

Visions of
China, Korea, and Japan
in the East Asian War
1592-1598

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其出於誰手而詳其語勢必奉使公管下掌史者所錄
右東槎錄一帙迺奉使曾叔祖航海時日記也今不知

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Note on Names and Dates

- **Romanization** of Chinese, Korean, and Japanese words and names follows the Hanyu pinyin, McCune-Reischauer, and Revised Hepburn systems respectively. For the names of modern Chinese, Korean and Japanese authors who have published using an alternative romanization of their name, this romanization is given alongside the standard one in the bibliography.
- **Chinese characters** for names and places are given in the traditional form, using the currently most common variant. Quotes from texts reproduce the forms used in the source as far as possible. Modern personal names and publication titles that use simplified characters are left unchanged.
- In dealing with **historical dates**, original lunar calendar dates are maintained rather than converted to Gregorian equivalents. This is to make comparison between sources easier. Years are referred to by the equivalent year of the Common Era, however, as this is more universally understandable than dating based on reign names.

Acknowledgements

On the long and winding road that I have taken to this point, innumerable people have provided encouragement and support of all kinds, some in fleeting encounters and some over years. May they forgive me that I cannot name them all here, and allow me to express my gratitude in person.

First and foremost, I must state that this research was made possible by funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation. The Leverhulme Trust generously funded my time as a visiting scholar in Japan. I have also benefited from funding from the Korea Foundation, the Stanley Ho scholarship at Pembroke College, and the Davis Fund in the Faculty of Oriental Studies, Oxford, as well as a grant for research in China from the School of Oriental and African Studies during my undergraduate degree.

Looking further back, I would not have been inclined or capable of carrying out the research I have, had it not been for the mentoring of my teachers at Bocclair Academy. I have fond memories of the late Mr. Topen, who introduced me to academic rigour in historical study, and moreover inspired my interest in history and the humanities. I should have liked to send him this thesis.

During my BA Chinese Studies degree at SOAS from 2004 to 2008, Ms. Lik Suen 宣力, Dr. Tian Yuan Tan 陳毓沅 and Prof. Andrew Lo 盧慶濱, taught me classical Chinese, my passion for which helped lead me to this topic. Prof. Michel Hockx helped convince me to continue academic study.

When I was still wandering through the SOAS library pondering on what subject to write my BA dissertation, Prof. Olivia Milburn put copies of Samuel Hawley's *The Imjin War*, and Chosŏn prime minister Ryu Sŏngnyong's 柳成龍 (1542-1607) diary into my hands. Prof. Milburn was later to supervise my dissertation on the Ming involvement in the war.

After an interview with Prof. Timothy Brook inspired me to pursue further study at Oxford, from 2009 it was Prof. Hilde de Weerdt who guided my first attempts to plan my research, and secured the funding for me that made my continued research possible. From the time of my MSt Chinese Studies degree, Dr. Peter Ditmanson was also a regular source of help. Dr. Laura Newby and Dr. Mark Strange gave me a much-needed nudge (當頭棒喝) when I was drifting astray. As I struggled to find my way again, Dr. James Lewis patiently offered criticism, constant encouragement, and support with acquiring funding. After Dr. Newby retired, Prof. Barend ter Haar generously took on the role of my co-supervisor. In the final stages of my (long) project, I have been grateful for the help of Prof. Remco Breuker, who flew over specially from Leiden to discuss my thesis, and Dr. Jennifer Guest, who gave much-needed advice on Japanese texts.

While I grappled with a vast subject, spanning multiple countries, languages, and bodies of literature, several experts on the East Asian War generously provided me with help. As I cast my gaze to the bookshelf by my desk, I immediately see books kindly given me by Prof. Kitajima Manji 北島万次, Prof. Han Myung-gi 韓明基, and Prof. Kim Shiduck 金時德; my debt to them is evident in my citation of their work. Prof. Kitajima also shared with me sources from his database meticulously collected over a lifetime of scholarship on the war. I owe my acquaintance with the best Japanese scholarship on Hideyoshi's motivations and the 1596 peace process (discussed in chapter 2) to the kindness of Prof. Sajima Akiko 佐島顕子. To aid my learning of Classical Japanese, Prof. Murai Shōsuke 村井章介 kindly welcomed me in his seminars looking at Japanese texts from the war period at the University of Tokyo.

My fruitful time in Tokyo from 2012 to 2013 was made possible by my host at the Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia, Prof. Oki Yasushi 大木康. While based there collecting sources, I became indebted to many people at the university and at archives around the country. Among these was Hirose Yūichi 廣瀬雄一 at the Nagoya Castle Museum, thanks to whom I could photograph *Tong sa rok* 東槎錄 (chapter 2), part of which is pictured on the cover. Pictured below is my meeting with the abbot at Anyōji temple 安養寺, Andō Ryushin 安藤隆伸, who kindly agreed to show me the original



Figure 1: Manuscript viewing at Anyōji Temple, 2013

manuscript of Keinen's 慶念 diary (see chapter 6) - a meeting made possible by my resourceful friend Satō Mika 佐藤美香. That I have been able to build networks in Korea and Japan is also partly thanks to my language instructors, including Dr. Younghae Chi 池永海 and Ms. Hiroe Kaji 鍛冶広恵.

It would be truly impossible to list all those who provided me with moral support and wise advice during my project. I reserve special mention for my fellow doctoral students at the Institute for

Chinese Studies at Oxford, who, as well as offering camaraderie, organized 'peer review sessions' (批鬥會).

I must also give special thanks to my family. My sisters, Edith, Jenny-Anne, and Iona, offered both moral and practical help. My parents provided the place of retreat most conducive to thinking and writing at their home by the North Sea, and kindly read my many drafts. My parents have also ceaselessly encouraged me, not least by expressing great interest in my research. Last but certainly not least, I am grateful to my long-suffering wife, Sun-Young 仙英, who has been consistently supportive, even as I spent years on the other side of the world digging through archives.

Above all, I am deeply grateful to have met and worked with so many inspiring people through the course of my research, and to have found such fascinating material; I can only hope that my findings will prove of interest to others.

馬沙爾

Marshall Craig

21st August 2015, London

To the above I append my sincere thanks to Prof. Dr. Marion Eggert and Dr. Robert Chard, my *viva voce* examiners, for their invaluable comments on everything from precise points of translation to the significance of my thesis as a whole.

Marshall Craig

1st March 2016, London

Abstract

This thesis uses contemporary writings from across the region to study the significance of the East Asian War of 1592-1598 for Chinese, Korean, and Japanese senses of identity, and argues that the war was a crucial moment in the development of those identities.

Despite the 1592-1598 conflict affecting millions of people, and resulting in almost unprecedented cross-border flows of people and information, most previous considerations of its effect on identity have focused on court documents. In the first dedicated study of identities in the East Asian War, this thesis shifts from the hitherto emphasis on politicians and commanders to prioritize individuals at the frontiers of cross-border contact. This shift of focus from centre to periphery contributes to our understanding of two areas of history. In terms of the East Asian War as a historical event, it provides a far more nuanced picture of what this momentous conflict signified for people at the time. In terms of the history of Chinese, Korean, and Japanese identities, it demonstrates persuasively that the sense of belonging to a country held real meaning for people

across society, influencing the actions even of those totally removed from the state. Tracing the legacy of frontier writings again contributes to both the history of the war and of identity, by revealing how peripheral insights and central biases combined to give birth to the orthodox narratives of the war, some of which remain influential to this day.

Personal writings show how first-hand encounters in the war modified but also re-inforced already well-established identities, making national identities of immediate significance for an immeasurably wider group than in peace time. The late sixteenth-century growth in printing and literacy subsequently greatly amplified the impact of the East Asian War by allowing real-life interaction to be endlessly re-told as a dramatic clash between China, Korea, and Japan.

This study restores the war to its proper place as a key moment in the longer development of national identities in East Asia. It also calls for a primary-source based, East-Asia centred reconsideration of theories on the historical development of collective identity, which remain overly influenced by later European experience.

Introduction

PROLOGUE

At the end of the sixteenth century, almost a hundred years of civil warfare in Japan was coming to an end, as one man – Toyotomi Hideyoshi 豊臣秀吉 (c. 1537-1598) – rose to a position of overlordship over his rivals. Yet whether it was that peace could not sate the appetite of a society geared for war, or that an intoxicated conqueror could not tame his lust for ever wider recognition, war was soon to spill on to the continent.¹ On Hideyoshi's orders, a Japanese army arrived in Pusan in the middle of the fourth lunar month of 1592, intent on invading China.

Neighbouring Chosŏn on the Korean peninsula had been enjoying an extended period of peace.² As the kingdom unfortu-

1 Why Hideyoshi launched the war is debated, and multiple credible motivations have been put forward. The main contenders as factors are desire to resume official trade with China, need to provide continued spoils of war to satisfy his vassals, and desire for international recognition. It seems plausible all of these factors helped precipitate the invasion. A combination of hubris and misleading intelligence on China's strength from former coastal raiders also encouraged Hideyoshi – see chapter 1.

2 The Chosŏn dynasty had a tense relationship with the Jürchen and other groups living across their northern border, and maintained a navy and coastal

nately located between Japan and China, however, it was fated to bear the brunt of the onslaught. Hideyoshi had warned the Chosŏn king of his plans, but his demands for submission and cooperation were met with a mixture of incredulity and righteous indignation at the Chosŏn court – that is, as much of Hideyoshi’s demands as were not lost in translation.³ Chosŏn officialdom had aligned itself firmly with the Ming dynasty of China both politically and ideologically, letting relations with its other neighbour Japan deteriorate to the point where those in Chosŏn knew almost nothing of the current Japanese political situation. Though in this they were not alone: Hideyoshi’s massive underestimation of the combined military power of the Ming and Chosŏn was to reveal that he, too, had woefully inadequate information about the empire he intended to

defences to deal with the ever-present threat of pirate raiders. Yet since the foundation of the Ming dynasty Chosŏn had never been at war or been invaded as such, leading contemporary Chinese observers to blame their lack of preparedness in 1592 on having enjoyed 'two hundred years of peace'.

- 3 The Sō family of Tsushima (the island between the Korean peninsula and the Japanese archipelago) managed most of Hideyoshi’s diplomacy with Chosŏn. Their main aim was to avoid offending either Chosŏn or Hideyoshi, lest their precarious existence eked out on trade between Korea and Japan be threatened. The result of these middle-men’s two-way filtering and interpretation was that what Chosŏn sent as a friendly envoy was received by Hideyoshi as the tribute from a vassal that he had requested. Ultimately, no amount of skilful diplomacy could paper over Hideyoshi’s desire to invade the Ming, and war became inevitable.

conquer. Perhaps the Ming government was the most guilty of ignorance of its neighbours. Yet when news came of a rapid Japanese advance up the Chosŏn peninsula, the Ming was in no doubt about the imminent threat to its security and responded by sending an army to aid the Chosŏn defenders.

By 1593, allied Ming-Chosŏn forces had reversed the Japanese advance. Yet, groups wishing for a speedy peaceful resolution emerged on both the Chinese and Japanese sides, and fighting was replaced by uneasy negotiations.⁴ These finally broke down in 1596, and Hideyoshi vented his frustration by ordering a second, punitive invasion in 1597. This second offensive had been all but abandoned when in 1598 a group of regents recalled the remaining troops after Hideyoshi's death from illness.

4 The cost and difficulty of supply put strain on both the Chinese and Japanese campaigns. In Beijing, Minister of War Shi Xing 石星 (d. 1599) pressed for negotiations after receiving word that Hideyoshi would be satisfied if given vassal status and the right to pay tribute (i.e. to trade). On the Japanese side, commander Konishi Yukinaga 小西行長 (1555-1600) led a group making great efforts to reach a peaceful settlement. As Yukinaga and his relatives were based in the west of Japan and benefited from trade with Chosŏn, they had a vested interest in peaceful relations. They may also have better understood the strength of the enemy, particularly after they were routed by Chinese heavy artillery at P'yŏngyang in 1593. Regarding Shi Xing and Beijing policy, see Kenneth Swope, *A Dragon's Head and a Serpent's Tail: Ming China and the First Great East Asian War, 1592-1598* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009), 198–200. Yukinaga et al. are discussed further in Chapter 2.

As with so many wars – past and present – what started as the pride and lack of mutual understanding of a few people in power grew into a storm that engulfed millions. The story of how the courts of the Ming, Chosŏn, and Hideyoshi, and their messengers interacted with each other has been told and re-told, but what the war meant for the majority of people – those outside these centres – remains largely unknown.

The impact of those seven years of war on East Asia cannot be overstated. The arrival of first one and then two foreign armies in Chosŏn led quickly to widespread famine followed by epidemic disease, such that corpses lined the roads even in areas the invading army had not reached. The Japanese armies carried out systematic annihilation of entire cities,⁵ and engaged in human trafficking en masse; the latter resulting in unprecedented cross-border population movement.⁶ Meanwhile, the invading soldiers and their army of

5 Extermination of entire cities was a punitive measure, targetted at fortresses that had earlier successfully resisted the Japanese – such as Chinju, for example – or at Chosŏn in general. Regarding punishment of Chosŏn, see Sajima Akiko 佐島顕子, “Hideyoshi’s View of Chosŏn Korea and Japan-Ming Negotiations,” in *The East Asian War: International Relations, Violence, and Memory*, ed. James Bryant Lewis (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2015).

6 Regarding abductions, the sources studied in this thesis point to abduction on a huge scale. See chapters 2, 4, and 6. Research on the topic is ongoing. See Naitō Shumpo 内藤雋輔, *Bunroku-Keichō no eki ni okeru hirojin no kenkyū* 文禄・慶長の役における被擄人の研究 (Research on Abductees in the Bunroku-

hapless conscripts also suffered heavy losses from disease, starvation, incessant guerrilla attacks, and the bitter Korean winter. The huge cost of the war was felt all the way from Honshū to Shandong, as the burden of supplying expeditionary forces strained economic and social capacity to its limits. This was a truly traumatic event for the region.

We have some idea of the suffering and upheaval that occurred, but the wider question of what the war meant to people – how it was understood – remains unanswered. Given the scale of the war, this is a question we cannot afford to overlook if we are to understand how people’s world-views evolved over time in the areas covered by China, Korea, and Japan. The 1592-1598 war was fought in the names of the Chinese, Korean, and Japanese states, but did those far from the centres of political power identify with these labels? Did they see the world in terms of a system of countries? How did first-hand experience of other countries and peoples during the war shape people’s views, and how were these experiences conveyed to others in writing?

Keichō Campaign) (Tōkyō daigaku, 1976); Kitajima Manji 北島万次, *Hideyoshi no Chōsen shinryaku to minshū* 秀吉の朝鮮侵略と民衆 (Hideyoshi’s Chosŏn Invasion and the People) (Iwanami shoten, 2012).

Recognizing the critical importance of the 1592-1598 war in the history of how the international order was envisioned in China, Korea, and Japan, this thesis shifts attention from central governments to the wider population, and demonstrates how voices from outside the centre give us a much fuller picture of thinking in this period.

OVERVIEW

The war involving China, Korea, and Japan that took place between 1592-1598 is known by various names in English, including the Imjin War (from the Korean name, *Imjin waeran*), the First Great East Asian War, the Seven Year War, and simply Hideyoshi's Invasion of Korea. In search of a name both neutral and meaningful, this study follows the most recent scholarly contribution to the war's history and refers to it simply as the East Asian War.⁷ Calling it by

7 The term has been coined in an edited volume on the war: James Bryant Lewis, ed., *The East Asian War: International Relations, Violence, and Memory* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2015). 'East Asian' War is neutral in that it uses an (albeit anachronistic) toponym in currency in all three countries involved, as opposed to translations of Chinese, Korean, and Japanese names for the conflict, which are specific to those countries. In Chinese, Korean, and Japanese the war is commonly referred to as: C. *Wanli Chaoxian zhi yi* 萬曆朝鮮之役 (Wanli Era Chosŏn Campaign) or *Wanli yuan Chao zhanzheng* 萬曆援朝戰爭 (Wanli Era War in Aid of Chosŏn); K. *Imjin Wae ran* 壬辰倭亂 (Japanese Uprising of the

this name highlights the fact that, in the long history of the region, there has only ever been one war where China, Korea, and Japan were the main combatants.⁸ The singular nature of the East Asian War is part of why it was a key moment for understanding how people in China, Korea, and Japan historically perceived their own and each other's countries.

The East Asian War saw huge movements of people, commodities, cultural objects, and ideas also flowing in all directions, inspiring cultural and intellectual traditions that continue to this day.⁹ Such a nexus of connections and exchange could not but have a profound effect on how the people living across the region imagined their place in the wider world. Moreover, this was not peaceful

Imjin Year), also *Chōng'yu chaeran* 丁酉再亂 (Second Uprising of the Chōng'yu Year) to separately identify the 1597-8 invasion; J. *Bunroku-keichō no eki* 文祿慶長之役 (The Bunroku-Keichō Era Campaigns), *Hideyoshi no Chōsen shuppei* 秀吉之朝鮮出兵 (Hideyoshi's Chosŏn Expedition) – the current trend in Japanese academia is to replace the innocuous term 'expedition' (lit. dispatch of troops) with *shinryaku* 侵略, 'invasion'. NB. translation of the Korean term *Wae-ran* is difficult: the term *ran* 亂 was historically used to describe uprisings against central power, but literally means 'throw into disarray'; the term for 'Japanese', *Wae* (J. Wa, C. Wo), is discussed in subsequent chapters.

8 The wars of the twentieth century involved different combinations of actors, rather than armies representing China, Korea, and Japan as the main combatants. In the seventh century, both the Tang of China and Yamato of Japan became involved in wars between the kingdoms on the Korean peninsula. The most recent time before 1592 when there had been a war involving all three countries was at the time of the attempted Mongol invasions

trade, but a violent clash – so horrific that even the attacking side described it as hell on earth.¹⁰ There can be no greater catalyst for hardening a sense of 'us' against 'them' than violent conflict, and no greater force for maintaining such a sense of identity than the remembering of conflict.¹¹

The East Asian War provides an opportunity to observe both the heightened senses of belonging to a country and the dynamic effect the experience of the war had on perceptions. Personal diaries and accounts offer us an entry point into understanding how individuals interpreted their experiences, and how these experiences shaped their world-view. By further placing these first-hand accounts in the context of the wider corpus of contemporary writing,

of Japan, in which Chinese and Korean troops and expertise were heavily conscripted. Even in the case of the Mongol invasions, these were part of a wider imperial scheme rather than a war 'between' the three countries, as such. The Mongolian invasion was an important historical memory at this time, and a possible point of comparison: Chinese observers took it as proof of the invincibility of the Japanese, while the Japanese monk-diplomat Keitetsu Genso 景轍玄蘇 (1537-1611) is quoted as having claimed it was only just that Japan have retribution on Korea for its part in the Mongol invasion. "*Sōnjo sujōng sillok*" 宣祖修正實錄 (Revised Annals of the Sōnjo Reign), 1591. 閏 3.1, National Institute of Korean History, <http://sillok.history.go.kr>.

- 9 During his stay in Japan, Hwang Shin (see chapter 2) played a critical role in the transmission of Neo-Confucianism to Japan. Makers of fine pottery were also taken to Japan as part of the slave trade, resulting in production tradition that continues today. See Kitajima Manji, *Hideyoshi no Chōsen shinryaku to minshū*. Meanwhile, red chilli is a characteristic ingredient of Korean food

we can glimpse how personal experiences and interpretations also fed into narratives about foreign countries and peoples produced and read by those without such first-hand contact. The resulting insights into the development of dominant narratives about 'us' and 'them' allow us to move beyond simple description of those narratives to understand their process of formation.

A breakthrough in our understanding of the stories told about the countries of East Asia can be achieved by widening our gaze from texts associated with the cultural and political centres to those at the periphery, and at the frontier of interaction with the foreign. Historians have typically focused on differing viewpoints displayed in diplomatic interactions and the foreign policy discussions of

today, but this was not so before the East Asian War, and the chilli is thought to have been brought by the Japanese around this time. Oh Hüimun (see chapter 4) records his wife going for a therapeutic bath in what appears to be chilli water. Oh Hüimun 吳希文, "Swaemi rok" 鎖尾錄 (Record of a Refugee), 乙未 (1595) 8.16, Jangseogak Royal Archives, <http://yoksa.aks.ac.kr>. For more on cultural exchange, see Ha Woo Bong, "War and Cultural Exchange," in *The East Asian War: International Relations, Violence, and Memory*, ed. James Bryant Lewis (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2015), 323–39.

10 See the discussions of Japanese accounts in chapters 5 and 6.

11 Haboush and Robinson observe that 'negative encounters with "the other" are believed to engender and deepen a sense of identity,' and that this is particularly evident in writings left by those affected by the East Asian War. JaHyun Kim Haboush and Kenneth R. Robinson, *A Korean War Captive in Japan, 1597-1600: The Writings of Kang Hang* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), x.

governments.¹² Yet, such an approach can never answer the question of how relevant central viewpoints were to the wider population. They also overlook the role of those on the frontier in informing central perceptions. This thesis seeks to move our focus from the centre to the periphery, and from the interior to the frontier of contact with the foreign.

The aim is to widen our perspective not only within one country, but to also consider interaction across China, Korea, and Japan holistically. To do so is to build upon the recent scholarly movement towards a transregional approach to the East Asian War, extending this approach to the question of mutual perceptions. Over the last decade or so, historians have increasingly recognized the need to transcend the limits of national history if we are to gain a rounded understanding of this complex conflict and all its implications.¹³ This

12 Etsuko Hae-jin Kang, *Diplomacy and Ideology in Japanese-Korean Relations: From the Fifteenth to the Eighteenth Century* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997); Han-II munhwa kyoryu kigūm 한일 문화 교류 기금 and Tongbuk yōksa chaedan 동북아 역사 재단, eds., *Imjin waeran kwa Tong Asia segye ūi pyōndong* 임진 왜란과 동아시아 세계의 변동 (Sōul: Kyōng'in munhwasa, 2010).

13 As one example of this recent trend, in his new translation of wartime diary *Chingbirok*, Kim Shidōk deliberately emphasises the diary's historical role as a text in all three countries. Kim Shidōk 金時德, (*Kyogam* • *Haesōl*) "*Chingbi rok*": *Hanguk-ūi kojōn-eso Tong-Asia-ūi kojōn-ūro* (교감 • 해설) 징비록 (懲毖錄): 한국의 고전에서 동아시아의 고전으로 ((Annotation & Interpretation) *Chingbi Rok*: From a Korean Classic to an East Asian Classic) (Sōul: Akanet, 2013).

is nowhere more true than in the development of ideas of self and other, to which interaction across boundaries is intrinsic. This thesis makes use of primary and secondary sources from China, Korea, and Japan to demonstrate conclusively how the narratives about each country's part in the war grew in an on-going exchange of information across borders. As the human and intertextual exchange extended across all three countries, our study of the development of these ideas must also take the region as a whole. This transregional investigation both builds on and contributes to the respective bodies of scholarship on the growth of identification with the country in China, Korea, and Japan.¹⁴

14 Relevant works include: Susan L. Burns, *Before the Nation: Kokugaku and the Imagining of Community in Early Modern Japan* (Durham, NC; London: Duke University Press, 2003); Mary Elizabeth Berry, *Japan in Print: Information and Nation in the Early Modern Period* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2006); Jahyun Kim Haboush, "Dead Bodies in the Postwar Discourse of Identity in Seventeenth-Century Korea: Subversion and Literary Production in the Private Sector," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 62, no. 2 (2003): 415–42; Ge Zhaoguang 葛兆光, *Zhai zi Zhongguo: chongjian youguan "Zhongguo" de lishi lunshu* 宅兹中国: 重建有关「中国」的历史论述 (Reconstructing the Historical Narrative around "Zhongguo") (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2011). Worthy of particular mention is the recent translation into English of the diary of the Chosŏn scholar-official Kang Hang 姜沆 (1567-1618), who spent time as a captive in Japan. This thesis offers further context, in the form of other contemporary perspectives and a conceptual framework, in which Kang Hang's diary can be appreciated. See Haboush and Robinson, *A Korean War*

SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH

This thesis aims to contribute to our understanding of the East Asian War and what it signified, as well as our understanding of how people in East Asia have historically envisioned the international order and identified with it. It also makes an original contribution through innovation in both choice of sources and approach to them.

BALANCING CENTRE WITH PERIPHERY

By focusing on sources from the periphery, the thesis includes previously excluded perspectives, providing a much fuller picture of how the events of the East Asian War were experienced and understood. While this thesis is far from a comprehensive survey of contemporary writings, it opens up a discussion on the multiplicity of co-existing perspectives within each country. This allows us to move beyond generalizations about 'Chosŏn' or 'Japanese' points of view and experiences of the war.¹⁵ It also makes it possible to begin

Captive in Japan, 1597-1600.

15 In the existing literature such generalizations remain the norm. For example, Han Myŏng-gi has led the field in the study of the East Asian War from the Korean perspective, with excellent and ground-breaking research. As his interest is international relations, however, his insights into changes in Chosŏn perspectives during the war are 'Chosŏn' perspectives, reflecting at most a

considering how distance from the centre of political power affected people's views.

In addition, more than simply providing a variety of perspectives, texts produced by those with closer contact with foreign countries and peoples are valuable in and of themselves. It has been observed that, 'people's categories are for acting, and are significantly affected by interaction rather than contemplation.'¹⁶ This thesis follows studies of later periods and comparable areas that have broken new ground by focusing on the frontier rather than the centre as the point of production of ideas.¹⁷ The power of this approach is built on the recognition that, 'at the boundaries we can expect to find the clearest definition of group membership, since it is there that

dominant view at court. See, for example, Han Myöng-gi 韓明基, "*Tong Asia kugjye kwan'gye-eso bon Imjin waeran*" 東아시아 國際關係에서 본 壬辰倭亂 (The Imjin Waeran Seen from EastAsian International Relations), in *Imjin waeran kwa Tong Asia segye ūi pyöndong* 임진 왜란과 동아시아 세계의 변동, ed. Han-Il munhwa kyoryu kigüm 韓일 문화 교류 기금 and Tongbuk yöksa chaedan 동북아 역사 재단 (Söul: Kyöng'in munhwasa, 2010), 103–45. Other studies that have given us insight into central viewpoints include: Kang, *Diplomacy and Ideology in Japanese-Korean Relations: From the Fifteenth to the Eighteenth Century*; Atobe Makoto 跡部信, "*Toyotomi seiken ki no taigai kankei to chitsujokan*" 豊臣政権期の対外関係と秩序観 (Foreign Relations and View of the World Order during the Toyotomi Government Period) no. 585 (2011): 56–82; Huang Zhilian 黄枝连, *Dongya de li yi shijie: Zhongguo fengjian wangchao yu Chaoxian bandao guanxi xingtai lun* 东亚的礼义世界: 中国封建王朝与朝鲜半岛关系形态论 (The East Asian World of Rites and Righteousness: On the State of Relations of China's Feudal Dynasties and the Korean Peninsula)

differences matter the most.¹⁸ The point of contact is a point of realization and negotiation: we must understand the process that took place on the frontier if we are to understand the wider picture of how identity was shaped.

TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Key to this study's contribution is its transnational scope. A textual survey which did not take in the whole region would fail to observe the processes of production, transmission, and re-production of texts that in the subsequent chapters are demonstrated to have criss-crossed China, Korea, and Japan. The East Asian War at once intensified and weakened the importance of borders, in the sense that it dramatically increased cross-border flows of people, objects, and ideas. Therefore if we are to understand its significance, we

(Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe, 1994).

16 Fredrik Barth, ed., *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1969), 29.

17 For example, Lewis's study on contact between people in Chosŏn and Japan, and Shin's study on frontiers in the south of the Ming empire: James Bryant Lewis, *Frontier Contact between Chosŏn Korea and Tokugawa Japan* (London; New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003); Leo Kwok-yueh Shin, *The Making of the Chinese State: Ethnicity and Expansion on the Ming Borderlands* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

18 Lewis, *Frontier Contact*, 6.

cannot limit our investigation to viewpoints from within one political domain. Furthermore, the different political and institutional environments in the three countries provide an opportunity for comparative observations on the role of such environmental factors in shaping identity. The last few years have seen a growing consensus on the need for a regional perspective in scholarship on the war, in the form of international conferences and collaborative projects. This thesis advances this movement as the first single study to give equal weight to perspectives from around the region. The value of such an approach is borne out in the observations of trans-regional similarities – and points of divergence – that this thesis is able to make.

SCOPE OF INVESTIGATION

This is an inquiry into how people who lived through the East Asian War envisioned the countries and peoples of China, Korea, and Japan, and their own relationship with these countries. It also begins the investigation into the effect of the war on how people thought about their own and other countries. In other words, this thesis is dealing with the question of national identity as well as how individuals' experiences of the East Asian War affected and were affected by their notions of national identity.

‘NATIONAL’ IDENTITY

The use of the term ‘national’ in this historical context is controversial, because it is seen by some as carrying anachronistic connotations. Since the debate on the nature and origins of modern nationalism in the 1980s, there has been a great divide between ‘modernists’ and ‘traditionalists’ over whether people before the late eighteenth century can be said to have had any sense of ‘national’ identity.¹⁹ It is not the purpose of this thesis to enter that old debate. At the same time, it would be disingenuous to avoid the problem entirely, because the very idea of investigating historical identification with the country is in itself implicitly inspired by discussion of ‘modern’ national identities. In fact, the shadow of the modernist-traditionalist debate hangs long over studies of collective identity in pre-nineteenth-century East Asia produced over the last three decades, affecting scholars’ starting assumptions and the very language they use. In addition, clarifying the position of this thesis

19 This debate has spawned a vast literature, but the following are some of the most commonly cited works: Benedict R. O’G Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1991); E. J. (Eric J.) Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, 2nd ed., Canto (Cambridge University Press) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986).

with relation to the discussion of national identity facilitates this thesis' engagement with scholarship on similar questions in both East Asian and European history.

In this chapter it is argued that the modernist-traditionalist divide is in fact greatly over-stated, and that the seemingly insoluble disagreement of the two camps arises in part from an ambiguity of terms and in part from a difference of emphasis. This thesis seeks to move past the debate, but to do so by recognizing we still suffer from its fallout: the limiting and distorting consequences of the *de facto* modernist monopoly of the term 'nation' and the corresponding over-emphasis on discontinuity with the past. This thesis takes the position that, providing the term is sufficiently contextualized, it is both valid and helpful to discuss the visions of China, Korea, and Japan observed in the texts analyzed here as 'national identities.'

PROBLEMS WITH AMBIGUITY

The cause of much of the controversy over where the term 'nation' can be applied has arguably been the ambiguity of the term. This ambiguity can be greatly reduced if we recognize that 'nation' is commonly used to denote at least two distinguishable ideas. For its first meaning, we can turn to Ernest Gellner's oft-cited definition, as

the congruence of ethnicity or culture (he uses both terms) and the polity.²⁰ Without a tangential debate on the definitions of the ethnic or cultural, a 'national' identity can here be taken as a case where people perceived as a distinct group (defined by certain perceived traits) is identified as coinciding with the group belonging to a certain polity.²¹ For example, 'Japanese' becomes a national identity when a group of people identify, or are identified by others, with a group defined by belonging to the polity known as Japan.

Confusion and controversy surrounding the term 'nation' arises because it is also used in the nineteenth-century sense of a political community including all classes.²² While previously a large proportion of the 'nation' was never considered to have direct political participation in the nation's fate,²³ during the nineteenth century and afterwards, the ideas inaugurated in the French revolution came

20 Ernest Gellner, "From Kinship to Ethnicity," in *Encounters with Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 34-46, cited in Azar Gat and Alexander Yakobson, *Nations: The Long History and Deep Roots of Political Ethnicity and Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 6.

21 For discussion of the definition of an ethnic group, see Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*.

22 Susan Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe, 900-1300* (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York, 1984), 254.

23 Although not all people in a realm were considered to have or need direct political representation, that did not imply that they were excluded from the community. *Ibid.*, 250-51.

to be seen as integral to the nation: popular sovereignty and equal citizenship were seen as prerequisite to true national community.²⁴ If we can recognize these latter ideas as a development in themselves, then we can say that the late eighteenth century onward did not witness the birth of nations but rather saw the rise of radical new ideas about society and political legitimacy, which in turn redefined the significance of the nation. The spread of the new ideologies of empowerment and national politics from Europe to East Asia in the nineteenth century has been the subject of much fascinating study. What we understand less well are national identities in China, Korea, and Japan before this period. This thesis proposes that the common conflation of the ideas of popular sovereignty and equality with the concept of 'nation' is hindering our effort to better understand earlier identities.

Given that the term 'nation' acquired new significance in the last three centuries and continues to be ambiguous, the argument can credibly be made that it should no longer be used to describe earlier periods, in order to prevent confusion.²⁵ Yet abandoning the term

24 Gat and Jakobson, *Nations*, 9–11.

25 Reynolds has previously argued that until the confusing implications of 'all-class' political participation can be separated from the word 'nation,' it should be avoided for the medieval period, for example. Reynolds, *Kingdoms and*

altogether for the 'pre-modern' period has resulted in two significant problems. The first of these is the lack of a suitable replacement.²⁶ Discussing 'ethnic' and 'cultural' identities is appropriate in some contexts, but cannot capture the association with the polity, which is the central focus of this thesis' investigation. The second and more serious problem is that rejection of the term 'nation' has had the misleading effect of suggesting people before the nineteenth century had no sense of identification with a polity whatsoever, or of groups defined by belonging to a polity.

THE QUESTION OF EMPHASIS

In addition to ambiguity, a difference in emphasis is the second factor contributing to the seemingly intractable disagreement between modernists and, for example, European medievalists. The modernist position was born out of a desire to de-construct nationalist myth; it thus had a particular context and purpose.²⁷ In order to

Communities, 254.

26 In search of a replacement terms for 'nation' and 'national,' Smith put forward 'ethnie' and Reynolds suggested 'regnal,' but no newly suggested term has gained wide currency. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*; Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities*, 254.

27 Modernist theory is said to have begun with Hans Kohn, Carlton Hayes, Karl Deutsch in the 1930s. It was then taken up again by Eric Hobsbawm, Ernest Gellner, and others in the 1980s. The historical background is therefore the

counter a nationalist rhetoric of primordial nations as the building blocks of history, Gellner, Hobsbawm and other leading historians of nationalism emphasized the artificiality and novelty of the new narratives built around the nation in the modern period. Particularly, narratives of common descent and national unity were contrasted with a past in which class divisions had been stronger than national boundaries.²⁸ The result was a somewhat caricatured vision of the earlier past, in which an international nobility and clerisy existed in apparent isolation from the lower parts of society around them. This vision was fit for the modernists' de-constructionist purpose, but appeared unfamiliar to the historians of earlier periods looking at primary sources.²⁹ Medievalists point out, for example,

horrors of the twentieth century resulting from nationalism. Also, in general, the current academic trend in historical studies is to minimize the relevance of ethnic continuity. Gat and Jakobson, *Nations*, 8; Hans-Werner Goetz, Jorg Jarnut, and Walter Pohl, eds., *Regna and Gentes: The Relationship Between Late Antique and Early Medieval Peoples and Kingdoms in the Transformation of the Roman World* (Leiden; Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2003), 599.

28 Modernists tended to greatly exaggerate the schism between classes, particularly 'the masses' and the 'elite.' Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities*, 250–51; Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism: A Critical Survey of Recent Theories of Nations and Nationalism* (London: Routledge, 1998), esp. 128.

29 In fact, the idea of a people (*gens*) as a community of common custom, law, and descent was established in Western Europe at least by the tenth century, and evidence shows the idea of a people constituting a kingdom developing over the next couple of centuries. Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities*, 250–59. See also, Patrick Wadden, "Theories of National Identity in Early Medieval

that different descent myths for different classes were a post-medieval invention.³⁰ In the fourteenth century we have the most eloquent presentation of a myth of common national descent and destiny, in the form of the Scottish letter to the papacy known as the Declaration of Arbroath (1320). Nor is this in any way a unique case, but rather a particularly potent expression of common ideas.³¹ We have no reason to suppose that fourteenth-century claims to homogeneity of the 'nation of the Scots' and their common Mediterranean descent to be any less artificial than the 'constructed' narratives of modern nationalisms.

It has not only been historians of Europe who have found wide-reaching modernist claims about the past difficult to support on closer analysis. In discussing the Chinese historical evidence, Prasenjit Duara has argued, that:

The long history of complex civilizations, such as that of China, does not fit the picture of isolated communities and a vertically separated but unified clerisy [...]

In privileging modern society as the only social form capable of generating political self-awareness, Gellner and Anderson regard national identity as a distinctively modern mode of

Ireland" (DPhil, University of Oxford, 2011).

30 Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities*, 250–59.

31 Ibid., 274–76.

consciousness [...] The empirical record does not furnish the basis for such a strong statement about the polarity between the modern and the premodern.³²

While Duara's focus is on a later period, his arguments ring true for the longer stretch of history. Similarly, in the case of Korea, John Duncan argues that organizational activities of the state fostered communal identity much earlier than in Western Europe.³³

It would be self-serving to criticize specialists in modern European history for their over-simplified portrayals of earlier European history, let alone East Asian history. Yet it is necessary here to point out the danger of taking the modernist school's narratives out of context and applying them uncritically, because such practice continues to be the norm: modernist ideas continue to exert a disproportionate influence on the discussion of the earlier history of China, Korea, and Japan. Examples abound, but one relevant to this thesis is Marcia Yonemoto's study of mapping in Japan in the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. After presenting a well-studied case for maps demonstrating a distinct sense of Japan and Japanese

32 Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 53–54.

33 John Duncan, "Proto-Nationalism in Pre-Modern Korea," in *Perspectives on Korea*, ed. Sang Oak Lee and Duk-Soo Park (Sydney: Wild Peony, 1998), 200–201.

identity, Yonemoto quotes Gellner to relegate these ideas to a level of awareness less than the 'national'; ideas of cultural identity are merely disparate 'shreds' and 'patches' until nationalism draws these 'resources' together into an unnatural modern invention. While this may or may not be the case, it is telling that no evidence is cited other than Gellner's famous dictum that nationalism preceded the nation. The author also emphasises the unnaturalness of modern nationalist myths (as argued by Gellner) without explaining why these are more unnatural than earlier ideas, which she recognises are part 'invention.' This thesis takes the position that if our purpose is to understand how people of the past envisioned countries and their own relationships to them, then it would serve us well to jettison the modernists' pre-occupation with the artificiality and novelty of nineteenth century visions of the nation; this would free us to work towards a balanced understanding of continuity and change, based on the primary sources.

MOVING FORWARD: WIDENING THE STUDY OF NATIONAL IDENTITY

A number of bold studies over the last two decades have demonstrated that a sense of collective identity around the state, and

imagining of the nation, not only existed in earlier centuries but was widespread. Under the continued influence of the modernist position on the nation, however, these studies must win ground inch by inch from the default assumption that there cannot have been such a national identity. Thus it becomes a provocative new assertion when M. E. Berry finds that Tokugawa-period (1603-1860) print culture demonstrates a developed sense of the Japanese nation – and whether or not such an identity exists prior to this remains a case to be proved. Moreover, robbed of a practicable vocabulary, scholars not as daring as Berry struggle to express the sense of identity they observe.³⁴ For example, another historian of the Tokugawa period finds a ‘collective identity that emerged before the rise of a nation-state’ and ‘proto-modern’ images of the space called Japan.³⁵ As already pointed out by the great scholar of Korean identity JaHyun Kim Haboush at the end of the last century, avoiding applying the term ‘nation’ in this way can be as distorting as applying it unques-

34 In addition to the example of Ikegami’s work cited here, another example of excellent primary-source based scholarship which suffers from lack of an alternative vocabulary is the work of Susan Burns: Burns, *Before the Nation*.

35 Eiko Ikegami, *Bonds of Civility: Aesthetic Networks and the Political Origins of Japanese Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 364–65.

tioningly.³⁶ The militant avoidance of the term ‘nation’ in current scholarship was originally practised in order to prevent anachronistic assumptions, but by resorting to terms such as ‘proto-modern’ we risk introducing new teleological assumptions; we risk portraying the peoples of the ‘pre-modern’ world as existing in a sort of pre-nationalist naiveté, with as-yet immature ideas of the nation. Just as it is wrong to overlay modern ideas onto people in the past, so it is also making assumptions to deny the possibility that people in the past could build senses of solidarity in the same way as people today.

This thesis proposes that ideas about political legitimacy and the organization of society continue to change over time, but that it is a constant in human experience that shared experiences – whether lived or imagined – build a sense of solidarity. We can gratefully accept the insights from scholars of nationalism such as Gellner and Anderson, that the nation does not have a primordial truth to it but is constructed and imagined. This enabling insight must not be coupled with a limiting dictum of modern exclusivism, however.

36 JaHyun Kim Haboush and Martina Deuchler, eds., *Culture and the State in Late Choson Korea* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 1999). At the time of writing, the posthumous publication of Haboush’s *The Great East Asian War and the Birth of the Korean Nation* has yet to take place.

Instead, we must extend the investigation into the construction of national identities much further back in time, particularly in the cases of China, Korea, and Japan – for the inclinations, institutions, and technologies which contributed to such construction have much longer histories.

That shared institutions and narratives build a sense of solidarity can be observed at all levels of society. It is natural to find this also true of state institutions and associated narratives in centuries past. Historians in Europe have pointed to military service as one important institution, and this is one theme explored in this thesis. The sharing of narratives of community through writing was also identified as key in the development of modern nationalism: print capitalism and the role of the newspaper particularly has drawn much attention. People have been engaged in writing about their communities for millennia, however. Newspapers and similar media have had powerful catalytic effects on modern society, but this should not lead us to underestimate the effects of the circulation of written material in earlier eras. This is particularly true in late sixteenth-century East Asia, which saw a rapid expansion of print-

ing.³⁷ The following chapters present examples of widespread and relatively rapid transmission of both handwritten and printed material nationally and internationally, showing how these helped shape ideas of national identity. Furthermore, while historians of nationalism have traditionally privileged the position of writing, we cannot afford to overlook the potency of oral culture in illiterate societies.³⁸ The focus of this thesis is necessarily on the written sources that remain to us, but even through these we gain a glimpse of how ideas of the national may have been transmitted beyond writing.

By exploring the factors involved in identity creation at this important juncture in East Asian history, this thesis provides case studies for the continuing discussion on historical national identity. In reclaiming the word 'nation' for this purpose, the aim is to avoid uncritically accepting modernist assumptions, but to assess anew the

37 There was a great expansion of Chinese printing at this time, corresponding to an expansion of the reading public. See Cynthia Brokaw, ed., *Printing and Book Culture in Late Imperial China* (University of California Press, 2005). Berry looks at printing in Japan from 1600, but her study demonstrates that there was already a thriving circulation of written material at that time. Berry, *Japan in Print*.

38 Gat emphasises the oft-overlooked but powerful role of oral story-telling in village-based societies. Gat and Jakobson, *Nations*, 12–13. Duara also points out that, 'the exclusive emphasis on print capitalism as enabling the imagining of a common destiny and the concept of simultaneity ignores the complex relationship between the written and spoken word.' Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation*, 53.

nature of identity in the East Asian War. It is hoped this will contribute to a broader reassessment of the elements of continuity and change in identity history around the world, and perhaps provide part of the basis for future comparative work.

METHOD OF INQUIRY

This thesis seeks answers to the questions it raises using close reading and analysis of texts produced during the East Asian War. The set of questions regarding writers' world-views brought to the texts explore three main aspects: boundary, content, and formative process.

BOUNDARIES

Investigating boundaries reveals what defined a person, object, or phenomenon as belonging to one country rather than another.³⁹ As the human mind seeks to categorize and associate, it groups according to varying degrees of similarity and difference.

39 What is conceptualized here as a boundary, has also been discussed as criteria. Pu, for example, points out that we must identify the criteria which define 'us' and 'them'. Muzhou Pu, *Enemies of Civilization* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), 38.

Particularly in creating categories or groupings as vast as countries, many differences have to be ignored, while some identifying characteristics are emphasized. It is through this process of identifying which are critical differences as opposed to insignificant differences, that boundaries are created.⁴⁰ Focusing on the point when a writer perceives a boundary – a distinction between (belonging to) one country and another – is the most direct means of identifying how that person defines the countries in question.⁴¹

Boundaries can exist on multiple planes, including the geopolitical, cultural, and linguistic. This investigation examines on which plane the boundary is drawn, where it is drawn on that plane, and whether it is drawn at all. It is only by identifying both cultural and political boundaries that we can start to map how different individuals saw the relationship between the Ming empire and the kingdom of Chosŏn, for example. As two polities, they were distinct units, yet the king of Chosŏn was a vassal of the Ming emperor in a system of fealty also used for imperial princes, who were charged with fiefs

40 For a more extensive discussion of the subjectivity of choice in deciding which are significant group markers, see Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, 14.

41 Barth's classic essay on ethnic groups called for a renewed questioning of boundaries, arguing that they are of equal if not greater importance than content. *Ibid.*, 9–37, esp. 15.

unequivocally within the home territory of the empire. It was also a point of pride at the Chosŏn court that the ‘Celestial Dynasty’ (i.e., the Ming) ‘looks upon [our country] as an inner vassal (内服 K. *naebok*, C. *neifu*).’⁴² Moreover, the cultural and political elite in Chosŏn also enthusiastically adopted traditions from China, of literary learning, moral cultivation, government, and even clothing and etiquette. The Japanese sources studied here also show that outside observers did not always distinguish China and Korea as two countries. How the boundaries were determined between these two countries – and whether there was even considered to be a boundary – is therefore not a settled matter; where boundaries existed – and whether they existed – depended on the perspective of the observer and the context of observation.

CONTENT

The imagined boundaries between ‘us’ and ‘them’ indicate where one group or category begins and the other ends. Yet, another important aspect in imagining an entity or group is its representative characteristics. Taking the boundaries as a given, the writers studied

42 “*Sŏnjo sillok*” 宣祖實錄 (Annals of the Sŏnjo Reign), 1593.8.2, National Institute of Korean History, <http://sillok.history.go.kr>.

describe other countries and their peoples and engage in explicit and implicit comparison between countries. Analysis of such description and comparison reveals a great deal about how a given individual imagines the Other but also the Self.

This is partly because characteristics are rarely free of value judgements. It is through the study of the 'content' imagined to define each country that we can learn about the perceived relationship between countries. The values implicit in the portrayal or understanding of a country point to the basis on which the individual in question is building their world-view. Thus, for the warrior, countries may be ranked in terms of military might, while the scholar judges them in the light of their perceived attainment in learning. It is therefore vital that analysis of the world-view portrayed in each person's writing places that world-view in the context of the writer's experiences and purposes.

PROCESS

The relationship between each writer's environment and experiences and their world-view is itself also a subject of study in this thesis. For any textual analysis to be effective, it must be rooted in context: what we know of the author and the circumstances of

writing, as well as other relevant texts. This relationship of text and context can also tell us about why a writer expresses the view they do, enhancing our understanding of both their ideas and the wider environment of the period. Also, if we can understand how the personal circumstances of the individuals who left us writings affected their world-view, then we will have a better starting point from which to estimate how others for whom we have less evidence may have viewed the world. While the apparent views of one should not be presumed to represent many, our guesses should be informed by an understanding of the available evidence.

In tandem with a focus on personal experience and circumstances, this thesis also analyzes the role of the text itself in the shaping of ideas. Knowledge about foreign countries and peoples is born through the direct contact with that people of a minority: the contact of the majority is usually indirect, through oral and textual transmission. The texts left to us from the time of the East Asian War reveal how some of that learning occurred. Within the texts there is also evidence of the ways in which oral transmission took place. Moving beyond individual texts, examining the webs of intertextual links reveals the dynamic process by which a wider group of people constructed their views based on the recorded experiences of a few

individuals, their own existing ideas, and previously inherited knowledge. Investigating this process sheds light on how the East Asian War acted as a catalyst in the formation, re-shaping, and reinforcing of ideas about their own and other countries.

The intertextual process involved in writing and re-writing the war continued through the subsequent centuries – and continues today. Owing to the vast size of the corpus of East Asian War history, however, this thesis necessarily takes a narrow focus by concentrating on writings produced during the period of the war itself: subsequently produced texts are only drawn on to demonstrate the importance and influence of the primary sources. A full exploration of this later literature on the war must be left for other studies.

CHOICE OF SOURCES

The selection of source material for this thesis focuses primarily on six individuals. Their writings are analyzed in the context of the wider body of contemporary writing, and so other writers and writings also figure significantly in the analyses of the main texts. In line with the basic premises of this thesis, the writers analyzed were chosen with special attention to both the extent of their connection

with political and cultural centres, and the extent of their contact with foreign peoples. While each sits at a different point on these spectra, the focus of this study is necessarily on those with significant direct experience outside their own country. Four of the men (Xu, Hwang, Yoshino, and Keinen) travelled or lived abroad, an experience to which they react in different ways. The remaining two (Zhao and Oh) are influenced by closer proximity to foreign peoples, while having little or no direct foreign contact themselves. As such they provide a point of comparison both with those who travelled abroad and with more 'central' narratives, such as the accounts of the war written by Zhuge Yuansheng 諸葛元聲 and Xu Xizhen 徐希震.⁴³

Another important criterion in choosing sources for study was the ability to place the writings in sufficient context. In order to perform a credible analysis, it was necessary to find sources about which we have at least basic knowledge of the circumstances of the author and the text's composition. The fact that most of the texts studied are diaries or memoirs of some sort is a reflection of this necessity. The memoir links a portrayal of the world to personal experience, and, as such, provides some context for understanding

43 For the writings of Zhuge and Xu, see particularly chapters 1 and 4 respectively.

the world-view presented. In the case of the two men studied who did not leave diaries – Xu and Zhao, their writing contains some autobiographical information which, combined with extra-textual evidence, facilitates a contextualized reading. Though this study spans differing genres of writing – and, indeed, languages – due care for the implications of each genre allows for a meaningful comparison of the differing visions presented in each work. At least as great as the challenge of generic diversity is the need to appreciate the various cultural contexts in which these men were writing: the diverse institutional and scholarly traditions from which they came. Cultural, generic, personal, and compositional contexts are all given attention as they arise in the analysis of the texts.

Diversity may present challenges to the historian, but to reflect some of the diverse perspectives evidenced in the writings of the East Asian War period is one of the purposes of this thesis. It is out of this consideration that individuals have been selected from a range of social and experiential backgrounds: a warrior, a doctor, a monk, a minor civil official, an ambassador, and a civilian refugee in his own country. Diversity has also been sought at the level of the text, in that the fates of these men's writings lie across a wide spectrum: while some were read and re-used extensively in more than one

country, others remained the knowledge of a privy few for hundreds of years. Examining this wide range helps deepen our understanding of the factors that affect the role of texts from the frontier in the formation of central historical narratives.

The value of each of the texts in answering the questions of this study is ultimately proven in the results of the analyses themselves. A brief summary of the sources and the themes analyzed in each chapter is given below.

THESIS OUTLINE

PART I FROM THE ISLANDS

The first section of the thesis explores the viewpoints of people from China and Korea staying in Japan. Interacting extensively with locals, Xu Yihou and Hwang Shin are plunged into a world that the literary tradition in which they were educated looks on as both alien and inferior. In the context of the war, however, their acquired knowledge of Japan becomes invaluable to Ming and Chosŏn decision-makers, and of great interest to wider audiences in both countries. The authenticity of their view from across the frontier is recognized, but at the same time, in interpreting and re-using their

reports, those on the continent lose much of the nuanced understanding conveyed by Xu and Hwang. The two men's writings demonstrate both how the cultural background travellers took with them affected how they interpreted their first-hand experience of foreign peoples and themselves, and how readers back at home filtered these travellers' reports through their own prejudices and interests before incorporating them into their own narratives of the war.

CHAPTER 1: XU YIHOU – LOYAL BEHIND ENEMY LINES

Xu Yihou 許儀後 (dates unknown) was the unfortunate victim of pirates and slave-traders and found himself forcibly taken to Japan two decades before the outbreak of war in 1592. Learning of Hideyoshi's plans for imminent invasion, he and a friend defied a ban on Chinese people boarding ships and secretly sent a report to Ming officials. The report did not stay secret for long, becoming common knowledge as far away as the north-eastern corner of the empire only weeks later and subsequently in Korea and even Japan. Xu's report is interesting because the vision of the world it presents is subtly more pluralist than ones found in writings emanating from within China. Years of living in a space occupied by both Japanese and

Chinese people also left Xu's sense of identity crystal clear; equally well-defined is his sense of cultural boundaries. As well as analyzing the contents of Xu's report, this chapter looks at what Xu's actions reveal about his sense of loyalty and belonging. Finally, a survey of later writings on the war demonstrates the wide-reaching and lasting influence of Xu's report, testimony to the power of the voice from the frontier and a case study in how central narratives drew on these voices.

CHAPTER 2: HWANG SHIN – AMBASSADOR TO JAPAN

During the lull in the fighting before the second invasion in 1597, there was still hope of a negotiated resolution to the conflict. Hwang Shin 黃愼 (1562-1617) and others were appointed by the Chosŏn king to accompany the Ming delegation on their way to enfeoff Hideyoshi as a Ming vassal. Two diaries remain from this journey, one by Hwang Shin, and the other associated with his assistant, Pak Hongjang 朴弘長 (1558-1598). Extensive description of sights, sounds, and encounters in Japan show how the authors interpreted what they saw in comparison to their own country and to China. When the diplomatic process eventually collapsed, Hwang rushed a report back to the Chosŏn court, which was then forwarded

to Beijing. The information that arrived in China was written into an account of the war composed at its end, which then made its way back through Chosŏn to Japan. Tracing this transmission process, we can observe how Hwang's first-hand account was taken as valuable evidence, but used for the various purposes of the historians in China and Japan. This case shows that it is only by returning to the primary source produced at the frontier that we can appreciate how the received narratives on the war evolved in a process of centre-peripheral interaction.

PART II UNSEEN ENEMY

The second section looks at writers who had limited or no first-hand knowledge of the foreign, but greater proximity to foreign people than many of their fellow countrymen. This proximity and the immediacy of the war situation strips away layers of clichéd rhetoric and encourages a more realistic – though not less emotional – assessment of 'us' and 'them'. The writings of both men also reveal what information was circulating in China and Korea during the war as part of the context in which people were forming their ideas about Japan, Chosŏn, and the Ming.

CHAPTER 3: ZHAO SHIZHEN – OBSERVER FROM THE FRONTIER

Zhao Shizhen 趙士禎 (1554-c.1611) was a minor official in Beijing, who was originally from the southeastern coastal region of China. When the Minister of War was still pursuing peace with Japan through negotiations, he proposed a strengthened military response. In two memorials to the throne and another essay printed for wider circulation, he draws on his knowledge of 'Japanese raiders' from his home region to dismiss fanciful tales of Japanese demonic invincibility. He cannot tolerate the notion of Japan vying for supremacy with China, but his insistence on China's unassailable position in the hierarchy of countries is based pragmatically on China's superior size and resources. This more military-minded appraisal (Zhao was a weapons expert) is subtly different to other contemporary writers based in China's interior, who emphasize China and the Ming emperor's cultural and moral superiority, and resonating more with Yoshino Jingozaemon's portrayal of international hierarchy.

CHAPTER 4: OH HŪIMUN – REFUGEE IN HIS OWN LAND

A descendant of a proud family but fatherless since childhood and without employment, Oh Hŭimun 吳希文 (1539-1613) was already living on humble means when the 1592 invasion began. He and his family barely survived the war by maintaining a web of relationships with other elite families that gave him indirect access to state resources. Though far from the centre of political power, Oh nevertheless remained part of a social network that kept him informed of current events. In his diary he recorded stories he heard as well as copies of documents that were circulating at the time, which included writings from China and even Hwang Shin and Xu Yihou's reports from Japan. In addition to this, he reveals many details of his daily life, which include his encounters with the Ming presence in Chosŏn and the impressions Chinese soldiers and buildings leave on him. His diary therefore offers a rare insight into the context in which a Chosŏn civilian experienced the war and interpreted those experiences. Furthermore, it illustrates how Oh's views of Chosŏn, China, and Japan were formed in response to perspectives from all three countries.

PART III BEYOND THE SEA

During the course of the war, hundreds of thousands of people travelled from the Japanese archipelago to the Korean peninsula – willingly or unwillingly – as part of the invasions ordered by Hideyoshi. This part of the thesis looks at the writings of two such people: a warrior who joined the first assault of 1592, and a monk who followed the second invasion in 1597. The memoir of the warrior Yoshino Jingozaemon 吉野甚五左衛門 (dates unknown) is an account of the 1592-3 campaign as he saw it, that seeks to place personal experience in the context of the wider history of Japan and the world. It is also an example of the genre of military storytelling that became the dominant literary memory of the war. Yoshino's memoir is analyzed next to the diary of the Pure Land monk Keinen 慶念 (1536-1611). The juxtaposition of their different values serves to highlight the diverse world-views held by those who participated in the war. At the same time, similarities in their ideas about Japan point to basic elements of a world-view seemingly held in common by people from different walks of life. This included thinking of the world in terms of the three countries India, China, and Japan (with Chosŏn as part of a Chinese sphere) and a sense of great distance between Japan and the continent. Yoshino and Keinen's ideas about

the international order show the influence of both the Buddhist canon and pre-Buddhist religious tradition, as well as of their personal experiences in Korea. Finally, the different fates of the two diaries give us insight into the factors which condition the influence of voices from outside the centre. While both diaries could claim the authenticity of an eye-witness account, the world-view underpinning Yoshino's memoir proved much more palatable to a domestic audience seeking tales of the military campaign.

CH. 5: YOSHINO – WARRIOR OF JAPAN

At the front line of the initial attack on Chosŏn, Yoshino Jingozaemon does not shy away from portraying its brutality in his writing; nor does he refrain from indulging in the artistic licence typically used by military storytellers writing about the war. Yoshino's combination of vivid imagery and heroics created an account which continued to attract readers in subsequent decades. The values he espoused as a warrior not only made his writing appealing to those similarly minded, but also informed the criteria by which he assessed the relative positions of Japan's place in the world. Identifying with Japan and projecting warrior-like qualities on to it, Yoshino's comparison with other countries reveals an inferi-

ority-superiority complex, derived from both inherited knowledge and his own experience on the peninsula.

CH. 6: KEINEN – LONGING TO ESCAPE

Abbot of a Pure Land Buddhist temple in Kyūshū, Keinen was called upon to accompany the local lord on his expedition to Chosŏn. Keinen had no interest in military glory, however, instead seeing the world as a place of suffering from which the wise and faithful escape through rebirth in paradise. Pervaded as it is by Buddhist teaching, Keinen's account of the 1597 invasion is of a radically different flavour to the heroic tales inscribed by his fellow countrymen. The critical voice in which he describes the samurai around him is possibly the reason for Keinen's diary reaching a more limited readership than Yoshino's memoir. In any case, Keinen's is a perspective we should not overlook, given the important place of Buddhist establishments and teachings in Japanese society of the time. Moreover, a closer reading of the diary shows us how his various experiences in Chosŏn helped shape the way he imagined Japan and the rest of the world.

Conclusions are brought together at the end of each of the three parts, and then finally at the end of the thesis.

Part I | From the islands

Displacement is the theme of this first part, in as far as the individuals studied all found themselves in a foreign environment. Their common reaction to this displacement was to reflect on the question of identity in a much more immediate way than they would have otherwise.

Engagement with a foreign people – the Japanese – heightened Xu Yihou, Hwang Shin, and the *Tongsa rok* diarist’s awareness of differences, strengthening their sense of which features distinguished them as men of Chosŏn or of the Ming. This included differences in dress and custom, in language, in social ritual. This sense of difference was not idle observation, but defined their identity, which in turn influenced their actions. Identity influencing action can be seen in the ambassadors wishing to help their countrymen who had been taken as captives to Japan, for example. It is the actions of Xu Yihou, however, which most vividly demonstrate the power of a sense of belonging to one’s country. Despite being far removed from any possible material reward, and rather in danger of

being seen as a spy and traitor by both the Ming and the Japanese, Xu Yihou decided to risk everything to send intelligence to the Ming dynasty – not once but several times. Xu’s writings and his actions show a developed sense of national identity, shaped by years living as a foreigner in Japan.

Beyond the views of the individual authors, the legacy of both Xu and Hwang’s writings demonstrates how texts describing foreign peoples and the international order in all three countries were all inter-connected, drawing on and reacting to each other. It is with respect to both the individual experience of the writer, and to this wider intertextual context, that each source must be considered.

Figure 2 is a detail of the map *Kunyu wanguo quantu* 坤輿萬國全圖 (Map of the Myriad Countries of the World), on which places significant to Xu Yihou and Hwang Shin have been indicated.⁴⁴ Though hardly accurate by present-day cartographic standards, the map is significant because it was being developed in China precisely at the time of the East Asian War. Drawn up in a European-Chinese

44 The version of the map used here is a seventeenth-century colour copy (the original was black and white) produced in Japan. Image: *Tōhoku daigaku fuzoku toshokan Kano bunko gazō DB* 東北大学附属図書館狩野文庫画像DB (Tōhoku University Library Kano Archive Image Database), <http://tul.library.tohoku.ac.jp>.

collaborative effort including Matteo Ricci (1555-1616), this version of the map was presented to the Wanli emperor just a few years after the war, in 1602. It is interesting that the textual description of Japan given on the map focuses on the same points as Xu Yihou's explanation of the country, noting how power in Japan rested with a 'powerful minister,' rather than the sovereign, and how 'by custom it prizes strength; the people practice the martial rather than the literary'.



Figure 2: Map showing Xu and Hwang's movements

	Xu Yihou	Hwang Shin and Pak Hongjang
Z	Zhe river region: original home.	1 Pusan: port of departure.
S	Satsuma: residence after capture.	2 Tsushima: resting point on journey.
		3 Sakai (Osaka): destination of embassy.

Chapter 1 | Xu Yihou

Loyal behind enemy lines

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In early 1591 clouds of war were gathering in the east, as Toyotomi Hideyoshi called on the Japanese lords to prepare for an invasion of Korea and China. The Ming government, however, maintaining no official contact with the Japanese at that time, remained ignorant of the looming threat. The courts of Chosŏn and Ryūkyū became aware of Japanese intentions after their aid in the invasion was requested by Hideyoshi, but the Chosŏn court was divided on whether the Japanese would actually invade and hesitated in sending a report to Beijing, while two Chinese men bringing reports from Ryūkyū were not taken seriously by Ming officials.¹ The Ming court began to take heed only when in the second month

1 For a discussion of the Ming reception of pre-war intelligence reports, see Chen Zhigang 陈志刚, “Mingchao zai Chaoxian zhi yi qianhou de junshi qingbao huodong lunxi” 明朝在朝鲜之役前后的军事情报活动论析 (Analysis of the Ming Dynasty’s Military Intelligence Activities before and after the Chosŏn Campaign), *Xuexi yu tansuo* 学习与探索 no. 4 (2011): 240–42.

of 1591 a missive arrived from a Chinese man living in Satsuma, Japan, who gave extensive intelligence on everything from Japanese politics to tactics in the field – even describing a typical Japanese boy’s education. The author’s name was Xu Yihou 許儀後.

Xu Yihou was a native of Jiangxi province on the south-eastern coast, and appears to have been from a humble background.² In his report, Xu introduces himself by explaining that he and everyone on board his boat were captured by Japanese pirates twenty years earlier, off the coast of Guangdong province. Like many others from the coastal regions, Xu bitterly remarks, he was taken as a slave to Japan.³ Owing to his knowledge of medicine, however, he won the favour of the lord of Satsuma, Shimazu Yoshihisa 島津義久 (1533-1611). It is from this position that he not only gained access to militarily sensitive information, but – according to his own account – with tearful pleading had been able to convince Hideyoshi to order action

2 Guan Ning 管宁, “Ming dai Xu Yihou, Guo Guoan deng zhongjun baoguo huodong shiji kao” 明代许仪后、郭国安等忠君报国活动事迹考 (Investigation of the Loyal and Patriotic Activities and Exploits of Xu Yihou and Guo Guoan of the Ming Era), *Zhongguo lishi wenwu* 中国历史文物 no. 2 (1994): 11.

3 Hou Jigao 侯繼高, *Quan Zhe bing zhi* 全浙兵制, ed. Siku quan shu cunmu congshu bianzuan weiyuanhui 四庫全書存目叢書編纂委員會, vol. 子 31, Siku quan shu cunmu congshu 四庫全書存目叢書 (Jinan: Qi Lu shu she 齊魯書社, 1995), 178–79.

against the marauding pirates when he accompanied Yoshihisa to an audience with him.⁴ Xu's preoccupation with pirate abductions suggests he was genuinely taken to Japan forcibly, rather than merely making such a claim in order to avoid being accused of breaching the ban on travel abroad.⁵

Learning of Hideyoshi's intentions to invade China, Xu twice attempted to send warning to the Ming via trading ship captains, but remained doubtful as to whether or not they had arrived. Then, one day when he visited a Buddhist temple, he by chance encountered a Chinese man kept by the monks as a scribe. From his speech he quickly recognised him as a fellow native of Jiangxi. This man's name was Zhu Junwang 朱均旺. Originally a merchant, he had been sailing to northern Vietnam to offload excess stock when he was captured by pirates and sold to the Satsuma temple.⁶ Xu arranged for him to enter the lord of Satsuma's household to copy medical

4 Ibid.

5 Japanese ambassadors to the Ming court who were of Chinese origin all described themselves as having been taken abroad by force, and it has been suggested in some cases this was due to the official Ming ban on emigration. Hok-Lam Chan, "The 'Chinese Barbarian Officials' in the Foreign Tributary Missions to China during the Ming Dynasty," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 88, no. 3 (1968): 414–15.

6 Zhu probably gave 'excess stock' as an excuse for his travelling abroad to trade.

books.⁷ When in 1590 confirmation came of Hideyoshi's plans to invade the following year, Xu was desperate to send word. He explains that he himself could not risk flight as his wife and children were with him, but that Zhu agreed to attempt escape and carry the written report back to China.⁸ Recorded by the official who received the report, we have Zhu's testimony of how he escaped. We learn that Hideyoshi had already placed a ban on Chinese people boarding ships for fear of news of the planned invasion being leaked, and Shimazu Yoshihisa's younger brother Yoshihiro 義弘 (1535-1619) refused to let the boat carrying Zhu go until Xu Yihou convinced him that it was only a trading boat and preventing its sailing could harm the all-important trade link with China.⁹

1.2 LETTER FROM THE PERIPHERY

Xu wrote about Japan from an entirely different position than that of his contemporaries based in China who had knowledge of Japan only through reading and hearsay. Not only had he lived in

7 This information was obtained by the Fujian official who received Zhu and his report. Guan Ning, "Xu Yihou, Guo Guoan deng shiji kao," 77.

8 *Quan Zhe bing zhi*, 子 31:178-79.

9 *Ibid.*, 子 31:184-85.

Japan for two decades and could evidently speak Japanese, but apparently being trusted as the lord of Satsuma's personal doctor he had access to Japanese high-level politics. In his 1591 report he summarises the letter circulated by Hideyoshi giving orders for the invasion, and relates the secret discussions in Satsuma as to whether or not to rebel against Hideyoshi.

A salient question for this investigation is: how did Xu's understanding of China and Japan differ from that of those in inland China who wrote about Japan as a hopelessly remote island country to the east? Or, equally interestingly: in what ways was it the same?

The report is divided into sections with titles such as 'On the background of Japan's invasion' (一陳日本入寇之由), 'On the background of Japan's Kampaku' (i.e., Hideyoshi) (一陳日本關白之由). Information is interspersed throughout with advice, and there is a dedicated section headed 'On strategies for defending against the raiders' (一陳禦寇之策). Xu gives great detail on strategic and tactical weaknesses of the Japanese, and painstaking instructions on how to secure victory. His hope, repeated more than once through the letter, is that following his advice 'all of the Japanese (slaves)¹⁰

10 'Japanese (slaves)': the term Wonu 倭奴 (K. Waeno) literally means Wo slaves (where Wo is an ethnonym for the Japanese), but the term was common

can be killed, [such that] not a piece of armour returns [to Japan].'¹¹ He also discusses cultural details such as how Japanese boys learn to use a sword from an early age, and how their education is in classical Chinese – though they do not understand what they learn.¹² Taken as a whole, the report conveys Xu's urgent concern that there should be Chinese victory, together with the low opinion in which he holds the Japanese as possessing no virtue but bravery.¹³ The only Japanese subject to receive a positive portrayal is the ruling house of Satsuma, which he describes as having always been respectful of the Ming, and opposing the invasion.¹⁴

Though parts of the report are recorded in a variety of locations, the most complete version, including the account of the report's receipt, is contained in *Quan Zhe bing zhi* 全浙兵制 (Military

because Wonu is the full name of the first kingdom of the Japanese islands recorded in Chinese classical records. For this reason, Wonu can also be read as a simple proper noun, rather than as a derogatory term. This is why 'slaves' is placed in parenthesis here and in translations throughout this thesis. An analysis of the usage of 'Wonu' in Xu Yihou's missive reveals that he only shifts from 'Wo' to 'Wonu' in contexts where he is excitedly describing violent destruction of the Japanese – such as the instance quoted here. This trend implies that Xu used 'Wonu' to express a hateful attitude towards the Japanese, because of the extra derogatory implications of *nu* ('slave').

11 「可盡殺倭奴 片甲無歸」 Ibid., 子 31:181, 185.

12 Ibid., 子 31:179.

13 'No talents or abilities whatsoever, relying on fierce bravery alone' (無些才能 只恃一猛勇). Ibid., 子 31:185.

14 Ibid., 子 31:181.

system of the entire Zhe region) compiled by Hou Jigao 侯繼高 (1533-1603). Hou held a military post in the Zhejiang area, which as previously mentioned had long suffered attacks from sea raiders. It is for this reason that Hou includes as an appendix to *Quan Zhe bing zhi* collected warning reports on Japanese activity, including that of Xu Yihou.¹⁵ The edition used here is a facsimile of a handwritten copy held in Tianjin Library.

1.2.1 STATE-DEFINED IDENTITIES

Satsuma was a busy centre of sea trade, where peoples from across East Asia interacted and came to settle.¹⁶ We might have expected that in such a cosmopolitan environment identities were not defined in terms of political boundaries so much as other social groupings. As it seems likely that Chinese staying in Satsuma would form communities based on common regional language, we might also expect groups to be identified by region. Xu does not distin-

15 Regarding the receipt of the report, see also Kenneth Swope, *A Dragon's Head and a Serpent's Tail: Ming China and the First Great East Asian War, 1592-1598* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009), 62.

16 Zhou Zhiming 周志明, "Mingmo renchen zhanzheng yu Zhongguo haishang" 明末壬辰战争与中国海商 (The Imjin War and Chinese Sea Merchants in the Late Ming), *Journal of Fujian Normal University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)* no. 4 (2009): 124–28.

guish the people he describes by these criteria, however. Instead, he draws a black and white distinction between Chinese and Japanese people. They are clearly divided even when Chinese families had been long in Japan.

It is often pointed out that the drawing of identity boundary is a mutual process, and Xu's categorisation is surely not uninfluenced by the Satsuma society in which he lived. We learn from Xu that the Japanese classify Chinese people into two sub-groups:

呼我大明曰大唐 呼我國之人曰唐人 久居倭地者曰舊唐人 蓋大唐之威令素行於夷狄也

[The Japanese] call our Great Ming 'the Great Tang', and call the people of our country Tangren [people of the Tang dynasty (618-907)]. Those who have lived long in Japanese territory are known as old Tangren. This is probably because the Tang dynasty commanded authority among the non-Chinese peoples.¹⁷

This short passage is revealing of both local perspectives and Xu Yihou's view.¹⁸ Firstly, we see that Xu uses the contemporary Chinese universalising categorisation in which the Japanese are but

17 *Quan Zhe bing zhi*, 子 31:180.

18 Xu's explanation of Tangren here can also be compared to the use of the same term (J. Tōjin/Karabito) by Yoshino Jingozaemon and Keinen, discussed in chapters 5 and 6 respectively. While Xu's interest is only in Chinese people and loyalty to the Ming (or lack thereof), the term was also used by contemporary Japanese to refer to people from other countries, notably Koreans.

one group among the non-Chinese.¹⁹ His extended severance from mainstream Chinese society and his experience of Japan has not led to his adopting a more multi-polar view in this regard. Secondly, while settlers from abroad maintaining a distinct identity in the local community over several generations is a commonly witnessed phenomenon, we see here that in Satsuma all Chinese were grouped together under a persisting category of Tangren (J. Tōjin/Karabito) rather than according to regional groupings. Xu's categorisation by country of origin would therefore seem to be in line with the categorisation which he was experiencing in Satsuma society.

Defining people's identity based on them having roots in one country also takes precedence over other social groupings in Xu's writing. Though he describes himself as of modest origins, Xu is evidently educated and concerned with the fate of the Ming state. He looks with disdain on the majority of his fellow countrymen in Satsuma, whom he describes as just the opposite:

唐人久住日本者 皆賊寇之黨 怨無一人肯言真者 且皆
市肆村居 不達國務 亦無一人肯言真者

19 Leo Kwok-yueh Shin, *The Making of the Chinese State: Ethnicity and Expansion on the Ming Borderlands* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 160–65.

The Tangren who have lived in Japan for a long time all belong to the outlaw raiders, and so there is virtually no-one willing to speak out. Otherwise they are all from market towns or villages and do not understand matters of state, and so again not one of them is willing to speak the truth.²⁰

Xu describes a group of people who lived without concerning themselves with the fate of the state. Despite their not sharing his political consciousness, he evidently believed that it was the Chinese state to which they should be loyal. It seems justified to refer to a Chinese state in this context as opposed to the Ming as Xu does not name the Ming state, but instead creates a Chinese category that extends backwards beyond the Ming by using the term Tangren. Despite himself explaining how the Japanese refer to the Ming as the Tang in the section quoted above, Xu seems to unconsciously do so himself. When later in the report he explains with what tactics to respond if the Japanese attack China, he begins 'If the Japanese raiders set foot in our Great Tang...' (萬一倭寇履我大唐) – despite the letter being intended for an official Ming audience.²¹ Having spent two decades in Japan, the labels used there had evidently become his own.

Behind Xu's interchanging use of '(our) Great Ming' or '(our) Great Tang', there seems to lie an imagined constant category. When

20 *Quan Zhe bing zhi*, 子 31:179.

21 Quoted in Guan Ning, "Xu Yihou, Guo Guoan deng shiji kao," 77.

discussing Japanese education, Xu refers to what we now call Chinese characters as ‘the writing of our Great Ming.’²² In Xu’s own historical account, Chinese writing was transmitted to Japan centuries before the Ming dynasty, in the Tang dynasty.²³ It appears that in Xu’s eyes the current Ming polity has inherited ownership of this cultural entity. Or rather, that the Ming dynasty has come to embody a China that extends beyond the limits of a single dynasty. This view is in line with the supra-dynastic labelling of the Japanese around him but also with the narrative officially promulgated by the Ming dynasty, which envisioned a Chinese collective identity stretching back to the beginnings of civilisation.²⁴

A significant point in Xu’s vision of this Chinese category is his inclusion of people in all social positions. In Xu’s view, people originating from China retain a Chinese identity and a relationship to the state even if they join outlaws. The interesting related question of whether those labelled as Tangren by Xu included some who were categorised as non-Chinese (*yi* 夷) within the Ming empire can unfor-

22 「我大明文字」 Hou Jigao, *Quan Zhe bing zhi*, 子 31:179.

23 Ibid.

24 Pamela Kyle Crossley, Helen F. Siu, and Donald S. Sutton, eds., *Empire at the Margins: Culture, Ethnicity, and Frontier in Early Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 2–9.

tunately not be answered. Within the Ming empire at this time the group representing the majority of subjects – often referred to as the Han Chinese – was ‘very clearly defined’ in opposition to peoples considered to be non-Chinese.²⁵ In the context Xu describes, however, issues such as official registration as a subject (*min* 民) as a marker of identity would not be relevant.²⁶ Within the Ming empire there were those who left behind their non-Chinese status by purchasing land rights, and those who abandoned their status as subjects to avoid conscription.²⁷ Xu, on the other hand, was wholly removed from this state apparatus. The boundary of identity that was most relevant for him was the distinction between Japanese and Chinese. At least in as far as his written account goes, the distinction between the two groups appears to have been self-evident for him.

Undoubtedly, identities were given increased relevance in the context of the impending invasion. All people mentioned in Xu’s report are identified under three categories, as Chinese (Tangren),

25 Ibid., 2.

26 For discussion of ethnicity issues and government registration in the Ming dynasty, see Shin, *The Making of the Chinese State*.

27 Helen F. Siu and Zhiwei Liu, “Lineage, Market, Pirate, and Dan: Ethnicity in the Pearl River Delta of South China,” in *Empire at the Margins: Culture, Ethnicity, and Frontier in Early Modern China*, ed. Pamela Kyle Crossley, Donald S. Sutton, and Helen F. Siu (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 293.

Korean (Liren 麗人), or Japanese (Wo 倭), and their roles in the predicted conflict vary accordingly: the Chinese in Japan are expected to help but are mostly apathetic; the Japanese are the aggressors; the Koreans are expected to fight in pro-Japanese and pro-Chinese factions (a Chosŏn embassy the previous year had been presented within Japan as paying tribute to Japan, and Xu believed Chosŏn had agreed to cooperate with the Japanese). The historical circumstances of his report suggest that it was not only for Xu that the invasion had promoted the significance of individuals' political identity. The ban on travel ordered by Hideyoshi and locally enforced by Shimazu Yoshihiro was not on ships travelling to China, but on Chinese people leaving Japan. This suggests the Japanese elites around Xu shared his expectation that individuals hailing from a certain state would possess an active allegiance to that state.

1.2.2 A MORE PLURALIZED WORLD-VIEW

At the level of inter-state relations, Xu's report comes closer to depicting the Ming state as one among many than most contemporary Chinese writers, which maintain the rhetoric of a single emperor and empire above the kingdoms of the world.

The most striking example of this is his apparent acceptance of the Japanese emperor. Other contemporary Chinese texts record that the Japanese ruler adopted the title of emperor, and quote it using the Japanese term *Tennō* 天皇 (Heavenly Emperor). For example, in *Wanli san da zheng kao* 萬曆三大征考 (Study of the Three Great Campaigns of the Wanli Era), written in China just after the war, the Japanese rulers are said to, ‘call [themselves] king and claim superior status, later using the title Heavenly Emperor.’²⁸ Chosŏn writers too, avoid directly recognizing the Japanese emperor. Hwang Shin (see chapter 2), in his description of the Japanese political system, states that Japan ‘has someone who is referred to as Heavenly Emperor.’²⁹ In contrast, Xu does not describe the Japanese as claiming this title but uses the standard Chinese term to state simply that Japan ‘has always had an emperor.’³⁰ He goes on to explain that the Japanese emperor possesses no real political power, and draws a comparison with a similar situation at the end of the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220

28 「稱王曰尊 後以天皇為號」 Mao Ruizheng 茅瑞徵, “Wanli san da zheng kao” 萬曆三大征考 (Study of the Three Great Campaigns of the Wanli Era), SB/.85/4426 916, 倭上 1a, Peking University Library.

29 「所謂天皇者」 Hwang Shin 黃慎, “Ilbon wanghwan ilgi” 日本往還日記 (To Japan and Back Again: A Diary), 30a, Kyōto University Kawai Archive, Kyōto.

30 「原有皇帝」 Hou Jigao, *Quan Zhe bing zhi*, 子 31:179.

CE) in China. Considering that the traditional rhetoric of Chinese empire is one of universal authority, it is surprising that his discussion of the Japanese emperor is not qualified by in any way denying his legitimacy.³¹ Furthermore, in Xu's writing this is not an isolated case. He goes as far as to use the word *tianzi* 天子 'Son of Heaven' to describe the Japanese Tennō. This is done again within the context of describing the emperor's lack of political autonomy: '[Japan's Kampaku] uses the authority of the Son of Heaven to rule over the Feudal Lords.'³² The term translated here as 'feudal lords' (*zhu hou* 諸侯) is borrowing a historical Chinese term and the phrase he is using is in fact one often applied to describe such situations in the Chinese context.³³ By using this familiar language Xu effectively expresses the political power relations in Japan to a Chinese audi-

31 This rhetoric of universality is demonstrated, for example, in the edicts issued by the emperor at the beginning and end of the war. Huang Zhilian 黄枝连, *Dongya de li yi shijie: Zhongguo fengjian wangchao yu Chaoxian bandao guanxi xingtai lun* 东亚的礼义世界：中国封建王朝与朝鲜半岛关系形态论 (The East Asian World of Rites and Righteousness: On the State of Relations of China's Feudal Dynasties and the Korean Peninsula) (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe, 1994), 442–43, 555–58.

32 Kampaku is the title that Hideyoshi held at this time. Hou Jigao, *Quan Zhe bing zhi*, 子 31:182.

33 Xu's version of the phrase reads '挾天子凌諸侯,' while the more common usage is '挾天子令諸侯.' Sima Guang 司馬光, "Zi zhi tong jian" 資治通鑒 (Comprehensive Mirror to Aid in Government), 164:14a, Wenyuange Siku quan shu dianzi ban 文淵閣四庫全書電子版 (Digital Heritage), <http://www.sikuquanshu.com>.

ence. Yet he also uses no qualifying statements. These cases are not presented explicitly as comparisons, using words marking a simile for instance, but instead as direct descriptions. Not only do other Chinese writings of this time not describe Japan as having an emperor, but one goes as far as to describe as illegitimate the name 'Japan', 'the origin of the sun'.³⁴ What makes Xu's choice of words all the more unexpected, is that he is sending a report intended for the Ming court.

That the rhetoric of Ming world order did not allow for another emperor is reflected in Korean sources. The Chosŏn court, priding itself on Chosŏn's position as favourite vassal of the Ming, was very sensitive to the language of the tribute system. In 1594, a Chosŏn official persuading the king that the Japanese are determined to invade China quotes as evidence a Japanese letter to China which was addressed 'the Son of Heaven where the sun rises writes to the Son of Heaven where the sun sets', commenting 'oneself acting as an emperor of part of the world: this is intention to rebel.'³⁵

34 Xu Xizhen 徐希震, "Dong zheng ji" 東征記 (Record of the Eastern Expedition), KJ 5249, 1a, Kyujanggak, Seoul National University. See also chapter 3.

35 「倭賊通書於天朝曰 日出處天子寄書日沒處天子云 自為一方天子 此乃犯順之意也」 "Sŏnjo sillok" 宣祖實錄 (Annals of the Sŏnjo Reign), 1595.2.6, National Institute of Korean History, <http://sillok.history.go.kr>.

Xu's apparently unique usage of these terms implies that compared to other Chinese and Korean writers he was more willing to accept the Japanese use of political structures parallel to those of the Ming dynasty. As demonstrated in his reporting on Chosŏn, Xu's information on political events was received through Japanese channels. It would be natural for exposure to this perspective to have some influence on his view of the world. The fact that he was living abroad and had close contact with a foreign political power in itself could well have effected a subtle shift in his perspective to a more plural world view.

1.3 LOYALTY BEHIND ENEMY LINES

Xu Yihou and Zhu Junwang were taking a great risk in releasing military secrets. Satsuman records report that Xu Yihou was betrayed by a 'person of the Ming' (Meijin 明人). Hearing the news, Hideyoshi was furious, apparently ordering that Xu be boiled in a recently forged cauldron. Xu's master Shimazu Yoshihichi seems to have greatly valued Xu. He asked a favour of Tokugawa Ieyasu, who on his behalf persuaded Hideyoshi not to execute Xu, arguing that should the news reach other countries it would reflect badly on the Japanese – a line of argument that is in itself revealing of a sense

of identity. In the end Xu had his chains removed and was released without further punishment.³⁶ From Hideyoshi's point of view this was an unwise move, as Chinese and Korean sources show that Xu continued in his efforts to aid the Ming defeat the Japanese.

As the information Xu provided proved largely accurate, he evidently became a name known to Chinese officials at court and in the field, as well as to Chosŏn officials.³⁷ When the Minister of War sent a team of spies to Japan they were instructed to seek out Xu and employ him as an agent with the mission of encouraging his master to betray Hideyoshi. In 1593 some of these men arrived in Satsuma and reportedly made contact with Xu. Xu is said to have introduced a Ming military official disguised as a merchant to Shimazu Yoshihisa's most trusted servant, Ijūnin Tadamune 伊集院忠棟 (d. 1599) (Yoshihisa was in Chosŏn).³⁸ In his report, Xu had described Tadamune as sharing the Shimazu brothers' respect for the Ming, and further as having wished to take his army to Taiwan or the Philip-

36 *Sappan kyūgi zatsuroku* 薩藩旧記雜錄 (Miscellaneous old records of the Satsuma domain): *kan* 卷 26, 798; quoted in Guan Ning, "Xu Yihou, Guo Guoan deng shiji kao," 79.

37 References are made to him in communications throughout the war. For example, he is discussed in a conversation between a Chinese official and the Chosŏn official assigned to him. "Sŏnjo sillok," 1591.11.1.

38 Chen Zhigang, "Mingchao zai Chaoxian zhi yi qianhou de junshi qingbao huodong lunxi," 243.

piners and watch Hideyoshi's invasion from the sidelines.³⁹ Politically or militarily, this meeting does not appear to have had any consequences. Nevertheless, if it did indeed take place, then the meeting transformed Xu's relationship with the Ming from that of sending information indirectly to direct cooperation.

The governor (*xunfu* 巡撫) of Fujian, Xu Fuyuan 許孚遠 (d. 1594), subsequently sent at least two more missions to Satsuma hoping to make use of Xu to form an alliance with Shimazu against Hideyoshi. Zhu Junwang is recorded as having joined the first of these, which made successful contact with Xu and returned optimistic of a potential alliance.⁴⁰ Later, near the end of the war, a Chosŏn official who visited Fujian was told by an official there that the new governor of Fujian, Jin Xue 金學 (*jinsi* 進士 1565), had sent someone to Satsuma to seek out Xu. This official boasted that Xu was encouraged with a large payment of gold to persuade Shimazu Yoshihisa to withdraw his forces. This Xu did, going in person to Sach'ŏn 泗川 in Chosŏn in 1598, and so the withdrawal of the Japan-

39 Hou Jigao, *Quan Zhe bing zhi*, 子 31:181.

40 Chen Zhigang, "Mingchao zai Chaoxian zhi yi qianhou de junshi qingbao huodong lunxi," 243–44.

ese was indirectly the achievement of Jin Xue.⁴¹ At that point in the war Hideyoshi's death had become known and the Japanese commanders were already keen to withdraw. Other sources suggest it was this fact – combined with short supplies – which sped Shimazu and the others' withdrawal.⁴² Nevertheless, there may well be truth in the report that contact was again made with Xu on this occasion.

Xu also more than once successfully sent further reports to the Ming court. We learn via the Ming officials who met with him that he was summoned to Chosŏn from Satsuma by Yoshihisa when in 1594 an epidemic broke out among Japanese forces on Kōje Island 巨濟島, and that it was not his first visit to Chosŏn. Military Commissioner for the Ming campaign, Song Yingchang 宋應昌 (1536-1606) mentions a further written report from Xu warning of Japanese duplicity in the on-going peace negotiations, and it seems he sent this while in Chosŏn.⁴³ In 1594 a message from Xu reached the court

41 No In 魯認, *Kūmgye ilgi* 錦溪日記 (Kūmgye diary), quoted in Guan Ning, "Xu Yihou, Guo Guoan deng shiji kao," 82.

42 Mao Yuanyi 茅元儀 ed., *Wu bei zhi* 武備志 (A history of armaments), quoted in Chen Zhigang, "Mingchao zai Chaoxian zhi yi qianhou de junshi qingbao huodong lunxi," 246.

43 Song Yingchang 宋應昌, *Jinglüe fuguo yaobian* 經略復國要編, *juan* 卷 11, 'Bao Shi sima shu' 報石司馬書, quoted in Guan Ning, "Xu Yihou, Guo Guoan deng shiji kao," 81. The receipt of the report is also mentioned in Mao Yuanyi, *Wu*

in Beijing after being relayed via a chain of Chosŏn and then Chinese officials. A Korean man taken captive by the Japanese who escaped back to Chosŏn reported that he had met a man in Japan who had written him a note as follows:

俺是許儀俊[後] 系大明江西道吉安府萬安縣人 隆慶四年
被搶來此 衆賊候天使信來 當於八月中盡欲回還

I am Xu Yihou, a person of Wan'an county, Ji'an prefecture, Jiangxi province, in the Great Ming. I was captured and brought here in 1570. All the outlaws are waiting for the letter from the Celestial Ambassador, and are set to make a complete withdrawal in the eighth month.⁴⁴

Xu would of course have been unable to speak to the Korean man, and so wrote a note. He would have been very aware of the unreliability of sending a message in such a manner, but – perhaps in desperation – he attempted to use what opportunities presented themselves. Though he had left China two decades earlier and was serving the lord of Satsuma, Xu was evidently determined to aid the Ming military effort by providing information whenever possible.

bei zhi. See Chen Zhigang, "Mingchao zai Chaoxian zhi yi qianhou de junshi qingbao huodong lunxi," 246.

44 *Ming Shenzong shilu* 明神宗實錄, 1594.10.10, quoted in Guan Ning, "Xu Yihou, Guo Guoan deng shiji kao," 80.

In the original written report that has survived intact, he writes of how before he met Zhu Junwang he ‘cried in anxiety day and night, looking to heaven and heaving great sighs’, not knowing what he could do. When Zhu agreed to help, Xu ‘leapt for joy.’ He explains Zhu’s being willing to help as a result of his being ‘fervently loyal’ and ‘willing to sacrifice himself for his country.’⁴⁵ Given he was writing to the emperor, his reported emotion and Zhu’s loyalty could be dismissed as performance. Zhu was surely keen to return home in any case. Yet Xu’s continued efforts to send reports to the Ming despite great personal risk, as evidenced in Chinese, Korean and Japanese sources, suggest that helping the Ming was something about which he felt passionately. In *Quan Zhe bing zhi*, which also gives Zhu’s oral testimony, a farewell poem Xu wrote to Zhu Junwang is included at the end of the report:

難域萍逢幾度周 一朝分首作遐遊 殷勤囑咐忠君事 盡
 意叮嚀滅寇籌 知汝歸成蘇子景 豈宜還作李陵秋 霜
 臺若問塵中事 惟道斯民苦尚憂

In the land of our plight we met by chance and for but a
 while,
 On a parting we are to take distant paths.
 Earnestly I instruct on the business of loyalty to our lord,

45 「幸而朱均旺忠心激切義氣發見 自願以身報國」 Hou Jigao, *Quan Zhe bing zhi*, 子 31:179.

Sincerely I reiterate strategies for destroying the invaders.
I know your return will become a scene like Master Su's,
How can you remain passing the years like Li Ling?
If the governor asks after my humble affairs,
Say only that this subject lives in hardship and anxiety.⁴⁶

Through this we can imagine what it meant to Xu to meet someone not only from his home province but who – unlike the majority of Chinese he met – appreciated his concerns about state affairs. His anxieties are the worries that left him restless before meeting Zhu: fear that the Ming would be ill-prepared to defend against the Japanese. On hearing of Hideyoshi's plans Xu was desperate to pass on the intelligence and also what he believed would be the best strategies and tactics for defeating the invaders.

'Master Su' in the poem is Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037-1101), who was remembered as a loyal official exiled but later pardoned and allowed to return. Li Ling 李陵 (d. 74 BCE) was a Han dynasty general who surrendered to the dynasty's non-Chinese enemy, the Xiongnu 匈奴. The Han court executed his family, and Li stayed with the Xiongnu until his death. Han histories recorded that his failure in battle was the work of an envious rival, and so for many commentators he

46 Ibid., 子 31:185.

became a tragic hero: loyal but forced into exile among barbarians.⁴⁷ With these analogies Xu presents himself and Zhu as suffering exiles, and implies they are loyal but their loyalty is subject to doubt owing to their staying abroad. In his report Xu expresses his fear that should he return his wish to 'repay his country' (報國) would be overlooked and he would be punished. This fear was well founded, as only months earlier a Chinese man from Ryūkyū warning of Hideyoshi's invasion had been imprisoned on suspicion of cooperation with Japanese pirates.⁴⁸ The theme of loyalty in the poem reflects the contents of his report, in which he also explains his actions as being out of loyalty to his lord (*zhong jun* 忠君) as well as being 'for the sake of the country and the people.'⁴⁹

As described above, after receiving his report it is clear that the Minister of War and others wished to employ Xu as an agent, capitalising on the weak loyalty of the house of Shimazu to Hideyoshi (as reported by Xu) to encourage dissension among the Japanese lords. The records we have also seem to show that Xu did meet with

47 K. P. K. Whitaker, "Some Notes on the Authorship of the Lii Ling/Su Wu Letters," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 15, no. 1 (1953): 113–15.

48 Chen Zhigang, "Mingchao zai Chaoxian zhi yi qianhou de junshi qingbao huodong lunxi," 240–42.

49 「為國為民」 Hou Jigao, *Quan Zhe bing zhi*, 子 31:179.

Ming officials, and one source records that he later received gold as payment for his efforts. Yet, given that when he sent his original report he remained in Satsuma serving the house of Shimazu, it seems unreasonable to assume that Xu was acting in the hope of receiving wealth or status from the Ming state. Instead, the combination of the contents of the report and his actions are a strong case for his identity as a Ming subject, and a loyal one, being of great importance to him. This seems to be reflected in his views of others, as his division of people at all levels according to their country of origin demonstrates that in his view each person belonged to a state-defined category. That he categorises using labels pre-dating current polities further suggests that he envisioned collective identities that pre-existed those polities. His identity as a Ming subject is therefore also a 'Chinese' identity, with the Ming empire apparently embodying a politically and culturally defined China.

The importance of regional identity is demonstrated in Xu Yihou and Zhu Junwang's forming a bond as men of the same province. Yet it would be difficult to extend much further the argument that Xu was motivated primarily by attachment to his local region. His action of attempting to aid the Ming and his painstaking policy advice speak only of a state-level concern. Xu evidently felt

strongly about the well-being of the Ming state and the security of the land that state represented. Living abroad on the eve of Hideyoshi's invasion, for Xu Yihou his identity as Chinese opposed to Japanese was not only important in an abstract sense, but became a powerful motive for his actions.

1.4 LEGACY OF XU'S REPORT

Through the Chosŏn court annals we see how within a few months the news contained in Xu's initial report in 1591 had spread across the Ming empire. When Chosŏn officials arrived in northeastern China they were treated with suspicion, owing to Xu having reported Chosŏn to be in league with the Japanese.⁵⁰ It was not long before the full report was brought into Chosŏn and circulated there. We know this because, of the few men in Chosŏn who left diaries of their war experience, at least two diarists felt it was so important they copied it out in full.⁵¹

50 "Sŏnjo sillok," 1592.6.18 . Xu Yihou believed Chosŏn had begun paying tribute to Japan, as this is how the intermediaries in Tsushima had portrayed the Chosŏn diplomatic mission of 1590 to Hideyoshi and the wider domestic audience.

51 Oh Hŭimun, whose diary is examined in chapter 4, carefully copied out Xu Yihou's letter. Oh Hŭimun 吳希文, "Swaemi rok" 鎖尾錄 (Record of a Refugee), 甲午 (1594) 附錄, Jangseogak Royal Archives, <http://yoksa.aks.ac.kr>.

The information in his report was not only distributed widely at the time, but was also incorporated into later accounts of the East Asian War. The text thus had a legacy not just as a single, cohesive text, but also woven into the fabric of other narratives of the war. The fact that later authors continued to draw on Xu's report reflects the importance of his eye-witness insights amid a general dearth of detailed and accurate information on the Japanese in both Ming China and Chosŏn. The scarcity of good information amplified the importance and subsequent influence of the few sources available, amongst which Xu Yihou's report stood out for its detail.

1.4.1 RE-USE OF XU'S REPORT

Listed below are subsequent texts which drew on parts of Xu Yihou's report. As these have been identified by matching similar textual phrases, the resulting picture is a conservative estimate of the report's influence because it does not take account of less direct influence (e.g., paraphrased citation, or simply ideas). In addition, the list

A somewhat rougher copy was also made by Chosŏn officer Yi T'akyŏng. Yi T'ak'yŏng 李擢英, "Chŏngmannok" 征蠻錄 (Record of Campaigning against the Barbarians), reg. treasure no. 880, Hanguk kukhak chinhŭng wŏn 韓國國學振興院 (Advanced Center for Korean Studies), Andong.

of texts identified here is probably far from exhaustive; texts still extant today must represent a minority of the total writings on the East Asian War.

Of the four sources below, the first is what appears to be the most complete version of the report, which provides a point of reference for the other redacted and partial versions.

Quan Zhe bing zhi 全浙兵制⁵² (QZBZ)

As introduction to the report, Xu's personal circumstances are described as well as how the report came to reach local Fujian authorities. At the end, a poem written by Xu for Zhu Junwang is also included. Phrases used by Xu in opening and closing his letter remain in the text, suggesting that it has not been truncated. As there is not another version of comparable length it is not possible to make a judgement on whether any sections of the body of the letter were omitted or abbreviated.

52 Hou Jigao, *Quan Zhe bing zhi*, 子 31:178–85.

Liang chao ping rang lu 兩朝平攘錄⁵³ (LCPR)

Liang chao ping rang lu (Quelling Unrest in Two Reigns) is a privately-produced history of the military campaigns fought in the Longqing 隆慶 (1567-1572) and Wanli (1573-1620) reign periods. The version used here is a facsimile of a 1606 block-print edition, which is the earliest known printing.⁵⁴

In the *Liang chao ping rang lu* the content from Xu's report appears repeatedly but the source is not cited. Some of what appears to be copied is information and is sometimes paraphrased, but the sections indicated below are instances where several consecutive sentences are almost identical to the other versions of the report.

53 Zhuge Yuansheng 諸葛元聲, "Liang chao ping rang lu" 兩朝平攘錄 (Quelling Unrest in Two Reigns), in *Renchen zhi yi shiliao huiji* 壬辰之役史料匯集, ed. Wu Fengpei 吳豐培, *Chaoxian shiliao congbian* 朝鮮史料叢編 (Beijing: Quanguo tushuguan wenxian suowei fuzhi zhongxin 全國圖書館文獻縮微複製中心, 1990).

54 The author, Zhuge Yuansheng 諸葛元聲, appears to have been from Kuaiji 會稽 (near modern-day Shaoxing 紹興, Zhejiang 浙江 province), and the publishing house which printed his book was also in Kuaiji: Banye Tang 半埜堂, owned by a man named Shang Jun 商濬.

***Chaejo pŏnbang chi* 再造藩邦志⁵⁵ (CJPB)**

Chaejo pŏnbang chi (Salvation of a Vassal State) is a private history by a Korean author of the period before, during and after the Japanese invasions (1577-1607). The earliest known edition of this work dates from 1693. The version used here is the one included in the *Taedong yasŭng* 大東野乘 (Unofficial Histories of Korea), a collection of Korean unofficial historical material dating from the latter half of the seventeenth century. Only a small excerpt of Xu's report is included, and it is explicitly cited, with the letter contents indented and separated from the main text.

***Sŏnjo Sujŏng Sillok* 宣祖修正實錄⁵⁶ (SSSL)**

Sŏnjo Sujŏng Sillok (The Revised Veritable Records of the Sŏnjo Reign – official court records produced several years after the war) quotes several excerpts from Xu's writing and places the report in its pre-war context. A footnote evaluates the accuracy of his report, concluding: 'Yihou's words on the whole correlated with subsequent

55 Sin Kyŏng 申晔, "Chaejo pŏnbang chi" 再造藩邦志 (Salvation of a Vassal State), in *Daitō yajō* (*Taedong yasŭng*) 大東野乘, vol. 7 (Keijō: Chōsen kosho kankōkai 朝鮮古書刊行會, 1910).

56 "Sŏnjo sujŏng sillok" 宣祖修正實錄 (Revised Annals of the Sŏnjo Reign), National Institute of Korean History, <http://sillok.history.go.kr>.

events, only when he spoke of our country's situation was he extremely libellous.⁵⁷

COMPARISON OF TEXTS

Table 1 shows which recurring fragments of text appear in each of the sources. The alphabetic sequence used to label each textual fragment is based on the sequence in which it appears in the QZBZ's apparently complete version of the report. A single fragment is identified as such based on an extremely high degree of similarity in a sentence or phrase across more than one text, but in most cases there is textual variation between versions. The actual textual fragments are placed alongside each other for comparison in Table 2, in the appendix to this chapter (section 1.6).

57 「儀後所言 大抵後皆符合 惟說我國情形甚誣」 *Ibid.*, 辛卯(1591) 5.1.

Table 1: Sequence in citations of Xu Yihou's report

Textual fragment	Sequence of appearance			
	QZBZ	SSSL	CJPB	LCPR
A	1	1	1	–
B	2	2	2	–
C	3	4	4	–
D	4	6	6	1*
E	5	–	–	2
F	6	9*	--	–
G	7	3	3	–
H	8	5	5	3
I	9	10	–	–
J	10	8*	8*	4
K	11	7	7	5

Key: – Fragment does not appear in this source.
 * Version of given fragment is significantly shorter than others.

The comparison in Table 1 is meant to be illustrative only, as it cannot fully represent the textual differences.⁵⁸ To give a sense of the total length of copied excerpts, the source with the longest quoted section, SSSL, only includes perhaps a tenth of the full report included in QZBZ. The table shows how the two Chosŏn sources, SSSL and CJPB, follow exactly the same sequence, though this differs

58 For a better representation of textual variance, Table 1 should be consulted alongside Table 2 (on page 88).

from what appears to be Xu's original composition. In contrast, while LCPR is less extensive in its use of the report, it was clearly based on a version of the text similar in basic structure to that seen in QZBZ.

It would be tangential to provide a full analysis of the textual variations between different versions, but some observations can be made that throw light on the circulation of the report's information. For example, although SSSL and CJPB include almost the same section of text, and despite CJPB probably being produced later than SSSL, CJPB provides specific days of the months when dates are mentioned whereas SSSL does not. Moreover, these dates are consistent with those seen in the other two sources. We can therefore infer that CJPB did not take SSSL as a source (access to such a court document was most likely not possible for the author in any case) but that both documents used a very similar version of Xu's report. This would suggest that an altered and reduced version of Xu's report circulated in Chosŏn, and did so probably for several decades.

It is impossible to estimate the breadth of readership that Xu's document enjoyed. From its re-use in historical documents in both China and Korea, and both at the beginning and end of the seventeenth century, however, we can see that at least in historiographical

terms its influence was broad. That the extant sources can be seen to have been copying from other sources, rather than each other, also implies an influence wider than we can see today. Xu Yihou wrote with the intention of averting an imminent disaster, but unwittingly joined the ranks of the historians of the East Asian War.

1.5 MEETING OF PERIPHERY AND CENTRE

Xu Yihou's report and subsequent communications are a vivid example of how the experience of someone far from the – in this case Chinese – political and cultural centre filtered back into that centre. Xu Yihou would in other circumstances have had no way of projecting his voice across the larger Sinophone world, but when information on Japan was required, his voice from beyond the periphery became invaluable. In several memorials during the war Ming officials pointed to Xu's report as providing vital warning and accurate intelligence.⁵⁹ Even after seven years of war, the importance of Xu's timely report was not forgotten: in a later memorial to the emperor, Zhao Shizhen (subject of chapter 3) used Xu's report as an example

59 Guan Ning, "Xu Yihou, Guo Guoan deng shiji kao," 78.

of how warnings from abroad should not be ignored.⁶⁰ He was arguing the very point that information from the frontier must inform knowledge of foreign lands and peoples. In a Chosŏn source also written at the end of the war, Xu Yihou is named as the first man to inform the Ming dynasty of the planned Japanese attack.⁶¹ In fact, Xu's was not the first report to reach the Ming court from abroad: two Chinese merchants arrived with news from Ryūkyū of Hideyoshi's intentions a few months earlier. It was initially the great thoroughness and later the proven accuracy of Xu's report that earned it the greater attention it received.⁶² Xu's more authentic report from within Japan was of great interest not only to policy-makers, but to ordinary individuals: this is demonstrated in a civilian such as Oh Hūimun (subject of chapter 4) making the effort to copy out the entire report by hand, and in the continued re-use of the report by later writers.

60 Zhao Shizhen 趙士禎, *Bei bian tuntian chechong yi* 備邊屯田車銃議 (Deliberation on Border Defense, Military Farms, and Mounted Cannon), ed. Wu Xinglan 吳省蘭, vol. 35:2, *Yi hai zhu chen* 藝海珠塵 (Taipei: Yinwen yinshuguan 藝文印書館, 1965), 1b.

61 See Guan Ning, "Xu Yihou, Guo Guoan deng shiji kao," 82.

62 *Ibid.*, 75, 83 fn. 4. The report brought back from the initial Ming spy missions of 1593 returned little significant information that had not already been covered by Xu in his 1591 report. Chen Zhigang, "Mingchao zai Chaoxian zhi yi qianhou de junshi qingbao huodong lunxi," 243.

At the same time, Xu's experience in Japan is greatly influenced by orthodox narratives promulgated at the centre of imperial power. This is particularly evident in his subscription to the value system that prized loyalty to the imperial enterprise. Internalization of beliefs about the importance of loyalty in general, and to one's king and country specifically, caused Xu to feel the anguish that he describes, and motivated him to take risks in sending intelligence. His grouping together of the Chinese in Japan matches the labelling used by the Japanese, but his subsuming of the Japanese into the wider category of 'non-Chinese' reflects contemporary Chinese thinking.⁶³ Xu's position in Japan seems to have led to him taking a more multi-polar view of inter-state politics, but at the same time he interprets the political situation in comparison to historical Chinese examples. Therefore we see a process by which Xu took his training in mainstream Chinese political thought with him to Japan, and in his report sent back to the centre a representation of the world subtly influenced by his experience abroad. To what extent his perspective of Japan – particularly its political status – influenced those who read

63 For a discussion of contemporary categorization between Chinese and non-Chinese within the Ming empire, see Shin, *The Making of the Chinese State*, 160–65.

his writing is difficult to judge. Given his letter's wide circulation, at the very least the relatively detailed and accurate information he provided can be said to have added depth to contemporary Chinese and Korean understanding of Japan and the Japanese.

1.6 APPENDIX

Table 2: Text of citations of Xu Yihou's report

Fragment	Source	Text
A	QZBZ	關白并吞列國惟關東未下去年正月初八日集眾諸侯於殿前率兵十萬征東曰重圍其城四面匝築小城以守之吾則欲渡海侵唐遂命肥前守造船越十日琉球國遣僧入貢賜金百兩囑之曰吾欲遠征大唐當以汝琉球為引導既而召曩時汪五峯之黨問之答曰大唐執五峰時吾輩三百餘人自南京地方劫掠橫下福建過一年全甲而歸唐畏日本如虎欲大唐如反掌耳關白曰以吾之智行吾之兵如大水崩沙利刀破竹何國不亡吾帝大唐矣惟恐水兵嚴密不能勾履唐地
	SSSL	關白平秀吉并吞諸國惟關東未下庚寅正月集諸將命率兵十萬征之且戒曰築城圍其四面而守之吾則欲渡海侵大明遂命肥前州太守造船越十日琉球國遣僧入貢關白賜金百兩囑之曰吾欲遠征大唐當以汝琉球為引導既而召曩時汪五峯之黨問之汪五峯者以中原人嘗導倭犯江浙者也對曰吾等曾以三百餘人自南京地劫掠橫行下福建過一年全甲而還唐畏日本如虎滅大唐如反掌也關白曰以吾之智行吾之兵如大水崩沙利刀破竹何城不摧何國不亡吾帝大唐矣但恐水兵嚴密不能踟履唐地耳
	CJPB	日本新關伯平秀吉併吞八國惟有關東未下庚寅正月初八日集諸將於前殿命率十萬征東曰重圍其城四面築城以守之吾即欲渡海侵大明遂命肥前太守造船越十日琉球遣僧入貢贈金百萬兩曰吾欲遠征大明以琉球為先導召汪五峯之黨問攻大明之策答曰明畏日本如欲取大明如反掌關伯曰以吾之智行吾之兵如大水崩沙利刀破竹何城不破何國不亡吾帝大明必矣
	LCPR	—
B	QZBZ	五月高麗國貢驢入京亦以囑琉球之言囑之賜金四百兩高麗之貢倭自去年始也七月廣東壕境粵佛狼機進我大明國天圖一幅地圖一幅
	SSSL	五月高麗貢驢亦以囑琉球之言囑之贈以百金高麗貢于倭自上年始也七月廣東壕境人進大明地圖
	CJPB	其年五月高麗貢驢亦以語琉球者語之賜金四萬兩七月廣東壕境人進大明地圖
	LCPR	—
C	QZBZ	今秋七月初一日高麗國遣官入貢為質催關白速行
	SSSL	今辛卯七月遣使入貢為質催關白速行

	CJPB	辛卯七月初一日高麗遣使入貢催關伯速行
	LCPR	-
D	QZBZ	九月初七日文書行到薩摩整兵二萬大將六員到高麗會齊取唐六十六國兵共五十餘萬關白親率五十萬共計百萬大將一百五十員戰馬五萬匹大鋤刀五萬柄斬刀十萬長槍十萬斧頭十萬破柴刀十萬長刀五十萬鳥銃三十萬三尺長刀分人人在身限來年壬辰起身關白三月初一日開船
	SSSL	命薩摩州整兵二萬大將二人渡高麗會聚六十六國兵共五十餘萬關白親率兵五十餘萬共計百萬大將一百五十員戰馬五萬匹大鋤刀五萬柄斬刀十萬長槍十萬破柴刀十萬鳥銃三十萬長刀五十萬三尺劍人人在身來年壬辰起事三月初一日開船
	CJPB	命薩摩州整兵二萬大將二人先到高麗抄發六十六州共五十餘萬關伯率親兵五十萬共計百萬大將一百五十員戰馬五萬匹大鋤刀五萬柄斬刀十萬長鎗十萬斧刀十萬斫柴刀五十萬鳥銃三十萬三尺長劍人人隨身以壬辰三月初一日關伯將起身
	LCPR	九月初七日文書行到薩摩整兵二萬大將六員到高麗取齊侵唐并起各鎮兵共五十餘萬限來年壬辰起程,自己三月初一日開船
E	QZBZ	而薩摩君尊我大明關白少知其意命薩摩君之弟武庫領兵而薩摩君相名曰幸侃亦素敬我大明意欲抽兵密逃呂宋淡水等處旁觀其成敗不意機露事乃不諧與武庫同行
	SSSL	-
	CJPB	-
	LCPR	而薩摩君尊我大明關白少知之命薩摩君之弟武庫領兵薩摩相幸侃亦素敬我大明意欲抽兵密逃呂宋淡水等處旁觀其成敗機露事不諧卒與武庫同行
F	QZBZ	進屯高麗盡殺其官長其民有不從者皆剿之伏大兵於麗之左右四畔命麗之人與我同心者假麗之官誘入重圍四面火炮為號攻而殺之山東遼東各出水兵五十萬望煙火為號以擊倭奴之後水陸互攻日夜竝殺斯時也倭不及飽食麗不及為應途分主客後無援兵不習水戰不敵火攻倭奴雖有長刀不為用弓銃不為使大將可以盡殺關白可以生擒
	SSSL	先發大兵襲據朝鮮盡殺其官長伏火兵於左右四畔俟其來重圍四面攻而殺之山東山西各出兵以擊其後水陸互攻日夜竝殺則關白可以生擒矣
	CJPB	-
	LCPR	-
G	QZBZ	去年命列國築城於肥前一岐對馬三處以為館驛命對馬太守扮作商人渡高麗以觀地形十二月二十日回報麗國退兵二十里之程以俟關白
	SSSL	關白命列國築城於肥前一岐對馬三處以為館驛又命對馬太守扮作(七司)(商)人渡海觀高麗相地勢還報十月麗王退兵二十日之程以竣關白

	CJPB	關伯命列國築城於肥前一岐對馬三處以爲館譯又命對馬太守扮作商賈渡高麗相地還報十月二十日麗王退二十日之程以俟關伯令
	LCPR	-
H	QZBZ	十一月十八日文書遍行列國各辦三年之糧先征高麗盡移日本之民於麗地耕種以爲敵唐之基若得大唐一縣是吾日本之名得矣唐之天下在吾袖內也
	SSSL	十一月文書遍行列國欲於來年春渡高麗盡移日本之民於其地耕種以爲敵大明之基
	CJPB	十一月十八日文書遍行列國欲於壬辰春渡高麗盡移日本之民於其地耕種以爲敵大明之基
	LCPR	十一月十八日文書遍行列國各辦三年之糧先征高麗盡移日本之民於麗地耕種以爲敵唐之基若得大唐一縣是吾日本之名得矣唐之天下在吾袖內也
I	QZBZ	關白貪淫暴虐過於桀紂詭謀百出莫測 【...】 數國者皆生疑變曰此舉非征大唐乃襲我等之後滅吾族耳密議謀未果反也倘謀反之事諧則關白入寇之計不成矣
	SSSL	秀吉貪淫暴虐浮於桀紂詭謀百出莫測其由數國密議謀叛儻謀反之事諧則關白入寇之計不成矣
	CJPB	-
	LCPR	-
J	QZBZ	又合列國之兵至高麗岸則破釜焚舟日取麗國暮夜築城不許掠人取財凡築城及征戰之人不許少停一刻拾取一芥縱有黃金不許視之臨陣不許一人回頭遇山則山遇水則水遇陷穿則落陷穿不許開口停足進前死者留其後退後者不論土侯將軍斬首示衆盡斥其族法令之嚴有如此
	SSSL	又令曰列國之兵到麗岸焚舟破釜及征戰之士不許少停臨陣不許一芥拾取不許一人回頭遇山則山遇水則水遇陷穿則陷穿不許開口停足進戰死者留其後退走者不論王侯將相斬首示衆盡赤其族法令之嚴如此
	CJPB	又令曰列國兵到麗岸焚舟破釜凡築城及征戰之士不許小停臨陣不許一芥拾取不許一人回頭遇山則山遇水則水遇陷穿則陷穿不許開口停足進戰死者留其後退走者不論王侯將相斬首示衆盡赤其族法令之嚴如此也
	LCPR	又令列國兵至高麗岸則破釜焚舟不許掠人取財日取高麗暮夜築城不許小停一刻拾取一芥臨陣不許一人回頭遇山則山遇水則水遇穿則落陷穿不許開口停足進前死者留其後退後者不論王侯將軍斬首族滅
K	QZBZ	十二月強占豐後王之妻為妾下令西海道九國爲先鋒南海道六國山陽道八國應之罄國而行父子兄弟不許一人留家
	SSSL	以海西九國爲先鋒以南海道六國山陽道八國應之傾國而行父子兄弟不許一人留家

	CJPB	以西海道九國為先鋒南海道六國山陽道八國應之傾國而行父子兄弟不許一人留家
	LCPR	十二月又下令西海道九國為先鋒南海道六國山陽道八國應之罄國而行父子兄弟不許一人留家

Chapter 2 | Hwang Shin

Ambassador to Japan

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter looks at the diary of Hwang Shin 黃慎 (1562-1617), official Chosŏn ambassador (*t'ongsinsa* 通信使) to Japan in 1596, alongside the diary attributed to Deputy Ambassador Pak Hongjang 朴弘長 (1558-1598).

Both Hwang and Pak were relatively high-ranking officials in the Chosŏn court, placing both men near the political and cultural 'centre' in Chosŏn. Hwang Shin, in particular, had received a very orthodox Neo-Confucian education, under the renowned teacher Sŏng Hon 成渾 (1535-1538), who had also been prominent at court. The diaries of the two men's mission trace their journey from a familiar political and cultural space to the frontier and beyond, into an unknown land. Recording their reactions each step of the way, the diaries offer an insight into how Hwang and Pak envisioned the border between Chosŏn and Japan, how they compared the foreign things and people they encountered to familiar Chosŏn and Chinese

reference points, and what they believed it meant for someone to belong to Chosŏn or Japan. As it is far richer in content and its authorship less ambiguous, of the two diaries greatest attention is given to the study of that of Hwang Shin.

Hwang Shin's account of his time in Japan had a wide impact at the time and in the years after the war. This is partly because, then as now, his report of the final breakdown of the peace process is the most detailed account available. Tracing the later re-use of information provided by Hwang demonstrates that it is not possible simply to talk of that information's 'influence': Hwang's accounts were used by later historians and story-tellers for their own purposes, applying varying degrees of creativity. The later legacy of Hwang's reports, in China and Japan as well as Chosŏn, is a case study in how people in all three countries used available information to build narratives about the international order, often using tales of international engagement for self-aggrandizement. A tracing of how the story of the breakdown of the peace process – initially reported by Hwang Shin – was subsequently rewritten also provides a case study in the importance of identifying sources closest to the point of contact: the voice from the periphery. Previous scholarship on this period has too often failed to disentangle later secondary sources from primary

ones. Tracing the legacy of Hwang Shin's initial report provides insight into how orthodox narratives about the war came into being, and how they can differ from what appears to have actually happened.

A brief review of the historical context of the 1596 embassy is given below, followed by an explanation of the two source texts. The main part of this chapter then follows the ambassadors' journey chronologically. Authorial self-representation, the account of the breakdown of the peace process, and comparisons of Japan and Chosŏn are the main themes covered in this summary of the diaries. A final section studies the later usage of Hwang Shin's writings.

2.2 PEACE PROCESS 1593-1596

Ming court plans to expel the Japanese from Chosŏn by force in 1592 had given way to the pursuit of peace negotiations by 1593.¹

1 A number of factors contributed to the change in official Ming stance. As will be discussed in subsequent chapters, the Ming army suffered from supply shortages (particularly as the Korean campaign was not the only campaign at this time) as well as outbreaks of disease, and the decision to pursue peace remained highly controversial in the Beijing court. For an overview of evolving Ming policy, see Kenneth Swope, *A Dragon's Head and a Serpent's Tail: Ming China and the First Great East Asian War, 1592-1598* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009).

Minister of War Shi Xing 石星 (d. 1599) received information that Hideyoshi was in fact seeking enfeoffment as King of Japan and the right to send tribute missions (which represented a limited right to trade). Shi saw an opportunity to bring to a swift end the extremely costly Eastern Campaign, and arranged for his informant and self-styled Japanese expert, Shen Weijing 沈惟敬 (d. 1597), to travel to Chosŏn to begin negotiations with the Japanese in 1593.

Konishi Yukinaga 小西行長 (1555-1600), the commander who had led the Japanese advance, also began working for a negotiated end to the conflict not long after arriving in Chosŏn.² As for Hideyoshi, though he had been detailing plans of moving the Japanese emperor to China just a few months before, the reality of the battle-

2 According to Hwang Shin, the turning point for Yukinaga was when he experienced the power of Ming heavy artillery at the siege of P'yŏngyang. ("Sŏnjo sillok" 宣祖實錄 (Annals of the Sŏnjo Reign), 1596.12.21, National Institute of Korean History, <http://sillok.history.go.kr>.) The Japanese did not have heavy artillery, only arquebuses. Kenneth Swope's research has highlighted how this disparity in military technology was a decisive factor in the conflict. (Swope, *A Dragon's Head and a Serpent's Tail*.) Speaking to Hwang Shin, Yukinaga himself claimed he had tried to pursue peace from when he first landed in Chosŏn. While this may well have been a lie, it is true that he had a vested interest in peace, as he and his family were involved in overseas trade. (Hwang Shin 黃慎, "Ilbon wanghaiwan ilgi" 日本往還日記 (To Japan and Back Again: A Diary), 27a – b (12.8), Kyōto University Kawai Archive, Kyōto.)

field also seems to have forced him to abandon his grand ambition.³ At a meeting in Nagoya, Hideyoshi's representatives relayed his proposed terms for peace, which show him seeking to establish amicable neighbourly relations with the Ming dynasty, and a suzerain-vassal relationship with Chosŏn.⁴ An end to the war seemed to be within reach, but there were several key points on which the leaders of the three states were unlikely to agree. Knowing this, the chief negotiators, Shen Weijing and his Japanese counterpart Yukinaga, filtered what they reported of the other side's demands. They were seeking to push the peace to a conclusion, with each side accepting increasingly more compromises *fait accompli* as the process progressed.

2.3 TWO AMBASSADORS SET SAIL

The Chosŏn court appointed Hwang Shin as Chief Ambassador (正使) and Pak Hongjang as Deputy Ambassador (副使). They

3 Takeda Mariko 武田万里子, "Toyotomi Hideyoshi no Ajia chiri ninshiki" 豊臣秀吉のアジア地理認識 (Toyotomi Hideyoshi's Geographical Conception of Asia), *Kaiji-shi kenkyū* 海事史研究 67 (2010).

4 Atobe Makoto 跡部信, "Toyotomi seiken ki no taigai kankei to chitsujokan" 豊臣政権期の対外関係と秩序観 (Foreign Relations and View of the World Order during the Toyotomi Government Period) no. 585 (2011): esp. 77–78.

led a company of civilian and military officials, including Chinese and Japanese interpreters, servants, and slaves, numbering about three hundred in all. The company set sail from Pusan at the beginning of the eighth month of 1596, and made their way to the port of Sakai, near Osaka and the capital Kyoto, where Hideyoshi was waiting. The two surviving diaries from the journey begin shortly before they set sail and end when they finally left the Japanese camp at Pusan to return to the Chosŏn court.

2.3.1 DIARY OF HWANG SHIN

Hwang Shin was famed for his scholarly talents: he was a *changwŏn* 狀元, meaning he had come first in the highest level civil service examinations (in 1588). In 1591 his career suffered a temporary setback when he was demoted after becoming embroiled in court politics, but he returned to office in 1592, employed to accompany the overall commander of Ming forces, Song Yingchang 宋應昌 (1536-1606).⁵ Figure 3 shows a portrait of Hwang Shin, and Figure 4,

5 After the embassy Hwang Shin went on to aid in the reconstruction of the southern areas, and was commended in his work. For part of the war he accompanied the prince Kwanghaegun 光海君 (1574-1641), and this helped him gain favour during Kwanghaegun's subsequent reign. Yi Taejin 이태진, "황신(黃愼)," *Hanguk minjok munhwa dae baekgwǎ sajŏn* 한국민족문화대백과사

a proclamation appointing Hwang Shin to office (in Kosan 高山, rank 4b) early in 1591.⁶

전 (Encyclopedia of Korean National Culture) (The Academy of Korean Studies, August 2015), <http://encykorea.aks.ac.kr/>.

- 6 Figure 3 and Figure 4 are the property of the Academy of Korean Studies. “Hanguk hyangt’o munhwa daejön” 한국향토문화전자대전, Database, *Hanguk-hak chungang yǒnguwǒn* 한국학중앙연구원 (Academy of Korean Studies), accessed 2015, <http://www.grandculture.net/>.



Figure 3: Portrait of Hwang Shin

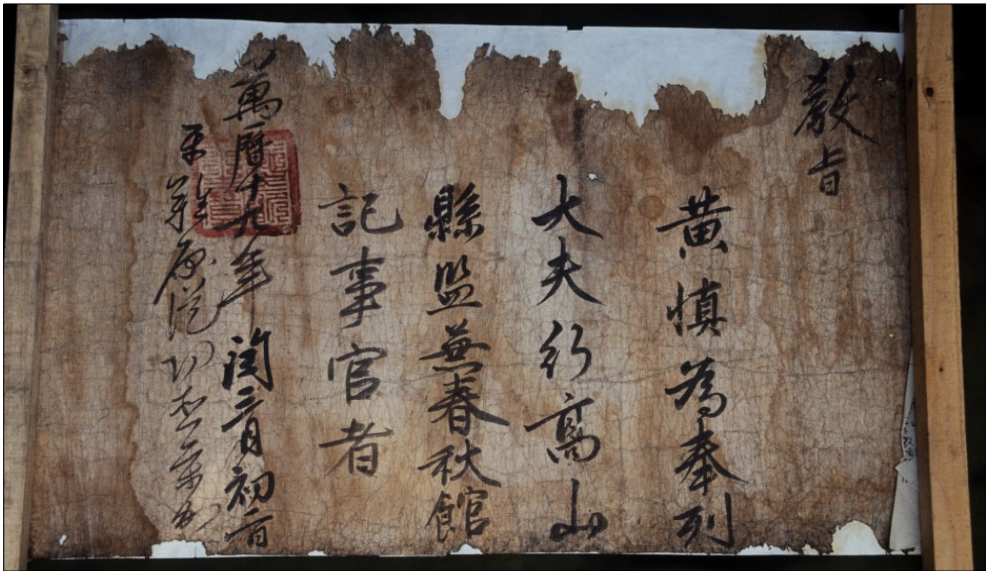


Figure 4: Proclamation appointing Hwang Shin to office, 1591

Before being made ambassador in 1596 Hwang had also been assigned to accompany Shen Weijing, so would have been familiar with him. We learn from Oh Hŭimun (see chapter 4), that after Shen sailed to Japan, Hwang made use of leave from duty to visit his mother, who lived near Oh. Oh records this in his diary as it transpires that Hwang was a long-standing acquaintance of his, and he spent the night at Oh's house on his way. Oh expresses great concern as to whether Hwang will return unharmed from the den of the vicious and fickle Japanese.⁷

The diary that describes Hwang's experiences on his voyage is known as *Ilbon Wanghwan ilgi* 日本往還日記 (Diary of a Journey to Japan and Back).

EXTANT COPIES

There are two known surviving copies of *Ilbon wanghwan ilgi*, both of which are manuscripts. One is held in the Kyujanggak archive in Seoul National University, and the other in the Kawai

7 Oh continues to keep a track of Hwang, noting his return from Japan and a later promotion. He at one point even borrows part of a wedding dress for his daughter from Hwang's household. Oh Hŭimun 吳希文, "Swaemi rok" 鎖尾錄 (Record of a Refugee), 丙申(1595) 12.4, 12.22, 庚子(1600) 3.21, Jangseogak Royal Archives, <http://yoksa.aks.ac.kr>. See also discussion of Oh in chapter 4.

Archive in Kyoto University. The latter is one of the documents collected by Kawai Hirotami 河合弘民 (1874-1918), so it seems likely it entered Japan around the beginning of the twentieth century. Neither of the copies have prefaces or postscripts, or other production notes. As a result, we cannot be sure when the diary was first finalized and circulated.

A close comparison of the two copies reveals that the Kawai edition may in fact be a copy of the Kyujanggak edition. The Kawai edition contains many more omissions and incorrect characters, and some of these copying errors may have been caused by the way particular characters were written in the Kyujanggak edition.⁸ This is not certain, however: it may also be that they both share a common textual ancestor.⁹

8 For example, two instances of the character 柴 being miscopied as 柴. Hwang Shin, "Ilbon wanhwan ilgi," 32b; *Ilbon wanhwan ilgi* 日本往還日記, ed. Minjok munhwa ch'uch'ŏnhoe 民族文化推薦會, (Kugyŏk) Haehaeng ch'ongjae (國譯)海行總載 (Sŏul: Minjok munhwa ch'uch'ŏnhoe 民族文化推薦會, 1974), 57a.

9 There is one instance of the Kawai copy containing text absent from the Kyujanggak version: the phrase 'the accompanying official [i.e., Pak Hongjang] rose with me' (陪臣隨我起身). As the Kyujanggak text is unnatural at this point, however, this additional text may have been a correction by the Kawai version copyist. "Ilbon wanhwan ilgi," (Kyoto University Kawai Archive), 16b; "Ilbon wanhwan ilgi," in (*Kugyŏk*) *Haehaeng ch'ongjae*, 50a.

AUTHORSHIP AND PURPOSE OF WRITING

Unlike the diary of the Deputy Ambassador, the text appears to be written by Hwang Shin himself. At the very least, it is written in the first person. An example of this is the diary entry for Hwang Shin's birthday, where the author describes his birthday using the humble word *ch'ön'gang* 賤降 (lit., lowly descent).¹⁰ Given the fame Hwang enjoyed for his literary talents, it would have been odd if he had let someone else write on his behalf.

Hwang's writing was also not an idle hobby, but had immediate political purpose. Hwang faced political attack almost as soon as he returned to court. His enemies objected to the king rewarding him, when in their eyes he had failed in his mission. One of the repeated indictments against him read as follows: 'The old villain [i.e. Hideyoshi] is fierce and wily, and repeatedly spoke rashly. Shin did not manage to speak once to reprimand him, only listening to his threats and returning cowed.'¹¹ These attacks were surely a continuation of the kind of factional fighting that had cost Hwang his official

10 Hwang Shin, "Ilbon wanhwan ilgi," 20a (9.15). This and all subsequent references to *Ilbon wanhwan ilgi* are to the Kawai Archive manuscript.

11 「老賊兇狡 前後率辭不一而足 慎曾不能出一言而詰之 唯聽恐脅之言 俛首以歸」 Multiple complaints were made through the Court of Remonstrations: "Sŏnjo sillok," 1596.12.26–27.

position just a few years earlier, but the threat to his promising career was real.¹²

In the diary, Hwang is not able to avoid the fact that he did not have a single chance to speak or write to Hideyoshi, or in fact play any active role in the unfolding events. Instead, the diarist employs set-piece dialogues, speeches, and poetics to counter possible attacks and present Hwang in a most attractive light. The Chief Ambassador of *Ilbon wanghwan ilgi* is fearless in the face of danger, dutiful to the point of a fault, and respected as courageous even by his enemies. Apart from recording the sequence of events and the culture and society of Japan, this positive self-portrayal is undoubtedly the primary function of the diary. Any reading of the text that fails to take this into account risks mistaking the literary for the historical. At the same time, while critical reading is necessary, Hwang's diary remains probably the most valuable single historical source for the breakdown of the 1596 peace negotiations.

12 Hwang had fallen foul of those in positions of power a few years earlier. Oh Hūimun, "Swaemi rok," 丙申(1596) 6.4.

2.3.2 DIARY OF PAK HONGJANG

As a second diary of the same journey, *Tong sa rok* 東槎錄 (Record of an Eastern Voyage), offers a rare chance to compare and contrast with the account of events given in *Ilbon wanghwan ilgi*.¹³

Tong sa rok ostensibly records the journey of Pak Hongjang, but other than whom he met and where he slept, it gives no personal information about the Deputy Ambassador.¹⁴ It therefore diverges considerably from the self-promoting *Ilbon wanghwan ilgi* in its purpose of composition.

There is only one known extant copy of *Tong sa rok*, which is included with works connected to Pak, collected under the title *Kwangam nok* 觀感錄, held in the Nagoya Castle Museum (by the site of the original castle from where Hideyoshi launched the 1592 invasion). This manuscript edition was obtained by the Museum as late as the 1990s, and its ownership history before that time is not

13 Pak Hongjang 朴弘長, “*Tong sa rok*” 東槎錄 (Record of an Eastern Voyage), Nagoya Castle Museum Library, Nagoya, Saga.

14 Pak was a military official, whose charge in 1596 was the Taegu 大丘 area. He was chosen to accompany the civil official Hwang Shin upon the suggestion of the Prime Minister Yu Sŏngnyong 柳成龍 (1542-1607). Cho Wŏllae 조원래, “Pak Hongjang” 박홍장(朴弘長), *Hanguk minjok munhwa dae baekgwŏ sajŏn* 한국민족문화대백과사전 (Encyclopedia of Korean National Culture) (The Academy of Korean Studies, August 2015), <http://encykorea.aks.ac.kr/>.

known.¹⁵ A likely scenario is that the diary remained with the Pak family for most of its history, then – like so many historical documents – made its way to Japan after engagement between the two countries intensified in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Supporting this idea are extensive additions and corrections made to the main body of *Kwangam nok*, which refer to Pak Hongjang as *sŏnjo* 先祖 (ancestor).¹⁶ These are made in different hands, suggesting they might have been added over a period of time.

Comments also extend to the diary itself. As they perfectly highlight the characteristics of the diary and its contrast with Hwang Shin’s diary, it is worth quoting them here:

右東槎錄一帙 迺奉使曾叔祖航海時日記也 今不知其出於誰手 而詳其語勢 必奉使公管下掌史者所錄也 其陰陽風雨道里次舍 記之非不詳 而奉使公諮諏詢謀之間 言動容色之際 有足以鎮懾同舟疊讐異類者 反不暇及焉 甚可惜也

The piece to the right, *Tong sa rok*, is the diary of my great uncle, the envoy, from the time he went to sea. Now it is not known who the author is, but judging from the authorial voice, it must have been the clerk in charge of records under His Excellency’s command.

As far as clear and clouded skies, wind and rain, distances and accommodation are concerned, they are recorded in no

15 There is only one personal seal on the final page, of an unknown man named Hashimoto Shirō 橋本四郎, probably a previous owner.

16 For example: Pak Hongjang, “*Tong sa rok*,” 附錄遺事 7a.

little detail. But that it fails to record His Excellency's words and expressions as he was negotiating and planning, and how he awed those in the same boat and of a different race, is most lamentable.¹⁷

Judging by the generational difference, this commentator was probably writing in the seventeenth century. He takes the third-person narration to indicate that the diary was not written by Pak, but by a subordinate.

He goes on to observe the feature that most distinguishes *Tong sa rok* from *Ilbon wanghwan ilgi*: it records detail, but has less 'human interest.' *Tong sa rok* is often more detailed in describing the environment. For example, both accounts describe the island of Tsushima 對馬 as in a very poor state, but *Tong sa rok* goes into more depth, explaining the economic reasons behind this, and further describing the administrative districts, lifestyles of the inhabitants, and so on.¹⁸ Yet the ambassadors Hwang and Pak are only mentioned in terms of where they stayed or who they met; there are no dialogues and no charisma. In this way, *Tong sa rok* acts as the perfect foil for Hwang's *Ilbon wanghwan ilgi*. For example, *Tong sa rok*'s more straightforward style reveals the extent to which Hwang

17 Ibid., 14a.

18 Ibid., 3b (8.12).

was editing for the purposes of 'image management' when Hwang's rigid 'going to pay respect' to a Chinese official is revealed in *Tong sa rok* to have been an evening spent drinking and making merry together (all merry-making is self-censored from Hwang's account).¹⁹ It is also interesting that the type of personality of which Pak's descendant laments the absence, is precisely that embellished in Hwang Shin's diary: words and actions that awe friends and foes alike.

2.4 JOURNEY TO JAPAN

Hwang Shin had come first in the highest civil service examination, and was thus renowned for his literary talents in a country where this was prized above all other skills.²⁰ Not long after the two ambassadors and their company put to sea, there came an opportunity for Hwang to demonstrate his extraordinary abilities.

In waters between Tsushima and Ikinoshima 壹之島, the ships were caught in a violent storm. According to *Ilbon wanghwan ilgi*, under the force of the wind the ropes on the sails were ready to break

19 Hwang Shin, "Ilbon wanghwan ilgi," 4a (8.15); Pak Hongjang, "Tong sa rok," 4a (8.15).

20 Yi Taejin, "황신(黃愼)."

and the ship leaned almost to the point of capsizing. The ship leapt and fell like a galloping horse. All aboard were terrified. All, that is, except the Chief Ambassador. In the midst of spray falling on the deck 'like rain,' Hwang Shin composed a text as an oath to the sea: a prayer to the spirit of the sea in a style of Classical Chinese that makes use of parallel couplets. Soon after he had finished it and tossed it into the sea the wind is reported to have subsided.

The text of the oath read as follows:

朝鮮通信使某 敢[昭]²¹告於東海之神 伏以豺虎叢中 既持二年²²之節 蛟龍窟上 又乘八月之槎 捐驅[軀]是甘 稽首自誓 伏念某遭時板盪 許國驅馳 雖險阻艱難 備嘗之矣 然州里蠻貊 可行乎哉 賴有忠赤之不渝 可質上蒼而無媿 四千里行役 何敢一毫憚勞 三十年工夫 正宜今日得力 固王室之靡(監)[鹽]²³ 抑臣職之當然 直掛風帆 遙指日域 苟可安社利國 死且不辭 如使辱命失身 生亦何益 伏願靈聖俯鑒忱誠 幸斯言之不誣 天有知也 倘一念之或怠 神其殛之 謹告

I, Ambassador of Chosŏn, dare to make a declaration to the Spirit of the Eastern Sea:

In the dhole and tiger-filled thickets, I served two years; above the sea dragon's lair I now sail in the eighth month's raft. That I am willing to give my life in duty, I bow and swear. For I have been born into times of turmoil, and as

21 昭: Character missing in Kawai Archive manuscript, present in Kyujanggak manuscript.

22 年: Both manuscripts use the variant form 季.

23 監: Seemingly a copying error; Kyujanggak manuscript uses a simplified version of 鹽.

one sworn to the service of the state, trials and tribulations, many have I tasted. Yet be it the provinces or the land of the barbarians, only the loyal and sincere are fit to serve. Sure in my unfailing loyalty, I can swear it against the heavens without shame. While carrying out my mission of over four thousand *ri*, I dare not wince from hardship for one moment. After thirty years of cultivation, the time is ripe for my flourishing. What are the unsettled affairs of the king, are also the rightful duty of his servant.

Spreading the sails I make for the distant Land of the Sun. If it would secure the royal house and benefit the country, then I will refuse not even death; if I were to disgrace the mission entrusted me and fall into dishonour, then of what good would be life?

May his Divine Holiness look down and bear witness to my sincerity; and may these words be not false. Heaven is all knowing; should I be lax in but one thought, let the spirits strike me down. All this is I declare in reverence.²⁴

It is perhaps not surprising that while relating this dramatic event the diary fails to mention that Hwang suffered badly from sea sickness.²⁵ Hwang's grand pronouncement, sworn to Heaven and

24 Hwang Shin, "Ilbon wanghwan ilgi," 5a – 6a (8.25). 'Eighth month's raft' (八月槎): this simultaneously refers to the actual month they sailed and the legendary raft of the same name, which went to the stars. 'Four thousand *ri*' (四千里): likely a reference to serving the length of the country and beyond, as Chosŏn was considered to stretch for three thousand *ri*. 'The provinces or the land of the barbarians': this sentence is a reference to *Lunyu* 論語, and the translation attempts to explain the context of the passage. Divine Holiness (靈聖): Hwang is addressing the highest of the gods in the pantheon of folk religion.

25 Oh Hŭimun reveals that Hwang had always suffered from sea-sickness in his entry made before the embassy set sail. (Oh Hŭimun, "Swaemi rok," 丙申 (1596) 6.4.) The entry in *Ilbon wanghwan ilgi* for the first part of the voyage also

proved authentic by the weather's response, is a statement of both Hwang's courage and sense of duty. Within the diary, it sets the scene for Hwang's arrival in Japan; beyond the diary, it sends a message to those that would call him a coward. Interestingly, that the spirits were moved by the protagonist's sincerity and righteousness when at sea is a theme that also appears in the contemporary Chinese account of the East Asian War *Dong zheng ji* 東征記 (Record of an Eastern Campaign).²⁶ Hwang's poetic oath also demonstrates the tendency of writers who use florid language and classical allusions to speak in traditional terms of beasts and barbarians: such polemic language is absent from the main body of the diary.

The difference in style between *Ilbon wanghwan ilgi* and *Tong sa rok* is vividly demonstrated by the matter-of-fact entry of the latter

describes in detail how one is so violently sick that any medicines promised to be of use are no help at all, as one is in no condition to swallow them – but all this is related in terms of the experience of those on board and general advice, with no mention of the Chief Ambassador himself suffering particularly.

26 In *Dong zheng ji* 東征記 (Record of an Eastern Campaign) the righteousness of Chinese naval forces fighting the Japanese brings forth Lord Guan and a sea of spirit soldiers to obliterate the Japanese. Xu Xizhen 徐希震, "Dong zheng ji" 東征記 (Record of the Eastern Expedition), KJ 5249, 32a – 32b, Kyujanggak, Seoul National University. *Dong zheng ji* and this scene specifically are discussed in chapter 3.

for the same day's voyage: 'Set sail at dawn. Arrived at Ikinoshima at dusk.'²⁷

Hwang's composition was not just a literary flourish contained within the diary: two independent sources show that the text of 'Oath to the Sea,' along with the dramatic details of its composition, spread around the country that year.²⁸ Later histories also continued to quote it.

2.5 OSAKA AND HIDEYOSHI'S WRATH

Despite sailing all the way to the adjacent port of Sakai, the Chosŏn ambassadors never actually reached Osaka, and never managed to meet the infamous Hideyoshi, who had ensconced himself there. On the 18th day of the intercalary eighth month they sailed into the harbour at Sakai (which today is encompassed in the

27 Pak Hongjang, "Tong sa rok," 5a (8.25).

28 The Amended Annals of King Sŏnjo's reign (*Sŏnjo sujong sillok* 宣祖修正實錄), which were written some time after the war, include the incident and the text, and record that 'the people of the country passed on and recited' the text. The popularity of the text could be considered a later exaggeration (from a source which highly praised Hwang Shin), but other evidence suggests it was indeed widely celebrated. A copy of the text can also be found scribbled on the back page of the 1596 volume of Oh Hŭimun's, and Oh notes the story of nearly avoided danger that came with the ode. (Oh Hŭimun, "Swaemi rok," 丙申 (1596) 附錄.) The text also became the centre piece in the popular tale *Imjin rok*, discussed in the section 'Hwang's diary and legend' below.

Osaka area). It was a sunny day, and a fanfare played as the two Ming ambassadors and a Japanese delegation led by Yukinaga came to meet the ships. The pomp and ceremony was not for the Chosŏn ambassadors, but for the Ming Imperial edict which they had been escorting.²⁹

Hwang Shin describes in detail how, after he and Pak Hong-jang had performed the appropriate ritual bowing to the two Ming ambassadors at Yang Fangheng's accommodation, they insisted on following Shen Weijing to his accommodation to again bow to him there, despite Shen saying this was unnecessary. This show of conscientious propriety is typical of Hwang's account, and sits in contrast with Pak's diary, which omits the later visit to Shen's accommodation – leaving us to doubt whether it ever took place.³⁰ The author of *Tong sa rok* is more interested in describing his environment; he was clearly impressed by what he saw on arriving in Sakai:

高閣板屋連簷十餘里 幾至萬家 曾因地震 間有頽壞未
修者 壓死人畜無算云矣 市中物色照耀奪目 不知其幾
千萬種也

29 Hwang Shin, "Ilbon wanghwan ilgi," 8b (閏 8.18).

30 Such differences in the diaries continue throughout, beyond what is mentioned here.

Tall buildings and planked houses extend wall-to-wall for more than ten *ri* [2.5 miles], totalling almost ten thousand. Due to the previous earthquake, some among them were damaged and have not been repaired. Apparently countless people and animals died. In the market the goods shine and glitter, catching the eye; it cannot be known how many millions of different kinds there are.³¹

The diarist here does not hide his wonder at the spectacle of flourishing trade they encounter on arrival in Japan.

It was due to the devastating earthquake shortly beforehand that Fushimi 伏見 Castle, where Hideyoshi had planned to receive the ambassadors, could no longer be used. Nevertheless, soon after their arrival they heard that Hideyoshi felt this need not delay his meeting with them:

行長等 回自京城來報曰 關白聞信使之來 極甚喜悅
不待別營館宇 當於九月初二會見天使及信使 云云

Yukinaga and the others returned from the capital [Kyoto] and reported: 'The Kampaku [Hideyoshi] is ecstatic to hear that the ambassadors have arrived. He will not wait for another hall to be built, and will meet with the Celestial Ambassadors and the [Chosŏn] ambassadors on the 2nd day of the ninth month.'³²

While we may suppose that some of Hideyoshi's exuberance was the exaggeration of the messengers, the proposed meeting is indeed

31 Pak Hongjang, "Tong sa rok," 9a (閏 8.19).

32 Ibid., 9a (閏 8.23).

arranged for only a week later, and news came of Hideyoshi having returned to Osaka within just a few days.³³ Yet, according to *Ilbon wanhwan ilgi*, the very next day after he arrived in Osaka (29th), his attitude towards Chosŏn and its officials was being reported in very different terms:

平調信招朴大根謂曰 即刻行長正成自關伯處回還言關伯曰 當初我欲通中國而朝鮮過不為通情 及致動兵之後沈遊擊欲調戢兩國 而朝鮮上本 極陳其不可 且以沈遊擊為與日本同心 每每惡之 李天使之出去 亦回朝鮮之人恐動 冊使既渡海 而朝鮮不肯差官跟來 今始緩緩來到 且不遣王子來 事事輕我甚矣 今不可許見來使 我當先見天使 後姑留朝鮮使臣 稟帖兵部 審其來遲之故 然後方為許見云

[Yanagawa] Shigenobu summoned Pak Taegŭn [the interpreter] and told him: ‘just now Yukinaga, [Terazawa Hiro-taka], and the others returned from Hideyoshi’s quarters saying that the Kampaku had said:

“In the beginning I wanted passage to China and Chosŏn did not give me passage. Then after it had come to armed conflict, Shen [Weijing] wanted to reconcile the two countries and Chosŏn sent up a memorial arguing in the strongest terms that it should not be done. Chosŏn was also always against Shen [Weijing] because he was working with Japan. The departure of Celestial Ambassador Li also goes back to Chosŏn’s scaremongering. Once the enfeoffment envoys had crossed the sea, Chosŏn was unwilling to send officials with them, and have only now arrived – having taken their time. Furthermore they did not send a prince. In every matter they have slighted me severely. I cannot allow an audience

33 Ibid., 9a (閏 8.28).

to the envoys who have come. I will first meet with the Celestial Ambassadors, and keep the Chosŏn ambassadors here. I will only grant them an audience after writing to the Ministry of War and investigating their reasons for being late.”³⁴

It is not clear whether Hideyoshi changed his mind over the intervening days, or whether the Chosŏn ambassadors’ hosts had simply withheld news of Hideyoshi’s displeasure until this point.³⁵ All that we can be sure of, is that Hideyoshi’s anger towards Chosŏn only grew.

The background to this cool reception for the Chosŏn ambassadors was that Hideyoshi had long believed Chosŏn to be a vassal of Japan.³⁶ The Sō 宗 house of Tsushima and others had conspired to maintain a pretence of Chosŏn submission, in an attempt to avoid disruption of the trade with Chosŏn upon which Tsushima’s

34 Hwang Shin, “Ilbon wanghaiwan ilgi,” 10a – b (閏 8.29). ‘Celestial Ambassador Li’ refers to Li Zongcheng 李宗城 (dates unknown), the originally appointed envoy who suddenly abandoned his mission in unclear circumstances.

35 Shigenobu presented it as a sudden, unexpected change that threatened to derail their plans at the last moment. Ibid., 10a – b (閏 8.29).

36 Citing the missionary Luis Frois’ observations, Atobe argues that Hideyoshi not only expected that Chosŏn should be, but actually thought that Chosŏn was already a vassal of both the Ming and Japan. (Atobe Makoto, “Toyotomi seiken ki no taigai kankei to chitsujokan,” 75–78.) Sajima also provides a convincing analysis pointing to Hideyoshi treating Chosŏn as a vassal. (Sajima Akiko 佐島顯子, “Hideyoshi’s View of Chosŏn Korea and Japan-Ming Negotiations,” in *The East Asian War: International Relations, Violence, and Memory*, ed. James Bryant Lewis (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2015).)

economy depended. That this was a commonly held opinion in Japan is reflected by Xu Yihou reporting from Satsuma in 1591 that the diplomatic mission from Chosŏn the previous year had been to pay tribute, i.e. submitting to Hideyoshi as vassal.³⁷ From 1592, Chosŏn had of course attempted to resist the Japanese army as it headed for China, making it a rebellious vassal in Hideyoshi's eyes. Hideyoshi was a man who had risen to dominance out of the Japanese civil war by effectively utilizing threat and reward to win vows of allegiance from his would-be rivals; disobedience from vassals was not something he could afford to countenance, nor was he so inclined.³⁸ Therefore, while Hideyoshi appears to have welcomed recognition from the Ming emperor as something which bolstered his prestige, Chosŏn's continued 'insubordination' incensed him.

Yanagawa Shigenobu 柳川調信 (d. 1605), who accompanied the Chosŏn embassy and delivered the message cited above, belonged to the Tsushima house of Sō. It was in his and the negotiat-

37 See discussion in chapter 1

38 On Hideyoshi's tactics in relation to his treatment of his vassals and by extension Chosŏn, see: Sajima Akiko, "Hideyoshi's View of Chosŏn Korea and Japan-Ming Negotiations"; Mary Elizabeth Berry, *Hideyoshi* (Cambridge, Mass.; London: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1982).

Hideyoshi's desire for respect and recognition also appears to have been one of the motivations for the initial invasion.

ors' (led by Konishi Yukinaga) interests, to placate Hideyoshi regarding Chosŏn and complete the peace settlement. They had evidently believed it was possible to satisfy him, but Hideyoshi seems to have become more and more angry at Chosŏn's apparently disrespectful behaviour. This caused a problem, as from the Ming-Chosŏn standpoint, securing the withdrawal of Japanese troops from Chosŏn had originally been both the goal and prerequisite of Hideyoshi's investiture; as Shigenobu put it, 'the Celestial Dynasty investing the Kampaku is not for the Kampaku's sake, but solely to save Chosŏn.'³⁹ While angry with Chosŏn, Hideyoshi was unlikely to agree to withdraw and 'let them off' without punishment, yet Ming ambassadors Yang and Shen could not afford to leave without securing a withdrawal.

The final explosion of this tense situation is recorded in Hwang's diary as coming several days after Hideyoshi officially received enfeoffment from the Ming ambassadors.⁴⁰ Only after much worrying and urging on the parts of Shigenobu, Yukinaga et al., and the Chosŏn ambassadors, did Shen Weijing finally broach withdrawal from Chosŏn with Hideyoshi. Fearing a face to face

39 Hwang Shin, "Ilbon wanghwan ilgi," 12b (9.4).

40 Ibid., 14a (9.6).

encounter, Shen wrote a letter, which Yukinaga and others took to him in Osaka on the 6th of the ninth month.⁴¹ It was Hideyoshi's fury on receiving this letter that ended official negotiations, and doomed the region to another year of bloody warfare.

Hwang and Pak received the ominous news in the middle of the night, relayed once more by Shigenobu.⁴² The words Hideyoshi is quoted as having said in his burst of fury at this time, through Hwang's reporting, came to be well known in both Chosŏn and Ming China. Hwang quotes Shigenobu as having said:

關伯大怒曰 天朝則 既已遣使冊封 我姑忍耐 而朝鮮則 無禮至此 今不可許和 我方再要廝殺 況可議撤之事乎 天使亦不須久留 明日使請上船 朝鮮使臣亦令出去可也 我當一面調兵 趁今冬往朝鮮云云 且聞已召清正來計事 清正得志 則事將不測 行長與我輩死無日矣

The Kampaku became furious, saying: 'As for the Celestial Dynasty, given that it has already sent envoys to make an enfeoffment, I tolerate it for the time being. Yet Chosŏn is as disrespectful as this! There can be no peace now. How can we discuss withdrawal just when I am in a mind to fight? The Celestial Ambassadors also need not tarry long. Have them set sail tomorrow. You can also order the Chosŏn ambassadors to leave. Meanwhile I will start mobilizing forces to go to Chosŏn this winter.'

41 Ibid.

42 Ibid. The entries in *Tong sa rok* for these critical few days have been lost, as the original diary was damaged over time (before it was copied into *Kwangam nok*). For the 6th day of the ninth month, all that is left is, 'the Kampaku said, 'Choson...'. Pak Hongjang, "Tong sa rok," 10a.

He has also apparently summoned Kiyomasa to discuss plans. If Kiyomasa has his way, then things will go badly. Yukinaga and all of us will be dead in no time.⁴³

The news that Hideyoshi would launch another invasion confirmed the worst fears of the Chosŏn ambassadors, and seems to have devastated Shigenobu and the other Japanese working for peace, with Yukinaga reportedly considering suicide upon seeing four years of tireless effort prove fruitless.⁴⁴

With Hideyoshi furiously demanding the immediate departure of both Ming and Chosŏn ambassadors, both groups had no choice but to make preparations for a swift return home. Not delivering the letter from King Sŏnjo that was entrusted to him meant Hwang was open to criticism of failing in his mission.⁴⁵ In *Ilbon wanghwan ilgi* we

43 Hwang Shin, “*Ilbon wanghwan ilgi*,” 14a – b (9.6). ‘Tolerate it for the time being’ (我姑忍之): the object of endurance has been interpreted in different ways. Later texts wishing to portray Hideyoshi as unhappy with the investiture itself interpret it as putting up with the investiture. Given that all other reports in the diary indicate Hideyoshi was happy about the Imperial Ambassadors coming, however, it seems more probable he was ‘putting up with’ the Ming, *precisely because* they sent him envoys of investiture. He was choosing to overlook the Ming’s defiance of him in Chosŏn and refusal of his other earlier requests, because he appreciated that they were giving him recognition. Trying to make the investiture itself the object of endurance is also an awkward reading of this sentence, as the investiture is provided as the *reason* for choosing to ‘endure.’

44 *Ibid.*, 15a (9.6).

45 Indeed, when the king interviewed him on his return, Hwang began by saying that he deserved death for failing his mission due to his own incompetence. The king responded to this humility kindly, saying it was not his fault. “Sŏnjo

therefore find dialogues with both Yang and Shen, where the two Chosŏn ambassadors explain their predicament and express their wish to die, only to have their position comprehensively defended by the Chinese officials. A corresponding entry in *Tong sa rok* indicates that Hwang and Pak did indeed visit the Chinese ambassadors on that day, and it may be that the conversation followed a line similar to that in *Ilbon wanghwan ilgi*, yet it seems likely such dialogues were set-pieces arranged by Hwang to justify himself.⁴⁶

2.6 RETURN FROM JAPAN

2.6.1 ATTITUDES TOWARDS KOREANS IN JAPAN

When the Chosŏn ships are due to depart on the 9th day of the ninth month, Hwang records how many of the Koreans who had been captured and taken to the islands as slaves crowd to the vessels, watching their last hope of return disappear:

先是 通信使初到界濱 我國被擄男婦 爭來謁見 如安國寺
秀家等各倭將 亦時遣所擄兒童輩來謁 每言和事若完 則
當隨使臣歸 及聞通信使將啟程 或有給行資而遣之者 稍

sillok," 1596.12.21.

46 Hwang Shin, "Ilbon wanghwan ilgi," 16a – 17a (9.8); Pak Hongjang, "Tong sa rok," 10a (9.8).

稍來到通信使所寓 以待上船之期 至是 各其主倭等 聞和事不成 當再廝殺 遂改前言 已到寓所者 亦皆被召去 唯金永川女子及男婦二十餘人 偕載卜物船 通信使上船之際 我國男婦 追送號泣者不知其幾人 一行莫不酸鼻 不為發船 仍宿船上

Earlier, when the ambassadors first arrived at Sakai harbour, men and women of our country who had been abducted all rushed to come and see them. [Ukita] Hideie and the other Wae [C. Wo J. Wa; i.e. Japanese] generals also regularly sent boys they had abducted to see the ambassadors, always saying that once the negotiations were completed, they could go back with the ambassadors. When they heard that the ambassadors were readying to depart, some gave money for the journey and sent [the boys]; gradually they came to the ambassadors' lodgings, awaiting boarding the ships.

At this point, each of the Wae masters heard that the peace process had failed, and that there would be fighting again. They then went back on their word, and all those that had come to the lodgings were recalled. Only twenty or so men and women, including the daughter of Kim Yongch'ŏn, came together on the luggage ship.

When the ambassadors were boarding the ships, countless men and women of our country followed howling and weeping. There was not a dry eye among the whole company. The ships did not depart, and [we] slept on board.⁴⁷

Tong sa rok gives only a minimalist account of the company's movements for this period, having given more detail on meetings with Koreans during the outward journey. When the party arrived at

47 Hwang Shin, "Ilbon wanhwan ilgi," 20a – b (9.9).

Nagoya, *Tong sa rok* records that they met abducted Koreans in person:

被搶男婦 懷戀首丘 自遠近來集者 千百為群 而兇徒禁
抑 幽囚不放 或有聞我聲音來哭者 慘不忍相視 兒時
見俘者 則口熟駛舌 不解我語 良可悼歎也

Men and women who had been forcibly taken, longing for home, came from near and far in their hundreds and thousands. But the villains kept them imprisoned without release. Some of them would hear my voice and come crying; it was so terrible one could not meet eyes with them. Those that had been taken captive as children were fluent in the barbarian tongue, and could not understand our language. It is truly tragic.⁴⁸

Both diarists are plainly moved by the plight of those forced into slavery in an unknown land. It is interesting to observe what the *Tong sa rok* diarist found most distressing. Perhaps because slavery was an integral part of the Chosŏn social system, it is rather the cruelty of being kept far from their homeland that is upsetting for him. His sympathy also seems to be for all the people from Chosŏn: neither diarist differentiates between those of noble and lowly birth, as would be common in a domestic context.⁴⁹ The *Tong sa rok* diarist

48 Pak Hongjang, "Tong sa rok," 5b (8.28).

49 The contemporary *yangban* diarist Oh Hŭimun, for example, evidences more concern for the fates of those of his own class, rather than commoners or slaves (see chapter 4); though he too is upset by the story of a common woman being taken to Japan with no hope of return. Oh Hŭimun, "Swaemi rok," 壬辰(1592)

evidently feels it is particularly tragic that children born in Chosŏn should not understand ‘our language,’ but grow up speaking a foreign tongue.

As a footnote to these sad scenes, a few days later one of the interpreters with the embassy is recorded as paying for the release of a slave. This was not a commoner, however, but the son of a minor official.⁵⁰ Later, when they returned and Hwang Shin was called for an interview with King Sŏnjo, the king specifically asked about ‘our people’ (我民) in Japan, to which Hwang responded disparagingly that they all speak Japanese and have forgotten Chosŏn.⁵¹ This obvious exaggeration (it had been only four years since the start of the war and the abductions) seems to indicate he somehow blamed them for their ‘betrayal’ of their country, but again highlights the perceived importance of language in identity.

In his diary, Hwang records how he in fact agreed to bring a captured boy back with him to Chosŏn. This boy had been kept in the house of Terazawa Hirotaka 寺澤廣高 (1563-1633), but was so homesick that Hirotaka took pity on him and asked that Hwang

9.15.

50 Hwang Shin, “Ilbon wanghwan ilgi,” 19b – 20a (9.14).

51 “Sŏnjo sillok,” 1596.12.21.

search for his family. He added that if the boy's family had not survived, then he would be very grateful if Hwang could return the boy to him, so that he would not be left homeless.⁵² By recording this incident Hwang presents a far more complex image of the Japanese than most writings at the time. Here was a Japanese commander – who were commonly vilified as savage and cunning beasts – showing compassion and generosity of heart. Hwang had spent several months in close quarters with Japanese who were working to save Chosŏn from further disaster. The perspective we see him share with his fellow countrymen is therefore a far cry from that of someone like Oh Hüimun (*Record of a Refugee*, chapter 4), who lived through the war hiding from the Japanese and never actually met a Japanese person.

These anecdotes about people born in Chosŏn but taken to Japan reveal aspects of the two diarists' thinking about identity and belonging. When Hwang was speaking with the king, belonging of course meant subjecthood, but regardless of context it seems language was an important marker of identity. That these very human anecdotes also contained descriptions of a humane Japanese

52 Hiroataka is referred to by his alternative name, Masanari 正成. Hwang Shin, "Ilbon wanhwan ilgi," 28a – b (12.8).

person points to how the embassy's working with Japanese people in a close, co-operative context would have encouraged a weakening of abstract labels and a re-assessment of Japanese identity. The transmission of such a story to a wider Chosŏn audience via Hwang's diary may have also added a depth and complexity to people's imaginings of Japan and the Japanese – if they were open to such complexity.

In addition to these short anecdotes, *Ilbon wanghwan ilgi* also attempts to give an overview of Japan and the Japanese; a country and its society. This forms the conclusion of the diary – after Hwang and Pak had safely left the Japanese camp. Though lacking such an appendix, *Tong sa rok* makes observations of Japanese culture and people en route. The observations recorded in both diaries are a revealing window into how the diarists viewed both Japan and their own country.

2.7 JAPAN AND THE JAPANESE

After reflecting on the journey times of the mission to and from Japan, *Ilbon wanghwan ilgi* ends by turning to explain this foreign country to the reader:

大槩 倭國幅員稍廣於我國 而無名山大川之固 風土物產俱不及我國 有曰富士山 在國之東 最號大山 而別無形勝佳麗之可觀其國在天地東南 故風氣甚和暖 仲冬之日 正如我國八九月 每於九十月間 種蘿蔔等菜 以為過冬之用 雖窮冬 無冰雪 通信還到馬島 始見微雪 而亦旋消不凝乾矣

To speak as a whole, the country of the Wae is slightly greater in area than our country, but it lacks the solidity of famous mountains or great rivers. Its scenery and produce are all inferior to our country. There is a mountain known as Puji [Fuji] in the east of the country, which is most acclaimed as a great mountain, but otherwise there is no scenery or outstanding beauty worthy of mention.

The country is to the south-east of the world, therefore the climate is mild and warm. Even the days of the eleventh month are exactly the same as the eighth or ninth month in our country. Around the ninth or tenth month of every year they plant vegetables such as turnip, as their winter supplies. Even in deepest winter there is no ice or snow. The embassy first saw light snow on returning to Mado [Tsushima], and even then it melted almost immediately and did not solidify.⁵³

The term for the Japanese as a people, Wae 倭 [J. Wa, C. Wo], is used throughout the description, rather than the official name of the country Ilbon 日本 (i.e. Japan). Hwang Shin's using Wae and refraining from more derogatory terms is in contrast to the author of *Tong sa rok*, who sometimes refers to the Japanese as 'stained teeth' 染齒.⁵⁴

53 Ibid., 29a – 34a.

54 Pak Hongjang, "Tong sa rok," 3a (8.10). Staining one's teeth black was a contemporary Japanese custom. Korean views of teeth staining are discussed in chapter 4.

Continuing on a geographical theme, *Ilbon wanghwan ilgi* turns to list all of the administrative regions. This it does with accuracy, except in a few cases where there are errors which can only be visual copying errors.⁵⁵ This suggests Hwang or the diarist were shown a map or written list of Japan's regions.⁵⁶ There is also a list of official posts, concluding with the observer's assessment of the government system:

官畧放[倣]唐制為之而其實別無所管職事 如調信自稱秘書少監 所謂圖書 而目不知書 平清正自稱主計 而初不管錢穀 蓋只用虛御[銜]也

They have roughly imitated the Tang system but in reality officials are not in charge of matters connected to their post. For example, Choshin [Yanagawa Shigenobu] claims to be Deputy of the Secretariat (what is known as the Library [J. Zushō]), but he is illiterate. P'yōng Ch'ōngjōng [Katō Kiyomasa] claims to be Master of Accounts but has never dealt with money or grain. It seems they merely use empty titles.

The observation of 'illiteracy' is of particular interest to the author of *Ilbon wanghwan ilgi*, who suddenly returns to it in the next paragraph, despite having appeared to introduce a new topic:

55 'P'ungdan' 風彈 is a miswriting of pida 飛驒 (J. Hida); 'Yōha' 如賀 is a miswriting of Kaha 加賀 (J. Kaga); 'Kyōldūng' 結登 is a miswriting of Nūngdūng 能登 (J. Nōtō). Hwang Shin, "Ilbon wanghwan ilgi," 29b.

56 The copying errors could of course also have occurred later, in the transmission of the diary text.

其民有兵農工商僧 而唯僧及公族有解文字者 其餘則雖將官輩 亦不識一字

The people consist of soldiers, farmers, artisans, merchants, and monks, but only monks and those of noble families can read. As for the others, even if they are military or civilian officials, they cannot recognize a single character.

Given that an education in Classical Chinese was the basic prerequisite for an official post in Chosŏn, it was highly surprising to discover this state of affairs. Hwang's claim that 'they cannot recognize a single character' represents him equating literacy with literacy in Classical Chinese: earlier diary entries show Shigenobu and others engaging in written correspondence, but presumably in Japanese. Judging the Japanese by their ability in Classical Chinese, or lack thereof, was also the habit of all the other contemporary Chinese and Korean observers who are recorded as commenting on the subject; Kang Hang 姜沆 (1567-1618) and Xu Yihou 許儀後, for example, enjoyed ridiculing the Japanese on this point.⁵⁷ As noted earlier, Hwang Shin was no less than the *changwŏn*: the man who out-

57 Kang Hang 姜沆, *Kan yang nok* 看羊錄 (Record of a Shepherd), ed. Minjok munhwa ch'uch'ŏnhoe 民族文化推薦會, (Kugyŏk) Haehaeng ch'ongjae (國譯) 海行總載 (Sŏul: Minjok munhwa ch'uch'ŏnhoe 民族文化推薦會, 1974), 424 (詣承政院啓辭); Hou Jigao 侯繼高, *Quan Zhe bing zhi* 全浙兵制, ed. Siku quan shu cunmu congshu bianzuan weiyuanhui 四庫全書存目叢書編纂委員會, vol. 子 31, Siku quan shu cunmu congshu 四庫全書存目叢書 (Jinan: Qi Lu shu she 齊魯書社, 1995), 179.

performed the rest of the country in examinations based on knowledge of the Classics and ability in literary Chinese. The examination culture strengthened a trend to judge a man by his degree of classical education, and it seems only natural that this standard was also applied to the Japanese.

Ilbon wanghwan ilgi does not depict everything Japanese with derision, however. The explanation of social classes continues:

兵則喫官糧 商人最富實 而以其利倍故稅稍重 國有大小費用 皆責於商人 農民則每田收其半 此外無它賦役 漕轉工役皆給傭價 故弊不及民

Soldiers receive a salary from the government. Merchants are the most wealthy, but as their profits are twice that of others, their tax is slightly higher. State expenses both great and small are all put upon the merchants. In the case of farmers, half of the produce of their fields is collected, but there are no other taxes or corvée. For transport and construction work a wage is given, *so the burden does not reach the common people.*⁵⁸

Not only is there no criticism, but in pointing out how the common people do not suffer, Hwang is actually explaining the advantages of the Japanese tax system, even discussing it as a potential model. The context to Hwang's writing was that in the latter part of the sixteenth century, the tax and corvée burden on the common people in Chosŏn

58 Translator's italics. Hwang Shin, "Ilbon wanghwan ilgi," 30b – 31a.

was particularly heavy, and was leading to social unrest. Immediately before the war, Hwang Shin's teacher Sŏng Hon identified this problem and proposed a set of forceful reforms that would relieve that burden. His reform movement met with political opposition, resulting in his removal from office – and temporarily also Hwang Shin's.⁵⁹ It would seem that Hwang was using the Japanese model that he observed to further this domestic reform agenda. Given the beyond-the-pale position normally accorded Japan in world political, moral, and cultural hierarchy by Chinese and Koreans writers at this time, it is surprising to find Hwang Shin willing to appraise the Japanese model as a valid point of reference.

There were other areas of Japanese culture that the diarists reviewed positively. Both were impressed by the aesthetic of 'cleanliness and simplicity' which they encountered. For the author of *Tong sa rok*, this extended to the food they were served when they arrived in Tsushima. He describes it as 'as refined and immaculate as is possible.'⁶⁰ High praise indeed. Hwang Shin is similarly taken aback by the decorations used at banquets:

59 Han Myŏng-gi 韓明基, "Imjin waeran chikjŏn Dong-Asia chŏngsae" 임진왜란 직전 동아시아 정세 (East Asia Immediately before the Imjin Waeran), *Han-Il gwan'gae-sa yŏngu* 한일관계사연구 no. 43 (December 2012): 187–89.

60 「極盡精潔」 Pak Hongjang, "Tong sa rok," 3a (8.10).

以金銀塗魚肉麵飯之上 剪綵為花 或刻木加彩 以造花草之形 置諸筵席之間 而極精巧逼真 四五步之外則便不能辨真假也

They paint gold and silver over the fish, meat, noodles, and rice. They cut coloured material to make flowers, or they carve wood and add coloured material to make the shapes of plants and flowers, and place them around the banquet. These are in fact extremely intricate and lifelike; from four or five paces away it is not possible to distinguish whether they are real or artificial.

Tong sa rok also has very high praise for the aesthetics of a newly built building in which they are at one point accommodated.⁶¹ The author seems to imply that the size and vibrancy of the market cities they see (particularly Sakai) surpass anything he had seen elsewhere.⁶²

In both diaries, the default points of comparison for everything they encounter in Japan are naturally Chosŏn equivalents, but this is not always the case. After lambasting Japanese cuisine as in all ways inferior to that of Chosŏn, Hwang Shin makes one exception, saying: ‘only the domestically reared pigs are quite plump, alike to those of the Central Dynasty [China], but they are rare.’⁶³ Here,

61 Ibid., 6a (閏 8.3).

62 Ibid., 9a (閏 8.19).

63 「唯家豬頗肥腫 如中朝所蓄 而稀罕矣」 Hwang Shin, “Ilbon wanghai,” 31a.

Ilbon wanghwan ilgi joins with later writings such as *Chaejo ponbang ji* in taking China as an alternative ready point of comparison. In this way, through the diary a comparative picture of the world is built up, with each country possessing its own forms of dress, cuisine, and customs.

One thing that neither diarist could look on without distaste, was what they deemed a lack of proper behaviour (*ye* 禮) connected with the teachings of Confucius and other sages (*yu* 儒). They were particularly critical of Japanese custom in the areas of proper hierarchy – to be maintained in forms of address and rituals (such as bowing) – and propriety in sexual relations. The author of *Tong sa rok*, in his overview of Tsushima, stated: ‘Buddhist Law is held in esteem, and Confucian teachings are not popular; names and roles are in disarray.’⁶⁴ The otherwise consistently neutral authorial tone of *Ilbon wanghwan ilgi* is broken only once, on description of Japanese male-female relations. After describing the surprisingly overt nature of Japanese prostitution, where the prostitutes ‘know no shame,’ he remarks:

至於嫁娶 不避娼妹 父子并淫一娼 亦無非之者 真禽獸也

64 「崇奉佛法 儒教不行 名分紊亂矣」 Pak Hongjang, “Tong sa rok,” 3a (8.12).

As for marriage, there is no taboo for siblings. If father and son ravish the same prostitute, no one will speak against them. Verily are they beasts not men.⁶⁵

Calling the Japanese beasts (*keumsu* 禽獸) was not an arbitrary insult, but a designation imbued with a particular significance. This term appears time and again in contemporary writings. In Calls to Arms circulated after the 1592 invasion, it is used to describe the lower state of civilization to which Chosŏn risked falling if overrun by the Japanese.⁶⁶ For King Sŏnjo, when he was accused of treachery by a Ming censor, it also described his kingdom being damned to a lower level of existence.⁶⁷

In late sixteenth-century Chosŏn, it was the knowledge and maintenance of proper relationships, such as father-son (*puja* 父子) and lord-vassal (*kunshin* 君臣), that separated men from beasts. This way of thinking, based in the tradition now known as Neo-Confucianism, had gained a dominant position in Chosŏn society and politics following the rise of the group referred to as the Sarim

65 Hwang Shin, "Ilbon wanhwan ilgi," 33b.

66 These Calls to Arms also gave strong expression to the idea that proper relationships separate man from beast, and therefore acting on loyalty to king and country was the pressing test facing the men of Chosŏn. Oh Hŭimun, "Swaemi rok," 壬辰(1592) 附錄告同道州府郡縣檄.

67 Gari Ledyard, "Confucianism and War: The Korean Security Crisis of 1598," *Journal of Korean Studies* 6 (1989): 81–119.

士林 (Forest of Scholars) faction, particularly after the accession of King Sŏnjo (1567). Sarim Neo-Confucianism especially emphasised the sharp dichotomies between the moral and immoral, civilized and barbarian.⁶⁸ These standards were readily applied in official Chosŏn writings on Japan. They were also widely propagated through children's educational materials, such as *Tong mong sŏn sŭp* 童蒙先習 (Beginning Practice for Children).⁶⁹ The idea that men and beasts were separated by morality was one of the fundamental ideas taught in another Classical Chinese primer for children, *Sohak* 小學 (Lesser Learning), which Hwang Shin himself promoted.⁷⁰ It is against this ideological background that the less regulated relations of the Japanese were so difficult to accept for Hwang Shin.

68 Han Myŏnggi argues Sarim thought developed a strong emphasis on the moral aspect of the lord-vassal relationship in response to the violent and autocratic reigns of Sejo 世祖 (1458-1468) and Yŏnsangun 燕山君 (1494-1506), and on moral criteria in general in response to power abuses by those who inherited power through their connection to the royal house rather than through scholarly learning. Han Myŏng-gi, "Imjin waeran chikjŏn Dong-Asia chŏngsae," esp. 175.

69 Han Myŏng-gi, "Imjin waeran chikjŏn Dong-Asia chŏngsae."

70 Hwang discusses these ideas in a memorial written before the mission: (Oh Hŭimun, "Swaemi rok," 甲午(1594) 附錄 東宮疏.) After the war, when calling for the rebuilding of the education system, he describes *Sohak* as essential reading, emphasising the need to understand proper relationships. ("Sŏnjo sillok," 1601.8.28.)

Given that the ideological framework in which the Chosŏn ambassadors had been educated drew such sharp distinctions, so readily demoting the Japanese to the level of beasts, it is surprising to find both diarists ready to praise aspects of Japanese food, craftsmanship, and even government. It seems that actual contact with foreign peoples stripped away much of the labelling and rhetoric that is common in writing by those living far from the frontier. Through the medium of the diaries, particularly Hwang Shin's diary, this more nuanced view of the Japanese also reached a wider audience back in Chosŏn.

2.7.1 TSUSHIMA: A LIMINAL SPACE

When the diarists describe Japan and the Japanese, a surely broad and diverse country and society is united under the single all-embracing label Wae: 'the Wae customs are so.'⁷¹ The ambassadors had crossed the border between 'our country' and the 'country of the Wae' with the voyage from Pusan to the island of Tsushima. Thus *Tong sa rok* makes its most detailed comments on cultural differences when the embassy arrives in Tsushima, and *Ilbon wanhwan ilgi* gives

71 Hwang Shin, "Ilbon wanhwan ilgi," 4b (8.15).

a general account of Japan after their return from it. The diarists show an awareness of the island as somewhat different from the rest of Japan, however. Hwang Shin explains that people from the islands of Tsushima and nearby Ikinoshima are 'humiliated' – discriminated against, in today's parlance – when they travel to the capital. Hwang may have learned this from his chief informant, Shigenobu, who was himself a servant of the ruling house of Tsushima.⁷² He describes the hospitality Shigenobu gave them when the embassy arrived in Tsushima as follows:

調信引通信一行寓島主客舍館 距義智僅二三里 堂宇不
甚華侈 而精緻潔淨 不留一塵 島中諸倭集外廳 以備
供給 凡接待之事 頗極恭款 其饌品亦依我國之制 沙
碗盛白粥 覆鍤蓋而進之 且具匙子

Shigenobu escorted the ambassadors and company to the lord of the island's guest accommodation, which was only two or three *ri* [$\frac{2}{3}$ mile] from [the lord Sō] Yoshitoshi. The halls were not elaborately decorated, but were refined and immaculate, with not a single speck of dust. All the Wae of the island gathered in the outer chamber, in order to provide supplies. All hospitality was done with quite considerable politeness and generosity.

72 The geopolitical interests of those on Tsushima (the desire to maintain good relations for trade with Chosŏn) were inextricable from the extensive help and hospitality the ambassadors received en route from Shigenobu, his master Sō Yoshitoshi and his wife, and Yukinaga (who was Yoshitoshi's father-in-law).

The dishes also followed the style of our country; rice porridge served in earthenware bowls, presented with a lid on, and with a spoon.⁷³

The diarist notices apparently unexpected similarities in eating habits with those on the peninsula, and is impressed with the politeness of his hosts. He is also told that the terrible poverty of the islanders which he observes is the result of being trampled under the feet of Japanese armies on their way to Chosŏn. Yet, despite all this awareness of Tsushima's special position, there is no third space available for the people of Tsushima to occupy: Hwang Shin labels the inhabitants of the island categorically as 'Wae.'

A reader of *Tong sa rok* might suppose that the longer entry given to Tsushima in that diary is simply due to it being the embassy's first point of call. There seems to have been a greater significance to the details given, however, including population and approximate distances. This is hinted at by a concluding remark: 'This is no great border commandery; they are merely protecting the land. The soil and climate are arid and terrible.'⁷⁴ To Chosŏn officials, Tsushima was important strategically.

73 Hwang Shin, "Ilbon wanhwan ilgi," 3b (8.10). Mention of the spoon is likely noting contrast with China, where only chopsticks were provided.

74 Pak Hongjang, "Tong sa rok," 3b (8.12).

King Sŏnjo's questioning of Hwang Shin on his return reveals what is perhaps the background to the *Tong sa rok* diarist's gathering of information on Tsushima. The King begins, 'Taema Island [Tsushima] was originally part of our country, but was captured by the Wae.'⁷⁵ He then asks Hwang whether he believes it could be recaptured. To this Hwang replies that given its current sorry state and the poor sailing conditions between Tsushima and mainland Japan, even the present battered remnants of the Chosŏn state could capture the island.⁷⁶

While in terms of territory the island was believed to have originally belonged to Chosŏn, and despite Hwang Shin being aware of Japanese people looking on the islanders differently, for the diarists it both culturally and politically belongs to Japan. They group the current inhabitants of the island under the label 'Wae,' and include it in the territory of 'the country of the Wae.'⁷⁷ Culturally, the predominance of Buddhism over Confucianism, and visual markers

75 Due to its position, Tsushima had always been central to peninsula-archipelago trade, and a base for armies moving in either direction. It is unclear which historical period King Sŏnjo has in mind when he argues that it belonged to Korea. He may have been referring to King Sejong's 世宗 (r. 1418-1450) attack of the islands or to a belief that previous dynasties controlled them.

76 "Sŏnjo sillok," 1596.12.21.

77 See list of regions of Japan, in *Ilbon wanhwan ilgi*: Hwang Shin, "Ilbon wanhwan ilgi," 29b – 30a.

such as striped clothes and stained teeth, distinguished the island from the peninsula.⁷⁸ The island thus formed the threshold between ‘us’ and ‘them,’ over which the ambassadors stepped.

2.8 LEGACY OF HWANG’S REPORT

Before Hwang Shin and Pak Hongjang returned to Pusan, Hwang had sent an urgent report ahead to the Chosŏn court. The information contained in the report corresponds to some of the key points of the events laid out in the diary. The Chosŏn court decided it was imperative to convey the intelligence they had to Beijing, so that the Ming court would be aware of the collapse of the peace talks and the impending second invasion.⁷⁹ In this way the contents of Hwang’s report reached China. This important news must have in turn been circulated widely in government newsletters, for extracts of it can be found in later writings.

Through Hwang’s writing, the Chosŏn embassy’s experience of the final part of the negotiations in Japan became an important

78 Regarding striped clothes, see: Pak Hongjang, “Tong sa rok,” 3b (8.12).

79 Officials at the Chosŏn court feared the Chinese would push the blame for the collapse of the peace process onto Chosŏn, and refuse to aid Chosŏn further. “Sŏnjo sillok,” 1596.11.15.

part of the textual memory of the war. At the same time, the information and themes in Hwang Shin's reports and his diary were selectively utilized by later writers, who wrote the events in Osaka into their own narratives of the war.

2.8.1 HWANG'S DIARY AND LEGEND

Hwang's diary itself – rather than his official reports – may not have passed beyond Chosŏn borders, but within the country it was evidently influential.

A well-known later history of the war, *Chaejo ponbang ji* 再造藩邦志 (The Salvation of a Protectorate Country), lists the diary of Hwang Shin as one of its sources. An analysis of the section describing the customs of Japan further shows *Chaejo ponbang ji* indeed owed a great debt to Hwang's descriptions. *Chaejo ponbang ji* combined the 1596 diary's information with that from the diaries of two escaped prisoners of war, Kang Hang and No In 魯認 (1566-1622), written a few years later.⁸⁰ Below is an example comparison of

80 There are not yet translations or studies of No In's diary in English, but Kang Hang's diary has been translated in full: JaHyun Kim Haboush and Kenneth R. Robinson, *A Korean War Captive in Japan, 1597-1600: The Writings of Kang Hang* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013).

a passage from *Chaejo ponbang ji* and the section of Hwang's diary upon which it is based:

From *Chaejo ponbang ji*:

其國在天之東南 風氣極溫 十一月間 如我國七八月
冬無冰雪 雖或有之 墮地即消 地雖大 而亦無名山大川
風土物產 不如我國 但有大山 鎮其國東。名曰扶山 以障
大海 而形勝不足以遊覽 其國分爲六十六州 曰...

The country is to the south-east of the world. The climate is extremely warm. Even the days of the eleventh month are exactly the same as the seventh eighth month in our country. There is no ice or snow in winter. Even if there sometimes is, it melts as soon as it falls to the ground. [...]

The country has sixty-six provinces: ...

From *Ilbon wanghwan ilgi*:

其國在天地東南 故風氣甚和暖 仲冬之日 正如我國八
九月 每於九十月間 種蘿蔔等菜 以為過冬之用 雖窮
冬 無冰雪 通信還到馬島 始見微雪 而亦旋消不凝乾
矣 其國有六十六州

The country is to the south-east of the world, therefore the climate is mild and warm. Even the days of the eleventh month are exactly the same as the eighth or ninth month in our country. Around the ninth or tenth month of every year they plant vegetables such as turnip as their winter supplies. Even in deepest winter there is no ice or snow. The embassy first saw light snow on returning to Mado [Tsushima], and even then it melted almost immediately and did not solidify.

The country has sixty-six provinces: ...⁸¹

The trend shown by the above comparison is of generalization and slight exaggeration of the original diary content (e.g., in the change of months).

What Hwang wrote about Japanese official titles not referring to their actual responsibilities, the Japanese dislike for flamboyant designs, and the lack of segregation of the sexes, all finds its way into *Chaejo ponbang ji*, and is thus given a new life and wider audience. Though it was of a general nature, readers in Chosŏn now had available to them quite an abundance of information on Japan, its people, and customs.

We can also see themes of the diary inspiring later dramatized histories of the war produced in Chosŏn. Particularly important among these was *Imjin nok* 壬辰錄 (Record of the Imjin Year).⁸² This was a popular retelling of the story of the war, with both Classical

81 Sin Kyŏng 申炅, "Chaejo pŏnbang chi" 再造藩邦志 (Salvation of a Vassal State), in *Daitō yajō* (*Taedong yasŭng*) 大東野乘, vol. 7 (Keijō: Chōsen kosho kankōkai 朝鮮古書刊行會, 1910), part 1; Hwang Shin, "Ilbon wanghwan ilgi," 29a – b.

82 Another example is *Sŏnmyo chungheung ji*: its treatment of Hwang Shin is almost identical to that of *Imjin nok*. "Sŏnmyo chungheung ji" 宣廟中興志 (The Revival of the Dynasty under King Sŏnjo), Jangseogak Royal Archives, <http://yoksa.aks.ac.kr>.

Chinese and vernacular Korean versions circulating.⁸³ It is worth looking at briefly here as its more dramatic narrative makes explicit what Hwang Shin in the *Ilbon wanghwan ilgi* so clearly wanted us to think about his character.

While in the original diary Hwang's calm in the face of the storm at sea is implicit, this later chronicle is not so conservative:

至中洋 颶風大作 巨鯨噴浪 天地窈冥 舟中皆蒼黃顛倒 慎
神色自若 整衣冠 焚香誓海 遂於卽席 口占一辭 曰

When they reached the open ocean a huge hurricane began to blow and a giant sea turtle spat waves. Heaven and earth were darkened and all aboard turned pale and fell to the floor. Shin's expression was composed. He straightened his clothes and cap, lit incense, and took an oath to the sea. He then spontaneously composed and uttered the following: ...⁸⁴

The text then reproduces this great scholar-official's masterpiece in full, noting that after he had thrown it into the sea the wind not only lessened but the giant sea turtle fled and the sea became still 'like a mirror.'⁸⁵ Lest Hwang's prose not deliver the message clearly enough, the chronicler has Hwang further compose a very straight-

83 For a study of the *Imjin nok*, see: Peter H. Lee, *The Record of the Black Dragon Year* (Seoul: Institute of Korean Culture, Korea University, 2000).

84 Tansil kōsa 丹室居士 (Vermilion Chamber Recluse), "Imjin nok" 壬辰錄 (Record of the Imjin Year), v. 5 12a – b (通信使黃慎朴弘長入日本), Jangseogak Royal Archives, <http://yoksa.aks.ac.kr>.

85 「寫訖托之海中俄而風止波靜巨鯨遠避水面如鏡」 Ibid.

forward poem (the quality of which probably had the literatus Hwang turning in his grave), beginning, 'A true man does not fear death; one who fears death is not a true man.'⁸⁶

Another underlying theme in *Ilbon wanghwan ilgi*, created by set-piece dialogues, was that Hwang impressed the Japanese. The less subtle *Imjin nok* simply states directly that the Japanese greatly admired and were in awe of the Chosŏn ambassador, comparing him to the famous ambassador of the previous Koryŏ dynasty, Chŏng Mongju 鄭夢周 (1337-1392).⁸⁷ One more important addition to the Hwang Shin story is that he knew the peace negotiations would fail before he set sail.⁸⁸ In *Imjin nok*, this addition was probably made to complete the image of a flawless hero. It nevertheless coincides with Chinese re-tellings of the story: that the peace negotiations were doomed from the start. This became the dominant narrative in both Chosŏn and China, even in texts which cited Hwang's far more nuanced report directly.

86 「丈夫不怕死怕死非丈夫」 Ibid.

87 Ibid., v. 5 12a (「是時倭人稱慎氣節」).

88 Ibid., v. 5 12a (「通信使黃慎朴弘長入日本」).

2.8.2 HWANG'S REPORT

The privately compiled history *Liang chao ping rang lu* 兩朝平攘錄 (Quelling Disturbances over Two Reigns), produced in China not long after the war, dedicates about half of its narrative to 'Japan' (Riben 日本), i.e. the quelling thereof. The multiple extant copies of this text indicate that it was read widely not only in China but also in Japan. A close examination of textual similarities reveals that its information on the key turn of events in Japan – Hideyoshi's decision to re-invade – originates in Hwang's report. When *Liang chao ping rang lu* quotes Hideyoshi, his words are almost identical to the character with the report sent by Chosŏn relaying Hwang's intelligence.⁸⁹

The author of *Liang chao ping rang lu*, Zhuge Yuansheng 諸葛元聲, thus had access to accurate information, but he interpreted it according to his own view of the whole war. A key theme he introduced is the idea that it was clear from the beginning that the peace negotiations would fail. In this narrative, the negotiations were the

89 Chosŏn court report: 「天朝遣使封我 我姑且忍之 朝鮮決不可許和 我但再要廝殺 天使亦不須久留 明日便可上船 我當再調兵馬 前往朝鮮廝殺」. *Liang chao ping rang lu*: 「天朝遣使封我 我姑忍之 朝鮮決不許和 天使亦不須久留 明日可上船 我當再調兵馬 前往朝鮮廝殺」 “Sŏnjo sillok,” 1596.11.10; Zhuge Yuansheng 諸葛元聲, *Liang chao ping rang lu* 兩朝平攘錄 (Quelling Unrest in Two Reigns), ed. Zhongguo yeshi jicheng bianweihui Zhongguo yeshi jicheng bianweihui, vol. 27, Zhongguo yeshi jicheng 中國野史集成 (Chengdu: Bashu shushe 巴蜀書社, 1993), 70 (4 卷 33a – b).

machinations of traitorous men in league with the greedy and unreliable Japanese. *Liang chao ping rang lu* records that Chosŏn had known all along that there was no hope for peace:

朝鮮素知倭人乞款原無實心 本不欲遣人 爲惟敬逼促

Chosŏn knew from beforehand that Japan was not sincere in its request [for vassal status]. [Chosŏn] had originally not wanted to send someone, but was forced to by [Shen] Weijing.⁹⁰

It is true that the Chosŏn court had been against the peace process, and also distrusted the Japanese – for understandable reasons. At the beginning of the war they had also accurately reported that Japan’s intent was conquest of China. Reliable information on Hideyoshi’s thinking about the peace negotiations was not available to the Ming or Chosŏn before the ambassadors set sail, however, so misgivings were based on little more than a visceral distrust. To report Chosŏn’s doubts as having been justified was to totally obscure the far more detailed picture of Hideyoshi’s expectations and disappointment that Hwang had drawn in his diary and report. A complex process of negotiation and compromise was thus reduced to simple deceit on the part of the Japanese. In taking this line the author was following

90 Zhuge Yuansheng, *Liang chao ping rang lu*, 27:70 (4 卷 32a).

those in Beijing who from the beginning had opposed negotiations, which were linked with the widely mistrusted Shen Weijing.⁹¹

As a narrative of the solving of problems through warfare, *Liang chao ping rang lu* naturally takes the side of the pro-war faction in Beijing. Furthermore, the character of Shen Weijing made the perfect, weasel-like, villain to complete the tale. The author takes pleasure in having him prostrate unashamedly before Hideyoshi, adding in a commentary: ‘the disgrace of Yang and Shen’s meeting Hideyoshi was too terrible for words... From this one can know that a base person cannot be relied on in high office.’⁹² The attraction of a black and white moral tale meant there was no incentive to dwell on the details of what had enraged Hideyoshi. After all, the Wo (K. Wae) were known to be violent and insatiable in their lust for plunder, from their long history of coastal raiding.⁹³ During the span of the Ming dynasty they had sometimes asked to come and pay trib-

91 The Minister of War Shi Xing was in the minority in his support of the peace negotiations, and his non scholar-official envoy was unpopular and doubted from early on. Contemporary memorials directly attack Shen as deceitful. See, for example: Zhao Shizhen 趙士禎, “Dong shi sheng yan” 東事剩言 (Surplus Words on the Eastern Business), KJ 5414, 疏草, Kyujanggak, Seoul National University.

92 Zhuge Yuansheng, *Liang chao ping rang lu*, 27:70 (4 卷 32b).

93 Their insatiability is a recurring theme in texts such as *Record of the Eastern Campaign*, and is given as the reason why the peace negotiations should never have been started. See for example: Xu Xizhen, “Dong zheng ji,” 3b.

ute, and sometimes raided the shores.⁹⁴ Thus the brevity of the text quoted from the report from Chosŏn, the historical context of previous pirate raids and current court politics, and the desire to portray foreign barbarians and domestic villains all combined to lead to a history such as *Liang chao ping rang lu* obscuring the true factors behind the collapse of the peace even while it accurately recorded the sequence of events.

This version of events – whereby the Japanese had never had any real interest in peace – became influential, particularly as *Liang chao ping rang lu* spread quickly and widely: we know that by 1632 at the latest it was being read in Japan.⁹⁵ It was to become one of the sources for the influential Japanese history *Sei Kan i ryaku* 征韓偉略 (Highlights of the Great Campaign against Korea). In this colourful account, the pathetic character of a submissive Shen Weijing in *Liang*

94 Writers failed to distinguish between rulers who had asked for trading rights and mere pirates, meaning that the Japanese appeared to suddenly attack after having established peaceful relations. This background was combined with the Imjin War experience in a mutually reinforcing narrative of the Japanese as fickle. See for example: Mao Ruizheng 茅瑞徵, *Wanli san da zheng kao* 萬曆三大征考 (Study of the Three Great Campaigns of the Wanli Era), ed. Xuxiu siku quan shu bianzuan weiyuanhui 續修四庫全書編纂委員會, 史部 436, Xuxiu siku quan shu 續修四庫全書, 1995, 13.

95 Willem Boot, “‘Chōsen seibatsu ki’ ni kakareta sensō” 『朝鮮征伐記』に描かれた戦争 (The War Depicted in *Chōsen Seibatsu Ki*), in *Jinshin sensō: 16-seiki Nit-Chō-Chū no kokusai sensō* 壬辰戦争 : 16世紀日・朝・中の国際戦争, ed. Chōng Tu-hŭi 鄭杜熙 et al., 2008, 208.

chao ping rang lu is taken and further developed. Zhuge Yuansheng had presented the investiture ceremony as shameful for the Ming dynasty, but his emphasis was on Shen being a scoundrel. Under a Japanese brush the national symbolism of a trembling Chinese emissary prostrating before the awe-inspiring Japanese warrior-ruler, Hideyoshi, was indulged to the full. In *Sei Kan i ryaku*, what provoked Hideyoshi's rage had changed. No longer was he enraged by Shen's letter, but when the 'true' contents of the Ming imperial edict were read to him. He had been kept in the dark until that point: for in the author's mind no self-respecting Japanese leader would willingly accept vassal status from China.⁹⁶

Surprisingly, this later re-telling of events – by a Japanese historian using a Chinese source based on Hwang Shin's report – has remained the orthodox narrative to the present day. Kenneth Swope's monograph on the East Asian War – the first serious schol-

96 Yukinaga purportedly asks that the monk translating the edict for Hideyoshi conceal its real meaning, to prevent enraging the Kampaku, but the monk refuses. His 'endure for the time being' is interpreted as meaning putting up with investiture despite disliking it. Kawaguchi Chōju 川口長孺, "Sei Kan i ryaku" 征韓偉略 (Summary of the Great Campaign against Korea), in *Renchen zhi yi shiliao huiji* 壬辰之役史料匯集, ed. Wu Fengpei 吳豐培, vol. 2, *Chaoxian shiliao congbian* 朝鮮史料叢編 (Beijing: Quanguo tushuguan wenxian suowei fuzhi zhongxin 全國圖書館文獻縮微複製中心, 1990), 682–89 (4 卷 14b – 18a).

arly monograph on the war in English – repeats this version of events, citing *Sei Kan i ryaku*.⁹⁷ Still more recently, the annotated translation of Chosŏn official Kang Hang’s wartime diary also repeats the narrative that Hideyoshi belatedly realized he had been ‘duped.’⁹⁸ It is only within the smaller circle of (Japanese-language) studies on the peace negotiations specifically that the idea that Hideyoshi rejected investiture outright has recently begun to be questioned.⁹⁹

There are several factors which can explain the persistence of an altered narrative of the events of 1596, but the foremost must be the tendency for historical studies to use sources from the cultural ‘centre’: a combination of official records and the texts that came to embody the orthodox narratives of events.¹⁰⁰ Focusing on texts

97 Swope, *A Dragon’s Head and a Serpent’s Tail*, 220–22.

98 Haboush and Robinson, *A Korean War Captive in Japan, 1597-1600*, x.

99 See for example: Sajima Akiko 佐島顕子, “Ninshin waran no kōwa no hatan wo megutte” 壬辰倭乱の講和の破綻をめぐって (Concerning the Collapse of the Imjin War Peace Negotiations), in *Dimensions of East Asian International Relations in the Sixteenth to Seventeenth Centuries*, 2013; Atobe Makoto, “Toyotomi seiken ki no taigai kankei to chitsujokan.”

100 There are probably two main reasons for the durability of the narrative which portrayed the peace negotiations as doomed from the beginning. One is that Hideyoshi’s original intentions and his later bargaining demands were indeed at odds with what the Ming or Chosŏn would ever have accepted. It requires a more in-depth examination to appreciate Hideyoshi’s willingness to compromise. The second factor is probably that the failure of the negotiations, led by the dubious character Shen Weijing, was precisely what many on the

produced at the frontier, at the point of contact, can help correct this imbalance. Owing to his being an eye-witness (or close thereto), Hwang Shin's writings on both political events in Japan and Japanese culture were repeatedly drawn on as a source, though not without reinterpretation. It is only by recognizing how the frontier witness was used in the creation of orthodox narratives that we can fully appreciate how those orthodox narratives arose, and the roles of the author of each link in the intertextual chain.

Chinese and Korean sides had expected – even if they had expected it for different reasons – and histories written immediately after the war already place the blaming finger at the discredited pro-peace faction. For example, *Dong zheng ji* has the glorious emperor see through both Chinese and Japanese scheming, to call for harsh punishment of the Japanese. Xu Xizhen, “*Dong zheng ji*,” 5b.

Conclusions

That there was never a shortage of people coming and going between the continent and the islands can be seen through the writings of Xu Yihou and of Hwang and Pak. Yet the information they brought back was either never put down on paper, or simply failed to make it into the orthodox narratives about Japan and was lost over time. In the context of the East Asian War, the voices of those who had first-hand experience of the country and its people attained new value. It is for this reason that parts of Xu Yihou and Hwang Shin's views of Japan and the Japanese became incorporated into orthodox histories. Despite the war significantly amplifying the role of writings from the frontier, to a large extent the power to disseminate texts widely remained in the political and cultural centres in Chosŏn and Ming China. This resulted in more nuanced or open-minded interpretations from the frontier being only selectively incorporated into what became the orthodox narratives. Hwang and Xu's reports were both first disseminated through official channels. Even in terms of private reading and re-use in non-official histories, it was the recognition and official position bestowed on Hwang by the court

that helped popularize his prose around Chosŏn. After the war, Xu Yihou's report was unlikely to continue to be sought after as a text in itself; it can be considered influential because of its re-use in private histories produced in the Chinese and Chosŏn cultural centres. Through these examples, we see how what became orthodox portrayals and understandings of Japan in China and Korea developed through just such an interaction of centre and periphery.

The historiography of the 1596 peace negotiations also demonstrates how tracing reports from the frontier on a transnational level is important not only for our understanding of identities, but for our understanding even of the fundamental events that shaped the war. In addition to adding many lively details to our present narrative, the ambassadors' diaries suggest that our views need to be corrected on some important points. That Hideyoshi did not accept, and never would have accepted, investiture as a vassal of the Ming has been widely taken as a given in the history of the war, despite having no basis in the primary sources. Hwang and Pak's diaries recording Hideyoshi joyfully accepting investiture and only becoming angry several days later, for a separate reason, immediately casts this into doubt – a doubt that is supported by recent studies of other sources. Tracing the re-use of Hwang's report to the Chosŏn court, in China

and then Japan, demonstrates how the orthodox narrative actually developed as the story of 1596 was told and re-told. The fact that what appears to be later Japanese wishful thinking about Hideyoshi continues to be widely accepted reflects the tendency of scholarship on the war to draw on a limited set of (often secondary) sources: the limiting tendency this thesis seeks to address.

Part II | Unseen enemy

While Xu Yihou and Hwang Shin both spent time in Japan but in different circumstances, the two individuals studied in this section both had relatively close proximity to foreign peoples but in markedly different situations.

Oh Hŭimun and Zhao Shizhen's diverse circumstances reflected the different levels of impact that the Japanese invasion of the Korean peninsula had on those living on the peninsula itself and those further in on the mainland. Oh Hŭimun and his family were displaced and suffered from the famine, disease, and violence that resulted from the invasion; Zhao Shizhen wrote about the strain of supplying Ming campaign forces from the comfort of his position in Beijing. The contrast in circumstance of Oh and Zhao's writings make their common elements and connections all the more significant, however. Zhao Shizhen and Oh Hŭimun wrote and thought about the Japanese a great deal, but neither ever actually seems to have met a Japanese person. They came very close, but in fact relied

on information provided by others to build their picture of the Japanese. Despite Chosŏn being far more directly affected by the war, both Oh and Zhao's writings point to comparable reactions across the two countries to initial defeat at the hands of the Japanese, and to the development of similar portrayals of the Japanese.

The unique day-by-day coverage of the entire war makes Oh Hŭimun's diary undoubtedly the richest source from the East Asian War outside court records. The chronological nature of *Swaemi rok* allows us to see what information was circulating at what times, and how it circulated. This is a valuable aid in the reconstruction of how the experience of the war shaped ideas about identity. Comparison of Zhao Shizhen's arguments about China and Japan with other contemporary writings shows how, even when information circulated, identity formation could increasingly detach from reality once separated from experience of the frontier. The cases of both men, each in their own way, confirm the importance of focusing on frontier contact in understanding how perceptions of China, Korea, and Japan took shape.

Chapter 3 | Zhao Shizhen

Observer from the frontier

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The author of *Dong shi sheng yan* 東事剩言 (Surplus Words on the Eastern Affair) was a man named Zhao Shizhen 趙士禎.¹ Zhao was a native of Yueqing 樂清 in Wenzhou 溫州, Zhejiang 浙江, an area in the south-east of China which had within living memory suffered prolonged periods of intermittent attack by ‘Japanese’ raiders (*wokou*).² It was on the basis of his home locality’s experience with these raiders that Zhao claimed himself qualified to speak on the subject of the Japanese to the emperor, and it appears to be this closer degree of contact

1 Zhao Shizhen 趙士禎, “Dong shi sheng yan” 東事剩言 (Surplus Words on the Eastern Business), KJ 5414, Kyujanggak, Seoul National University.

2 Many of those classed as *wokou* 倭寇 by Ming and Chosŏn authorities were not in fact of Japanese origin. See discussion and references in Swope: Kenneth Swope, *A Dragon’s Head and a Serpent’s Tail: Ming China and the First Great East Asian War, 1592-1598* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009), 65.

with the Japanese that led him to discuss them in ways subtly different to those of his contemporaries.

Dong shi sheng yan is actually a collection of three texts published together. Greatest in proportionate size are two drafts of memorials (*shu* 疏) the author had submitted to the throne. The title *Dong shi sheng yan* refers to a persuasive essay presented as a conversation between the author and his guest, which precedes the memorials in the text's sequence. The unity of the three parts is enhanced by a prologue and a colophon, which make reference to both the *Dong shi sheng yan* conversation and the memorials.

The conversation was reported to have taken place in the fifth month of 1594.³ As the title of the text suggests, the subject of discussion is the 'Eastern Campaign' of the time, i.e., Ming involvement in the East Asian War. Zhao's two memorials, submitted in the third and fourth months of 1594, gave policy advice on the ongoing military campaign in Chosŏn. The publication in print of *Dong shi sheng yan* in autumn of the same year would have given Zhao a wider audience for his proposals, while the conversation presented his opinions in a shorter, highly readable format.⁴

3 Zhao Shizhen, "Dong shi sheng yan," 8a.

4 The preface is dated in the eighth month of 1594.

Today only two copies of *Dong shi sheng yan* are known to be extant, held in the Kyujanggak Institute 奎章閣 (Seoul) and in the Tōyō bunko 東洋文庫 (Tokyo). The manuscripts themselves offer no clues as to the number of prints made or their circulation. We can only surmise that if copies reached both Korean and Japanese libraries the circulation was sizeable enough for the work to come to the attention of foreign visitors – such as one of the regular Chosŏn embassies to Beijing.

3.2 ‘SURPLUS’ WORDS ON THE EASTERN CAMPAIGN

3.2.1 FROM THE FRONTIER, IN THE CENTRE

When he wrote *Dong shi sheng yan*, Zhao was an official based in Beijing. His route into officialdom had not been via the standard examinations. He grew up in very modest surroundings, but won recognition for his outstanding calligraphy at an early age (though the exact date is not recorded). He is said to have met the emperor personally at a time when the emperor had taken an interest in calligraphy, and the emperor was so pleased with Zhao that he granted

him an official position.⁵ Zhao gave one of his reasons for writing the memorials as repaying the emperor's grace in granting him his post. He was not particularly senior, however: a seventh grade official as Secretariat Drafter (*Zhongshu sheren* 中書舍人) in the *Wenhua dian*. He was therefore stepping above his station in giving advice on foreign policy. For this reason he dedicated the last portion of the second memorial to defending himself against the charge that he was writing in the hope of gaining imperial favour.⁶ The authors of the prologue and colophon were also at pains to explain that he was not motivated by personal ambition.

According to the author of the *Dong shi sheng yan* preface, Zhao's friend Gao Cui 高萃 (dates unknown), both he and Zhao were born in the south-east and had been eye-witnesses of the Japanese raids. In a memorial to the throne, Zhao writes of himself:

5 This story is related in *Wanli yehuo bian* but is also testified to by Zhao's own memorials. For example, he writes, 'I happened to have the petty skill of calligraphy, and was undeservedly raised up from nothing by your Imperial Majesty.' 「臣偶執雕蟲之技 誤蒙皇上拔之草茅」. Shen Defu 沈德符, *Wanli yehuo bian* 萬曆野獲編 (Private Gleanings during the Wanli Era), ed. Zhou Guangpei 周光培, *Lidai biji xiaoshuo jicheng* 歷代筆記小說集成 (Shijizhuang: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe 河北教育出版社, 1994), 卷 23, 士人, 金華二名士, 35-36; "Dong shi sheng yan," 20a.

6 「臣疏茲以再上 不知臣者必謂臣為邀譽」 "Dong shi sheng yan," 疏草 19b - 20b.

臣生長海上 倭中虛實 防守款貢之事 聞之故老者最真
籌之平日者最熟

Your servant was born and grew up by the sea. As to the situation among the Japanese and the matters of defence and tribute, those who hear about them from the old and wise have the most accurate understanding, and those who plan for them normally are most familiar with them.⁷

The author of the colophon, a colleague named Huang Zhongchun 黃仲春 (dates unknown) from Yiyang 弋陽 (Jiangxi 江西) also described Zhao as extremely clear-sighted in evaluating the situation overseas as a result of his family being from the south-east.

In his writing Zhao displayed a developed knowledge of political events current and past, with a particular interest in military affairs.⁸ In his colophon, Huang Zhongchun claimed that Zhao Shizhen regularly asked others in the capital about contemporary affairs. From the memorials in *Dong shi sheng yan*, it is clear that Zhao kept close track of discussions at court. His knowledge of Japan, however, surpassed that displayed by other officials in the capital, and seems to have indeed been supplemented by personal experience at the frontier. For example, he referred to the Japanese place name Satsuma 薩摩 using a transliteration 'Sasima' 薩斯麻,

7 Ibid., 疏草 1a – 1b.

8 For example, Zhao discusses details of the recent Ningxia rebellion. Ibid., 12a.

rather than the Chinese characters used by the Japanese, the pronunciation of which in northern dialects (e.g. around Beijing) did not resemble Japanese pronunciation, being something similar to present-day Mandarin 'Samo.' As other Chinese and Korean sources of this time consistently use the Chinese characters used by the Japanese (薩摩) for this and other place names, Zhao's use of transliteration hints at his knowledge of Japan coming through oral transmission. Zhao claimed some of his information on Japan was gained from people of his area who had escaped after being captured by the Japanese.⁹ This perhaps explains how, in his later memorials, he demonstrated knowledge of the sea routes used by the Japanese to reach Fujian 福建 and his home province Zhejiang, the problems they faced in the crossing, and the economic factors on the islands encouraging the islanders to turn to raiding.¹⁰

Apart from *Dong shi sheng yan*, the other published works of Zhao's that survive today deal with weapons, and it is as a historically important developer of firearm technology that he is

9 Ibid., 疏草 3a.

10 Zhao Shizhen 趙士禎, *Wo qing tuntian yi* 倭情屯田議 (Deliberation on the Japanese Situation and Military Farms), ed. Wu Xinglan 吳省蘭, vol. 35:2, *Yi hai zhu chen* 藝海珠塵 (Taipei: Yinwen yinshuguan 藝文印書館, 1965), 1a–3b.

remembered today.¹¹ Though he was never rich, he spent what wealth he had on developing hand-held weapons and artillery. He then presented his inventions for imperial approval, submitting them along with his advice on military strategy, which he continued to put forward after the Chosŏn campaign.¹² Figure 5 shows some of the weapon designs in Zhao Shizhen's *Shen qi pu* 神器譜 (Catalogue of Wondrous Devices), inspired by European weapons he had seen. Zhao appears as a man who, perhaps influenced by experiences of pirate raids in his youth, was passionate about frontier defence. Taking a keen interest in weapons both Chinese and foreign, tactics and strategy, and past and contemporary military policy, Zhao showed himself to be a talented and knowledgeable military enthusiast. It seems he himself felt that his was a talent not fully recognized in his lowly position, and in the final exchange of the *Dong shi sheng yan* conversation, Zhao displayed his frustration at this. When the

11 His most famous work is a treatise in which he comments on firearms both domestic and foreign and presents his own inventions: Zhao Shizhen 趙士禎, *Shen qi pu* 神器譜 (Catalogue of Wondrous Devices) (Taipei: Guoli zhongyang tushuguan 國立中央圖書館, 1981).

12 Example of advice and weapons being submitted together: Zhao Shizhen 趙士禎, *Bei bian tuntian chechong yi* 備邊屯田車銃議 (Deliberation on Border Defense, Military Farms, and Mounted Cannon), ed. Wu Xinglan 吳省蘭, vol. 35:2, *Yi hai zhu chen* 藝海珠塵 (Taipei: Yinwen yinshuguan 藝文印書館, 1965). Later submission of policy advice: Zhao Shizhen, *Wo qing tuntian yi*.

guest quoted an ancient passage bemoaning the plight of the educated who were not given a chance to use their talents in the service of the state, Zhao – who in the conversation not insignificantly adopted the name of the Surplus Recluse (剩居士) – responded: ‘I believe men of the past truly understood how I feel.’¹³

13 「我思古人實獲我心」 “Dong shi sheng yan,” 7b – 8a. ‘The Surplus Recluse’ creates a play on words with ‘Surplus words’ in the text title.

3.2.2 AN EXPERT DEBUNKS POPULAR MYTH

The conversation in *Dong shi sheng yan* is presented as a record of an actual exchange between Zhao and a visitor. It may well have been one or more real life arguments that inspired Zhao to write in this way, but the format also functions as an easier entry point for a wider audience compared to his rather lengthy memorials. The conversation piece not only reveals the ideas Zhao wished to disseminate, but gives us insight into what he felt was widely-held opinion at that time. The main thrust of Zhao's arguments was that the Japanese were not as powerful as popularly believed. This idea supported the offensive strategy he proposed in Chosŏn. His position can also be seen as one of someone familiar with Japanese raids and well-versed in counter-tactics who was determined to debunk a myth of Japanese invincibility circulating far from the front lines.

The topic of Japan was introduced by his guest, who criticised Zhao for believing he knew how to defeat China's perhaps most formidable enemy. The guest first described the war-like nature of the Japanese:

日本為國 甲於東夷 守不設險 自衛以兵 物產之饒
刀劍之利 民俗輕生 習於戰鬥

The country of Japan is the strongest among the non-Chinese (*yi*) of the east. When defending it does not set up strategic positions, but defends itself with soldiers. Its produce is as abundant as its swords and knives are sharp. The common people by custom do not fear death, and are well practised in battle.¹⁴

The guest then cited the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368) military expeditions against Japan as evidence of Japanese invincibility. After explaining how the Yuan conquered the known world, he continued to emphasize the Yuan's unmatched power:

三五以降 爰逮嬴、劉 輿圖之廣 兵力之盛 自太古始
實稱無兩 惟茲倭奴 負固不臣 赫然震怒 聲罪致討
為謀壯矣 而舟師十萬 盡付天吳 挫敗之慘 至今有餘
懼焉

Since the times of the ancient kings, and through the Qin and Han dynasties (221 B.C.E.–220 C.E.), since the very beginning of history, there has truly never been any match for the territorial size or military strength [of the Yuan]. Only the Japanese (slaves) (Wonu) held their position and did not submit. Imperial wrath was unleashed, their crime announced and a punitive campaign on a grand scale was designed. But the army of one hundred thousand ships, went in its entirety down to Tianwu [the water spirit]. Their defeat was so terrible that even today people remain fearful.¹⁵

The guest's viewpoint – the position the author felt the need to attack – was that the Japanese defeat of the Yuan forces demonstrated an

14 Ibid., 1a.

15 Ibid., 1b.

unmatched military prowess. This part of Zhao's essay is a fascinating insight into how during the East Asian War people in Beijing called upon the disparate shreds of knowledge about the 'Wo' to contextualize the conflict at hand. Zhao's purpose was to dismiss this search for historical explanation of Japanese invincibility. He began by showing frustration with those who talked about foreign affairs but had no experience of the frontier:

足下生長內地 漫遊中原 雖富經濟 未涉封疆 更欲商
 確海外 真執冰以啗夏蟲 宜足下之不我信也 夫有元君
 臣 盡屬胡虜 [...] 耳無所聞 目無所見 新募南人 又皆
 趙宋遺黎 既不為用 復懷幸敗之心

Sir, you have grown up in the interior, and wandered the Central Plain. Though you have much knowledge of the workings of things, you have not ventured to the frontier. To talk [with you] of the world beyond the seas is truly to talk of ice with summer insects; it is natural that you believe me not.

The ruler and officials of the Yuan were all northern-barbarian caitiffs (*hulu*)¹⁶... they had heard of nothing and seen nothing. [Their] newly recruited men of the south were also all the former subjects of the Zhao Song dynasty: they were not cooperative, and in their hearts rejoiced in [Yuan] defeat.¹⁷

16 Zhao displays an intensely disparaging attitude towards Mongolian and Jürchen peoples to the north of the Ming empire, for whom he uses the pejorative label *lu* 虜 ('caitiffs').

17 Zhao Shizhen, "Dong shi sheng yan," 1b – 2a.

Zhao continued in this vein, explaining the exonerating circumstances of the Yuan defeat, before concluding, 'it was truly the work of Heaven; how can it have been a failure in battle, and the strength of the Wo?'¹⁸ In the remainder of the discussion between the Surplus Recluse and his guest, Zhao's persuasive strategy was to put forth specific circumstances which explained Japanese successes. Being also a product of Zhao's brush, the guest could naturally only accept the force of these well-informed arguments. Yet Zhao seemed to feel it might be difficult to convince his reader that the Japanese were not as formidable as had been assumed. His argument builds in a crescendo, and it is half way through the conversation before his guest begins to be convinced, asking, 'if what you say is true, then the brigands can indeed be brought under control?'¹⁹

To prove his point, Zhao then turned to describing victories won against Japanese raiders on the Ming coastline. The character of the guest, ever doubtful of Ming military ability against the Japanese, prepared the way for the climax of these examples of victory by retorting, 'that was but a minor wound: not enough to strike fear

18 「天實為之 豈戰之罪 倭之強哉」 Ibid., 2a.

19 「誠如足下所云 則賊亦可制乎」 Ibid., 3a.

into the heart of the Japanese.²⁰ To this the Surplus Recluse responded:

望海窩之捷 一日之內 勁倭數千 駢首受戮 [...] 迄今二百
餘年 罔敢窺兵遼左者 豈非天威震疊 [...] 紓華夏之氣
破倭奴之膽乎

At the victory at Wanghaiwo [in Liaodong 遼東], within one day several thousand of the strongest Wo put their heads together to be slaughtered. Now already two hundred years have past but they dare not make a military incursion in Liaodong. How was this not the thundering of Celestial Prestige, satisfying all China (Huaxia) and scaring the wits out of the Japanese (slaves) (Wonu)?

Reaching his climax, Zhao made an argument for how Chinese forces had comprehensively defeated the Japanese, with an absence of later attacks in the north given as supporting evidence of enduring Japanese fear.

The debate between the Surplus Recluse and his guest thus fulfilled two aims: to persuade the reader that military success against the Japanese was achievable, and to demonstrate Zhao's knowledge and superior insight into the truth of past Sino-Japanese conflicts.

20 「此小創耳 未足以懼倭心也」 Ibid., 3b.

Looking back on the text from after the war, the position of the guest also pointed to a contemporary Chinese awe of Japanese military strength. That the guest's view was held by a large number of people is also suggested by Zhao in one of his memorials. To the emperor he wrote that everyone speaking about the campaign talks of the Japanese as cunning and ferocious, but that in his opinion they were not worthy of such awe.²¹ He argued that the 'heart of the people has been shaken' (民心動搖), following a single Ming defeat: 'it is not that people of China (Zhongguo) are weaker than the Japanese (slaves) (Wonu), [they] frighten each other with empty rumours.'²² Years later, after the war had come to an end, he again felt the need to address this fear of the Japanese in another memorial.²³ While this was Zhao's subjective impression of popular opinion, his assessment is supported by another author writing a few years after the war. Xu Xizhen, author of *Dong zheng ji* 東征記 (discussed below), also reported that around the time of Zhao's writ-

21 「今之譚者皆曰 倭奴狡獪剽勁 以臣言之 彼亦人也 非魑魅魍魎之變幻 虎狼熊羆之搏噬 何甚畏之」. Ibid., 疏草 1b.

22 「非中國之人弱於倭奴 虛聲自相恐嚇」 Ibid., 疏草 2a.

23 *Wo qing tuntian yi*, 35:2:12b – 13a.

ing it was popularly believed that a vast force would be necessary to combat the strength of the Japanese.²⁴

We therefore come to understand one aspect of Zhao's motivation for publishing the *Dong shi sheng yan*. He wished to dispel the belief that the Japanese were formidable and war with them best avoided. In this we see someone with confidence in his own knowledge and experience. Zhao's friend from the south-east, Gao Cui, related that soon after the beginning of the war he met with acquaintances and the discussion they had on the history of clashes with the Japanese was along the same lines as Zhao's *Dong shi sheng yan*. The knowledge and experience Zhao and Gao brought from the coast led them to dismiss what they felt to be exaggerated hype about Japanese military prowess. Zhao's publishing of *Dong shi sheng yan* in the capital is a case of someone from the frontier, with closer contact with a foreign people, bringing his perspective to his more centrally-based countrymen.

24 「人皆謂倭掃穴而來 勢不可當 必數十萬兵方堪往敵」 Xu Xizhen 徐希震, "Dong zheng ji" 東征記 (Record of the Eastern Expedition), KJ 5249, 6a, Kyujanggak, Seoul National University.

3.2.3 ZHAO AND DEBATES AT COURT

The two memorials included in *Dong shi sheng yan* constituted part of a fierce debate taking place at the beginning of 1594 over whether to pursue peace with the Japanese or restart the paused military offensive. The emperor had been convinced by the Minister of War Shi Xing 石星 (d. 1599) to follow a policy of placating Hideyoshi with the title ‘King of Japan’ and the right to pay tribute (allowing legal trade). Yet, Shi Xing was in the minority in putting trust in the negotiator Shen Weijing 沈惟敬 (d. 1598) and his assurances that enfeoffment and tribute were enough to satisfy Hideyoshi. A greater number of officials advocated using military action to expel the Japanese from the Korean peninsula in order to ensure the security of the Chinese north-east and Beijing.²⁵ Despite opposition, the peace negotiations – largely between Shen Weijing and Konishi Yukinaga – were progressing apace when Zhao Shizhen was writing his memorials. It seems to be partly this fact that prompted Zhao to write: in the second memorial he says the imminent arrival of Konishi Yukinaga’s emissary Konishi Hidanokami 小西飛驒守 (Naitō Joan 内藤如安, c.

25 Swope, *A Dragon’s Head and a Serpent’s Tail*, 198–200.

1550-1626) prompted him to step above his station and propose policy.²⁶

With his relatively low rank, it was not Zhao's responsibility or privilege to participate in such court discussions. Yet, the campaign being such a momentous national effort, it is not surprising that the debate over the correct course of action for the Ming extended much more widely than the court – to include those interested in national affairs, such as Zhao and his acquaintances. In his memorials, Zhao explicitly took sides in the debate, fiercely criticizing the Minister of War's position and giving support to pro-war advocates.²⁷ The policies that he suggested were also very similar to those advocated by Grand Secretary Zhang Wei 張位 (1538-1605) and others in the pro-war faction, such as establishing military farms in Chosŏn and training Chosŏn troops in Chinese tactics. Yet Zhao was not simply repeating others' suggestions. In these and later memorials he proved himself to have very developed ideas on training, tactics, military and economic strategy, administration of the army, and – of course – weapons.²⁸

26 Zhao Shizhen, "Dong shi sheng yan," 疏草 9b – 10a.

27 Ibid., 疏草 5b, 10a – 11a.

28 See for example: Zhao Shizhen, *Wo qing tuntian yi*; Zhao Shizhen, *Bei bian tuntian chechong yi*.

In his later memorials he made reference to his previous suggestions which were acknowledged as received but apparently not acted upon.²⁹ The two memorials in *Dong shi sheng yan* are both followed by the acknowledgement of receipt received two days after submission.³⁰ When *Dong shi sheng yan* was published later that year, Zhao may have already felt frustrated at his proposals not being implemented. We begin to sense Zhao's frustration even in the memorials themselves. In his second memorial he reported that the previous year he saw problems with a proposal for building ships, but knowing it was not his place to join the debate refrained from submitting a memorial. Instead, he visited the Minister of War's personal residence and proceeded to explain to him how it was necessary to first select mooring points and establish the nature of the coastline before designing the ships, and discussed the advantages of building in the north or the south, the price of materials and the workmanship of different shipwrights. The Minister of War was not convinced. Yet now, reported Zhao, things had turned out 'precisely as your servant anticipated.' Feeling justified, he dared to

29 *Bei bian tuntian chechong yi*, 35:2:1b – 2a.

30 "Dong shi sheng yan," 疏草 9a, 20b – 21a.

send his proposals directly to the emperor.³¹ This episode demonstrates Zhao's intense determination to see his policy ideas taken seriously, as well as his highly pragmatic approach to problems. It also reveals the influence of his having spent his youth near the coast.

3.3 UNDERSTANDING THE ENEMY

The broad outline of Zhao's proposed policies did not differ greatly from those put forward by others, yet Zhao felt that he had a superior understanding of the enemy and how best to deal with them. As well as knowledge of Japanese tactics, military strengths and weaknesses, he also showed greater understanding of their internal dynamics. As a result he was able to offer insight into the Japanese perspective that was absent from other contemporary discussions about the Japanese. The following quotation serves as an example. Zhao explained to the emperor that the pirates of the past and today's invasion force are different in nature:

當時之賊 非酋長所遣 私自為盜 有利歸於己 人自為
戰 同心死命之徒 得兵家必勝之機者也 今日之賊則不
然 上迫平酋之威 下有妻子之念 暴露異國 利非己有

31 Ibid., 疏草 19a – b.

The brigands at that time were not sent by a chieftain, but were engaging in robbery by themselves; each man fought for himself. Those who have decided together to risk everything have the military strategist's position of secure victory. Yet the brigands of today are not so. Above, they are pressed by Chieftain Hideyoshi's might; below, they are thinking of their wife and children. Exposed in a foreign country, any gain will not belong to them.³²

Here as in the conversation piece, Zhao's purpose was to explain away the previous successes of Japanese coastal raiders, and argue that victory could be secured against the Japanese in Chosŏn. In doing so he also showed an understanding of the enemy as humans that is more perceptive than that displayed in other contemporary discussions of the Japanese.

In particular, for Zhao to develop a differentiated portrayal of past coastal raiders and Hideyoshi's current invasion was to move in the opposite direction from many of his contemporaries. The contrast is most evident when Zhao's writing is put beside the Chinese accounts of the war written just a few years later and studied below. Though these attempted to be comprehensive accounts of the war and contain great detail, in terms of sophistication in their

32 Ibid., 疏草 3a.

portrayals of the Japanese, they tend towards merging various actors under one label, as ‘Wo’ 倭.

3.3.1 NUANCE LOST WITH TIME

Serving as a point of comparison, the unofficial history *Wanli san da zheng kao* 萬曆三大征考 (Study of the Three Great Campaigns of the Wanli era) is typical in its informed and yet simplistic portrayal of the Japanese.

The author of *Wanli san da zheng kao* is recorded as Mao Ruizheng 茅瑞徵, who like Zhao Shizhen was a scholar-official from Zhejiang province. Though not a great deal of information remains about Mao, we know that he obtained his *jinsi* 進士 degree in 1601, and that the highest civil service post he served in was Chief Minister of the Court of Imperial Entertainments (Guanglusi Qing 光祿寺卿, rank 3b.1). As the Court of Imperial Entertainments was in charge of catering for the imperial household as well as high-ranking officials and dignitaries, we may speculate that some of the information he used to compile the book came as a result of contact with this elite social milieu. Another very likely source of information was through family: his cousin Mao Yuanyi 茅元儀 (1594-1640) served under commander Yang Hao, who had earlier led the 1597 Ming campaign

in Chosŏn, and completed an encyclopedia of military matters, *Wubei zhi* 武備志 (Record of Military Provisions), in 1621.³³

The earliest known edition of *Wanli san da zheng kao* was printed in the very same year as *Wubei zhi*: 1621.³⁴ Mao Ruizheng's account of the war seems to have enjoyed a much wider – or at least more enduring – circulation than Zhao Shizhen's writing, as there are numerous manuscript and print copies surviving in Chinese and Japanese archives, dated from the seventeenth through to the nineteenth century.³⁵ *Wanli san da zheng kao* winning greater popularity is

33 *Wubei zhi* contains a huge quantity of information, suggesting it was probably a collaborative effort. It is possible several members of the Mao family, including Mao Ruizheng, were involved, or that these military publishing projects were related projects. Mao Ruizheng also later produced a study of the *Dongyi* 東夷, or eastern non-Chinese peoples. Mao Yuanyi 茅元儀, *Wubei zhi* 武備志 (Record of Military Provisions), ed. Siku quanshu jin hui congkan bianzuan weiyuanhui 《四庫禁燬書叢刊》編纂委員會 and Wang Zhonghan 王鍾翰, Siku quanshu jin hui shu congkan 四庫禁燬書叢刊 (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe 北京出版社, 2000); Mao Ruizheng 茅瑞徵, *Dongyi kaolüe* 東夷考略 (Brief Study of the *Dongyi*), ed. Siku quanshu jin hui congkan bianzuan weiyuanhui 《四庫禁燬書叢刊》編纂委員會 and Wang Zhonghan 王鍾翰, Siku quanshu jin hui shu congkan bubian 四庫禁燬書叢刊補編 (Beijing, 2005).

34 The publishing house is given as the author's own Huan hua ju 浣花居 in Wuxing 吳興 (modern-day Huzhou 湖州 City, Zhejiang 浙江 province).

35 Original print editions are held in the Shanghai Library (上海图书馆) and the China National Library (中国国家图书馆) in China, and Maeda Ikutokukai (前田育徳会), and the National Documents Archive (国立公文書館) in Japan. Manuscript copies are held in China National Library (中国国家图书馆) and Peking University (北京大学) in China, and Kansai University (関西大学), the National Documents Archive (国立公文書館), and Tōyō Bunko (東洋文庫) in Japan. This list of holdings is likely not exhaustive.

not surprising, however, as it offers a complete narrative of the war, whereas Zhao's writings were mid-war policy advice.

For the readers of *Wanli san da zheng kao*, author Mao Ruizheng felt he needed to place the Japanese in proper historical context. In doing so Mao draws on accurate historical names and dates, yet a lack of understanding of the Japanese internal situation results in disparate actors being presented as one, coherent – if fickle – group:

倭於島夷 稱最強黠 自唐更號日本 [...] 洪武初 遣萊州
府同知趙秩奉璽書 諭其王良懷入貢 已復寇瀕海諸郡
[...] 永樂四年以其王有源道義有補海寇功 賜金印 封其鎮
山 碑而銘之 予勘合 令道寧波 十年一貢 後竟貢寇
無常

The Japanese (Wo) are known as the most powerful and cunning among the non-Chinese (*yi*) of the islands. Since the Tang dynasty they changed the name of their country to Japan. ... At the beginning of the Hongwu era (1368-1398) the Vice Prefect of Laizhou Zhao Zhi was sent to deliver a letter bearing the Imperial seal, proclaiming that their king Liang Huai would send tribute. Before long they again raided all the commanderies on the coast. ... In the fourth year of the Yongle era (1406), on account of his achievements in catching pirates, their king [Ashikaga Yoshimitsu] was awarded a golden seal and given the title Zhen Shan. A stele was carved to commemorate the event. [They] were given a license to trade (*kanhe*) and commanded to travel through Ningbo, paying tribute once every ten years. After this,

however, they were in fact inconsistent: sometimes paying tribute and sometimes raiding.³⁶

In the Hongwu era the activities of pirates and the 'king' are not distinguished, such that all 'Japanese' activities are ascribed to a single agent, which is then blamed for its unreliability. Later, the Japanese shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu is recognised as contributing in the fight against pirates. Yet when pirate raids continue, there is again no clear distinction of responsibility between this ruler and the pirates. Instead, the Japanese are presented as fickle and unreasonable.

In the version of the *Wanli san da zheng kao* held in Peking University, there are occasional comments marked by a later reader of the text, and above the section just quoted there are the words: 'A precursor of the enfeoffment and [giving of permission to pay] tribute' (封貢伏案). This refers to the incident in the middle of the East Asian War when the Ming court sent an embassy to Japan to enfeoff Hideyoshi as king and establish a tributary relationship between the two countries. In what had already become the orthodox narrative

36 Mao Ruizheng 茅瑞徵, "Wanli san da zheng kao" 萬曆三大征考 (Study of the Three Great Campaigns of the Wanli Era), SB/.85/4426 916, 倭上 1a – b, Peking University Library. Ashikaga Yoshimitsu 足利義滿 (1368-1394) was enfeoffed as 'King of Japan' (日本國王) by the Yongle 永樂 (r. 1360-1424) emperor. See Swope, *A Dragon's Head and a Serpent's Tail*, 47.

by the time of *Wanli san da zheng kao*, when receiving the ambassadors Hideyoshi suddenly became furious for no clear reason and launched his second invasion of Chosŏn. The reader's comments in *Wanli san da zheng kao* perfectly demonstrate how the text had succeeded in creating a consistent narrative about the Japanese. The commentator is making explicit what Mao Ruizheng had implied in his historical contextualization: that the Japanese were prone to unpredictable violence, and could not be trusted to keep agreements. With our greater access to information on the internal dynamics of Japanese politics, we know that both instances of apparent betrayal of trust in fact result from a failure to distinguish the multiple actors involved: be it independent raiding parties and central government, or Toyotomi Hideyoshi and his negotiators. Yet in contemporary Chinese writing all these actors were lumped together under the single label of 'Wo.'

If extant copies are a good indicator of circulation, then *Wanli san da zheng kao* appears to have been significantly more influential in shaping later memories of the East Asian War than Zhao's writing. It is revealing that although Zhao's more sophisticated insights had been made public through printing, only a couple of decades later they did not find their way into Mao Ruizheng's popular narrative of

the war. This exemplifies how more accurate information from the periphery was only selectively absorbed into the orthodox narratives of the war that emerged.

3.3.2 NUANCE OVERLOOKED

Another account of the Ming campaign in Chosŏn, produced even sooner after the war, demonstrates that simplification in portrayal of the Japanese did not result from the passing of time so much as authorial choice. *Dong zheng ji* 東征記 (Record of the Eastern Campaign), was composed in 1604, when Ming troops had only just finally withdrawn from Chosŏn.³⁷

In contrast with the relatively abundant copies of *Wanli san da zheng kao* that survive, the only version of *Dong zheng ji* still extant is held in the Kyujanggak Institute in Seoul. This may not indicate insignificant circulation, however. Not only did *Dong zheng ji* evidently reach Korea, but the woodblock copy that did was probably not the first printing, as it was produced under the reigns of subsequent

³⁷ There are no publication notes, prefaces, or colophons that survive with *Dong zheng ji*, but within the text the author gives the eleventh lunar month of 1604 as the date for his completion of writing.

Ming emperors (after 1621, and likely before 1644).³⁸ A potential explanation for the text's relative initial popularity but subsequent disappearance from Chinese archives might be *Dong zheng ji's* unabashed exaltation of the Wanli emperor and the Ming dynasty at the expense of its Jürchen and Japanese neighbours: this would have made it a politically suspect text only a few decades later in the Qing dynasty (1644-1911).³⁹

In explaining his motives for writing, author Xu Xizhen professed a concern that as time passed documents relating to the campaign in Chosŏn would be lost. In order to collect together source material for future historians, he gathered official news bulletins (*dibao* 邸報), as well as news or opinions current in society.⁴⁰ Xu Xizhen's account was no dispassionate recording of information, however. Arguing that the achievement of the Ming's campaign was unparalleled in history, Xu wanted this to be appreciated by later

38 We can deduce that the woodblock was probably cut between 1621 and 1644 because it replaces the normal graph for *you* (a preposition indicating origin or cause), 由, with 繇, which was required by law during the reigns of the Ming dynasty emperors Zhu Youxiao 朱由校 (1621–1627) and Zhu Youjian 朱由檢 1627–1644.

39 Other texts discussing Ming military matters were banned under the Qing, including *Wubei zhi* and *Dongyi kaolüe* discussed above. Mao Yuanyi, *Wubei zhi*; Mao Ruizheng, *Dongyi kaolüe*.

40 Xu Xizhen, "Dong zheng ji," 38b, 43a.

generations.⁴¹ He wove the events of the Ming intervention in Chosŏn into a story of wider appeal: a heroic tale of good against evil, with wise generals and scurrilous villains. It is not surprising, therefore, that in such a tale nuance in understanding of the Japanese was lost. Yet it is significant that this happened in the same way as seen in *Wanli san da zheng kao*: by merging disparate actors under one label. Xu Xizhen provides an interesting comparison with Zhao Shizhen, as he was Zhao's contemporary, also having lived through the Chosŏn campaign, but apparently had no special experience of closer proximity to the Japanese. His mixture of court news and rumours were the sources upon which those at the 'centre' relied for understanding the wider world.

In *Dong zheng ji*, the Japanese are introduced as follows:

倭奴國 僻居海嶠 僭號日本 其習俗貪殘 自隋唐宋以
來 真諸化外 隔尾閭故也 弘治時 曾遣僧入貢 優禮
延待 歸蕪崇明 即露刃剽掠 負柔懷初意 無恩誼可知
已

The Land of Wonu is located in a distant corner of the seas. It dares to claim the name Japan (lit., Origin of the Sun). Its customs are of greed and cruelty. Since the Sui and Tang dynasties, it has been beyond the pale of civilization (*hua wai*)⁴² due to being isolated.

41 Ibid., 39a.

During the Hongzhi era (1488–1505), [the Japanese] sent a tribute mission led by monks. They were received as honoured guests. After the mission they were indeed respectful, but almost immediately they drew their blades and began looting and pillaging, in betrayal of [the Ming's] original intention of appeasement. From this it can be seen that they have no sense of gratitude or duty.⁴³

Even simpler than that given in *Wanli san da zheng kao*, this history in *Dong zheng ji* had the same premise of seeing the Japanese as one actor and thus drawing the conclusion that they were unreliable. It also readily slotted the Japanese into the established rubric of the civilized and the barbarous – in Xu Xizhen's words, the *hua* and *yi*⁴⁴ – with no effort to understand them. If Xu Xizhen had not seen Zhao's writing, he would probably have had access at least to Xu Yihou's widely circulated report, which was cited in the contemporaneously-produced *Liangchao pingrang lu* 兩朝平攘錄.⁴⁵ Xu Yihou's report also differentiated not only between individual political actors within Japan, but also between pirates and rulers of Japan in general. It seems that this level of sophistication was considered superfluous by

42 A more literal translation of the phrase *hua wai* 化外 would be 'outside transformative influence.' The transformation referred to is the positive moral and cultural influence of the emperor.

43 Xu Xizhen, "Dong zheng ji," 1a.

44 For Xu's use of these terms, see for example *Ibid.*, 20a.

45 For discussion of *Liangchao pingrang lu*, see chapters 1 and 2.

writers such as Xu Xizhen or Mao Ruizheng. Complexity did not complement Xu Xizhen's caricature of an evil invading horde which could not be reasoned with, or Mao Ruizheng's narrative of consistent Japanese unreliability and violence.

3.3.3 FRONTIER INSIGHT AND CENTRAL PREJUDICE

Zhao showed a more insightful understanding of the Japanese situation, based not only on possessing more information but also on allowing the Japanese a greater level of humanity. In realizing they had families they wished to return to, he showed a greater empathy than his contemporaries. This is not simply a reflection of different purposes of writing. A romantic narrative such as *Dong zheng ji* provides a revealing contrast, but such simplified portrayals of the Japanese are equally evident in writing of the same genre as Zhao Shizhen's memorials. For example, the policy proposals of Grand Secretary Zhang Wei, of which Zhao was writing in support, also presented the Japanese in a two-dimensional manner, as an aggressive people, 'cut off from the ways of heaven.'⁴⁶ Zhao in fact compares his own view to those of his contemporaries:

46 Swope, *A Dragon's Head and a Serpent's Tail*, 200.

今之譚者皆曰 倭奴狡獪剽勁 以臣言之 彼亦人也 非
魑魅魍魎之變幻 虎狼熊羆之搏噬 何甚畏之

At present, all those speaking about [the campaign against the Japanese] say: 'The Japanese are sly and cunning, strong and fierce.' In your servant's opinion, they are also human. They are not the random transformations of ghosts or ghouls, nor the pouncing and devouring of tigers, wolves or bears. Why fear them greatly?⁴⁷

The characteristics ascribed to the Japanese as cited by Zhao correspond to those informing the *Wanli san da zheng kao* and *Dong zheng ji* portrayals of the Japanese above. It seems that this view became pervasive early on in the war, colouring all later portrayals, and acting as a filter on new information being received about the Japanese. This can help explain why the author of *Liangchao pingrang lu* on the one hand quoted both Xu Yihou's and Hwang Shin's reports on Japan and on the other continued to portray the Japanese as unpredictable savages.⁴⁸

The fact that in the above excerpt Zhao must emphasise the Japanese are also *ren* 人 (people, human) is telling. To those for whom the Japanese were never more than rumours and tales, and who may have been more interested in court politics or Ming heroics

47 "Dong shi sheng yan," 疏草 1b.

48 For discussion of *Liangchao pingrang lu* and its use of these reports, see chapters 1 and 2.

than understanding such a distant people, the 'Wo' quickly transformed into savages and wild beasts, who needed no further explanation. It was necessary for Zhao, who realized they were but people, perhaps characterized by certain ways of fighting, to rid the Japanese of their exotic and caricatured status in order to counter an apparent widespread fear of their military prowess.

While it is very rare for Chinese or Korean texts written during the war to use the term *ren* (K. *in*) to refer to the Japanese,⁴⁹ in an interesting coincidence, diarist Oh Hŭimun used precisely the same words as Zhao, 'they are also human' (彼亦人也), and in a similar context.⁵⁰ Lamenting the incompetence of the Chosŏn official defence effort, Oh argues that being human, the Japanese surely must fear death too, and an organized defence should be able to

49 One of the only other instances of the term *ren/in* 人 being used in a text of this time to refer to the Japanese is in a Chosŏn letter addressed to the Japanese, which read: 'Although [the people of] your country are said to be barbarians, [you] are also human' (汝國雖曰蠻夷 亦是人也). "P'iro waein Yŏn Yŏmun hyŏngo" 被擄倭人連汝文現告 in Yi Tak'yŏng 李擢英, "Chŏngmannok" 征蠻錄 (Record of Campaigning against the Barbarians), 67b, reg. treasure no. 880, Hanguk kukhak chinhŭng wŏn 韓國國學振興院 (Advanced Center for Korean Studies), Andong.

50 Oh Hŭimun 吳希文, "Swaemi rok" 鎖尾錄 (Record of a Refugee), 壬辰南行日錄序, Jangseogak Royal Archives, <http://yoksa.aks.ac.kr>. For further discussion of Oh Hŭimun and his opinions on the Chosŏn court as well as the Japanese, see chapter 4.

resist them.⁵¹ It seems that the force of the initial Japanese victories left people in both Chosŏn and the Ming overly fearful of them, something that Zhao looked to correct. Zhao Shizhen in fact dedicated a question and answer pair in his conversation essay to arguing for the supreme importance of ‘public morale and esprit de corps’ (民心士氣), saying that confidence in China’s (Zhongguo) ability to control the Japanese (Wo) had been devastated after earlier coastal raids and the 1592 defeat in Korea (Koryŏ).⁵² While Zhao offered a raft of specific policy suggestions for everything from military tactics to logistics, the fundamental argument running through the whole of *Dong shi sheng yan* is that China should not fear the Japanese, because despite much hype to the contrary, given a realistic assessment, the Japanese could never match China as a military force.

3.4 VISIONS OF CHINA

In tandem with seeking to debunk popular myth regarding the Japanese as invincible, Zhao implored his peers – and the emperor – to reassess China’s position in the world. While his rhet-

51 Ibid., *Imjin namhaeng illok sŏ* 壬辰南行日錄序.

52 Zhao Shizhen, “*Dong shi sheng yan*,” 5a – 5b.

oric is full of clichéd claims about the supremacy of the dynasty – as well as the inevitable sycophantic extolling of the splendour of the current emperor’s rule – it nevertheless argued the position of China in the East Asian War in a subtly different way than other contemporary writers. A comparison of a core paragraph in Zhao Shizhen’s memorial and a revealing tale presented by Xu Xizhen in *Dong zheng ji* proves illuminating in this regard.

3.4.1 CHINA THE UNASSAILABLE

Judging from his writing in both the conversation essay and the memorials, Zhao Shizhen was utterly convinced that China held a position of unmatched strength in the world. He was therefore deeply frustrated that people around him and at court talked of a depleted Ming army and the invincibility of the Japanese raiders. For Zhao, Ming failure was due to poor policy and inappropriate military tactics, that could and should be corrected. Before discussing specific policy suggestions in his memorial, Zhao explained why he believed the current situation was an unacceptable state of affairs:

臣伏而思之 我中國有至大至尊之體 長勝之機 執其機
以端我尊大之體 撫四夷 綏萬邦 莫不來享 莫不來王
者 緣此 機常在我中國也 漢人有言 匈奴不足當中國
一大縣 區區日本 僻處東溟 又不足當匈奴一大部落

我太祖高皇帝 以蚩虺擬之 豈無所見而云然哉 乃今不察情形 不論小大 惟信幸災樂禍 喜亂奸黨之言 反張賊勢 么麼小醜 名為敵國 較強弱於一勝一負之間 論兵機於一事一節之內 不思中國有至尊至大之體 以我長勝之機 反為賊得執之 臣死不敢服 今日之見為然也

Your servant has pondered over this. Our China (Zhongguo) has the largest and most esteemed polity (lit., body), and permanent strategic advantage. Taking hold of these circumstances to support our great and esteemed polity, pacifying the barbarians of the four directions and the ten thousand countries [of the world], there are none who do not come to make offerings and be enfeoffed as kings [of their countries]. For this reason, the advantage is always with our China.

The people of the Han dynasty said that the Xiongnu were not equal to even one large prefecture of China. Miniscule Japan (Riben), far off in the eastern sea, is not even equal to one large settlement of the Xiongnu. When our grand ancestor the first emperor [of the Ming] likened them to mosquitoes he was making no baseless remark!

Yet today, [people] do not examine the situation, do not take account of relative size, and only believe the words of those who delight in disaster and the chaos of factional politics, and rather aggrandize the brigands' position. [They] refer to tiny and insignificant upstarts as a rival [equal] country, and decide who is strong and who is weak based on a single victory or defeat, and who holds military advantage based on individual specific matters. [They] do not consider that China has the largest and most esteemed polity. That our permanent advantage has rather been taken by the brigands, I would die before I accept it. What we see today is this situation.⁵³

53 Ibid., 疏草 11a – 11b.

At first glance, Zhao's belittling of China's neighbours and self-aggrandizing language appears just a continuation of clichés about Chinese supremacy, so often detached from reality. Yet we must remember that in the sixteenth-century East Asian context in which Zhao was writing, it was in fact quite reasonable to assert that the Ming empire was unmatched in size or strength. Moreover, in Zhao's arguments, China's superior status is not abstractly derived but inseparable from its unmatched size. Zhao argues that the Ming had plentiful soldiers and wealth, if only it could use them efficiently and effectively.⁵⁴ It was this pragmatic assessment that justified Zhao's assertion of Chinese superiority, not abstract legitimizing narratives or claims of cultural supremacy.

3.4.2 CHINA THE RIGHTEOUS

The significance of Zhao Shizhen's pragmatic assessment of the international situation only becomes apparent when placed next to other contemporary portrayals of China. While the author of *Dong zheng ji*, Xu Xizhen, would undoubtedly have agreed with Zhao

⁵⁴ Ibid., 12a.

about China's superior size, this is not the basis on which he asserted Chinese supremacy.

The China portrayed in *Dong zheng ji* is superior in a variety of ways. Xu Xizhen first of all celebrated the intelligence and military prowess of Ming commanders. Wan Shide 萬世德, for example, (who we learn through *Swaemi rok* was in fact corrupt)⁵⁵ terrified the Japanese with just the news of his coming, and before he even reached Chosŏn, upon realizing the 'caitiffs' (Jürchen) needed to be taught a lesson, promptly donned his armour and charged into battle, taking many enemy heads.⁵⁶ In addition to portraying individual Ming commanders as vastly superior to the enemy, Xu Xizhen also emphasised how foreign peoples were impressed by things Chinese during the campaign. The Koreans (lit., 'people of Koryŏ' 麗人) were so awe-struck by 'Chinese clothing and adornments' (中國服飾) that they begged for Chinese troops to stay after the end of the war, wrote Xu.⁵⁷ Xu was indulging a sense of collective pride by allowing his readers to imagine Chinese troops dazzling culturally-inferior non-Chinese peoples.

55 See chapter 4.

56 Xu Xizhen, "Dong zheng ji," 34a – 34b.

57 Ibid., 41a.

The most vivid portrayal of China's special status in *Dong zheng ji* is undoubtedly the instance of divine intervention, which Xu Xizhen narrated as follows:

四路進兵 倭退下洋 陳璘等將危迫時 但見陰雲漠漠
海氣濛濛 半空中望見長鬚紅面神將橫大刀 擐倭旗 馘
倭隊 通海皆綠巾兵馬 倭始知中國帝皇天縱仁聖 神器
有授 非貪謀可欺 莫不魂飛魄散 棄甲投戈 土崩瓦解
矣

When the army was advancing on four fronts, the Japanese had retreated out to sea and Chen Lin and the others were about to press them. Then dark clouds could be seen to gather thickly, and mist from the sea making a haze. They saw at a distance a spirit general with a long beard and red face in mid-air. He swung a great sword, felling the Japanese flags and beheading the Japanese army. The whole sea was soldiers and horses wearing green [head]bands. It was only then that the Japanese understood that the emperor of China (Zhongguo) is given sagacity and benevolence by Heaven, and bestowed with the vessels of power. He cannot be challenged by covetous plotting. They were all frightened out of their wits. Throwing off their armour and abandoning their weapons, their army crumbled to pieces.⁵⁸

In this story, China's authority was justified in terms of the appointment by Heaven of its ruler. Xu Xizhen was arguing that the Japanese could never have unseated 'the emperor of China' from his position of supremacy, not because of superior Chinese military might or size, but because the ruler of China was divinely appointed.

58 Ibid., 32a – 32b.

This divine blessing was also presented as inseparable from righteousness, a moral superiority. This is implied by Xu's later comment on the episode, that, 'spirits aided the victory [...] spreading the righteous might (*wei*) of the court.'⁵⁹ The symbolism of the whole episode was in fact designed to convey that righteousness was on China's side: the unnamed spirit general who appeared is the embodiment of righteousness itself. Xu Xizhen did not need to name the spirit for his readers, because his description of a long beard, red face, and green headbands already identified him: it was none other than Guan Yu.⁶⁰

Guan Yu 關羽 was a historical military figure of the Three Kingdoms period (220-280), but by this point in history had long since developed to become a deity. The cult of Guan Yu reached a high point during the Ming dynasty, and the reign of the Wanli

59 「神鬼助功 [...] 揚朝廷有道之威」 Ibid., 32b.

60 The distinctive visual features attributed to Guan Yu developed partly from mention of his beard in historical record, and partly from visual characterizations of him in Yuan dynasty drama. Li Linglong 李玲瓏, "Yuan dai Guan Yu chongbai yu Yuan zaju zhong de Guan Yu xingxiang" 元代关羽崇拜与元杂剧中的关羽形象 (Worship of Guan Yu in the Yuan Dynasty and the Image of Guan Yu in Yuan Plays), *Qinghai shifan daxue minzu shifan xueyuan xuebao* 青海师范大学民族师范学院学报 17, no. 1 (2006): 34-37; Liu Haiyan 刘海燕, "Guan Yu xingxiang yu Guan Yu chongbai de chuanbo yu jieshou" 关羽形象与关羽崇拜的传播与接受 (Spread and Acceptance of the Image and Worship of Guan Yu), *Nankai Xuebao* 南开学报 no. 1 (2006): 74-79.

emperor (1573-1620) in particular. Though originally a folk cult, during this period worship of Guan Yu gained patronage at the highest levels. Previous Ming emperors had performed rites to Guan Yu, but as a particularly fervent patron, the Wanli emperor went as far as to bestow Guan Yu with the title of 'emperor.'⁶¹ This imperial association could possibly explain Xu Xizhen's linking of Guan Yu with imperial authority in the passage quoted above. A work of rather fanciful history similar to *Dong zheng ji* and written not long before, in 1581 (the ninth year of the Wanli reign), makes a similar connection, with a warrior of 'a long beard and red face' suddenly appearing outside the emperor's tent: people responded by assuming it must be Spirit Guan (關神) protecting the emperor.⁶² By calling on popular imagery of a righteous folk hero and deity, Xu Xizhen invited his readers to take satisfaction in identifying with this force of righteousness as he destroyed the Japanese villains. *Dong zheng ji*

61 Kuwano Eiji 桑野栄治, "Chosŏn Korea and Ming China after the Imjin Waeran: State Rituals in the Later Chosŏn Period," in *The East Asian War: International Relations, Violence, and Memory*, ed. James Bryant Lewis (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2015), 294–322.

62 Sun Gaoliang 孫高亮, *Yu Shaobao cuizhong zhuan* 于少保萃忠傳, Guben xiaoshuo jicheng 古本小說集成 235 (Shanghai guji chubanshe 上海古籍出版社, 1994), chap. 19. *Yu Shaobao cuizhong zhuan* tells the story of folk hero Yu Qian 于謙 (1398-1457) of Qiantang 錢塘, Zhejiang, which was also the hometown of the author Sun Gaoliang. Though focusing on one individual, Yu Qian's tale is also one of a righteous hero.

was appealing to a market of readers that enjoyed tales of heroism, using romantic narrative elements to embellish what also attempted to be a serious historical work. In doing so, he vividly portrayed China as occupying a unique position in the world, asserting both graphically and verbally that the Chinese emperor had a special status not available to the Japanese would-be challengers, a status combining moral superiority and the divine blessing earned by that morality.

3.4.3 SIMILAR WORDS, DIFFERENT ARGUMENTS

The portrayal of China in *Dong zheng ji* stands in contrast to Zhao Shizhen's calls for a re-assertion of confidence in China's position based on its inherently superior strength. Xu Xizhen was of course writing after the war, allowing him to take victory for granted, and launch into romance. A direct comparison of the two is also difficult because the genre and purpose of Xu and Zhao's writing differed so greatly. Yet Xu Xizhen's eulogization of the emperor demonstrated some of the language that was also available to Zhao. Zhao did indulge in the use of some of the same rhetoric of superiority that simplified the world in a self-serving way. For example, arguing against those who worried about the Japanese taking

advantage of tribute relations to attack China, he wrote to the emperor:

堂堂天朝 四夷咸賓 萬世一時之盛 即受其貢 區區小醜 何足為中國患哉!

The grand Celestial Court, visited by the barbarians of the four directions, a splendour unmatched in ten thousand generations; even if [we] accept their tribute, how could this miniscule and insignificant people be trouble to China (Zhongguo)!⁶³

In a similar vein, Zhao also used the common Chinese designation of the Japanese as ‘barbarians’ (*yidi*) to aid his argument that China need not fear espionage on Japanese tribute missions:

若以倭使之來 覘我虛實 無論倭中多有中國奸人 獨不曰賊能窺我 我之使臣 豈不能窺賊乎 [...] 智謀防範 反出夷狄之下 臣不敢信也

If one takes the Japanese (Wo) ambassador coming as spying on our strengths and weaknesses, then even leaving aside that there are many despicable Chinese (*Zhongguo jianren*) among the Japanese, why do they talk only of the brigands spying on us? Can our emissaries not also gain insight into the brigands? Your servant dares not believe that [China’s] strategic cunning and preventative measures will rather be inferior to those of the barbarians (*yidi*).⁶⁴

63 Zhao Shizhen, “Dong shi sheng yan,” 疏草 07b – 08a.

64 Ibid., 疏草 6a – 6b.

Despite his use of such language, in both the examples quoted above Zhao's discussion never strayed into assertions of moral or cultural superiority. Where he contrasted the great Celestial Court with the pitiful Japanese, he was adding rhetorical flourish to his comparison of their objective sizes; where Zhao talked of 'barbarians,' he was actually making the modest proposal that the Chinese should not consider themselves inferior or take a passive stance vis-à-vis the Japanese. His use of the same clichéd language shows how Zhao was immersed in the same tradition of dangerously self-aggrandizing rhetoric that also caricatured foreign peoples. Yet his more intimate knowledge of foreign peoples, and particularly military engagement with them, were probably important factors in encouraging Zhao to call for a realistic appraisal of the situation. Zhao not only understood the Japanese as more than a myth or caricature, but also highly valued European technological innovations. His far greater knowledge of the foreign explains why Zhao Shizhen was not inclined to dismiss the 'barbarians' out of hand, but instead argued that if only China would adopt the most effective strategy, tactics, and weapons, it could maintain its rightful position of unchallenged supremacy.

Zhao Shizhen's more nuanced vision of the Japanese and realist position on China's superiority seem not to have made their way into subsequent accounts of the war, however. After the war, it seems that the one-time fear of the Japanese – which Zhao argued so persistently against – only served to increase the glory of the final Ming victory. The need to understand the Japanese as more than unreliable rogues dissipated quickly, or was never widely appreciated. A combination of spatial distance from the Japanese and increasing temporal distance from the point of crisis allowed writers such as Xu Xizhen to eschew practical arguments in favour of myths of innate moral and cultural superiority and divine favour. To these later writers, Zhao Shizhen's arguments would have provided superfluous detail on the barbarians, albeit interspersed with satisfying confirmation of China's unassailable position at the top of the world.

Chapter 4 | Oh Hŭimun

Refugee in his own land

4.1 INTRODUCTION

S *waemi rok* 瑣尾錄¹ is possibly the richest single source from the East Asian War outside of the court records, which are unmatched in sheer volume. This is because it is both extensive – covering ten years from 1591 to 1601 – and broad in the areas of life which it covers. It is a personal diary, but as this chapter will show, Oh Hŭimun 吳希文 (1539-1613) also recorded what he knew of the wider events going on around him. Not only is the breadth of information to which the author had access impressive, his recording of events and his reactions ‘as they happened’ gives us the best possible insight into how the war looked to someone living through it rather than reflecting back on it. Particu-

1 The first character of the title is sometimes written as 鎖, notably in the collection of the Jangseogak Royal Archives, which provides the digital rendition of the diary referenced here. (Jangseogak Royal Archives, <http://yoksa.aks.ac.kr>.) The reasoning behind this variation is not clear, as 瑣 is the form used both in the original manuscript and in common usage.

larly relevant to this thesis's study is the context which this provides for Oh Hŭimun's thinking about Chosŏn, the Ming empire, and Japan: we see the specific experiences that helped shape his outlook. More than this, through Oh's recording of people's lives around him, we gain insights into not only his experience, but what the war meant for the lives of so many on the Korean peninsula.

4.1.1 THE AUTHOR

The title *Swaemi rok* is translated here as 'A Refugee's Record.' As perhaps the term 'refugee' in English also implies, *swaemi* 瑣尾 describes the pitiful state of wandering endured by someone displaced.² This captures well the theme of the diary: Oh Hŭimun's self-pity and feeling of helplessness as he and his family are displaced again and again during the invasions of 1592-1598. From his repeated laments in the diary, we can sense that this self-pity did not begin with his experiences from 1592, but rather grew out of his

2 It originates in the Book of Odes (詩經 C. *Shijing*, K. *Sigyŏng*), and Oh Hŭimun likely had in mind Zhu Xi's commentary explaining the term as a pitiful state of displacement. See the introductory notes in the first volume of Oh Hŭimun 吳希文, *Swaemi rok* 瑣尾錄, ed. Kuksa pyŏnch'an wiwŏnhoe 國史編纂委員會, 2 vols., Hanguk saryo ch'ongsŏ 韓國史料叢書 14 (Kwach'ŏn: Kuksa pyŏnch'an wiwŏnhoe 國史編纂委員會, 1962).

longer life experience. Oh's father died when he was very young, as did all his uncles, leaving his mother to raise him in relative poverty.³ Oh was educated, presumably with a view to taking the civil service examinations that would have won him employment and secured his family's continued noble status as *yangban* 兩班 (the ruling class of civil and military officials and their families).⁴ Oh was never successful in becoming an official, however. As a result he was intensely aware that his wife and mother were suffering poverty because of his failure to provide for them.⁵ Despite being financially poor, Oh could boast a noble family history stretching back thirteen generations to the time of the Koryŏ dynasty (935-1392) and his noble status provided him with potent social resources. We gain insight into the fascinating working of his social networks, seeing how he relied on his wife's family and increasingly his son's connections to survive. His diary of 1591-1601 traces a tangible turning point in family fortunes for the better, in that one of his four sons, Yun'gyŏm, rises in the ranks of the civil service – succeeding where his father had

3 Oh Hŭimun 吳希文, "Swaemi rok" 鎖尾錄 (Record of a Refugee), 庚子(1600) 5.5, Jangseogak Royal Archives, <http://yoksa.aks.ac.kr>.

4 *Yangban* status was hereditary, but only for three generations.

5 Oh Hŭimun, "Swaemi rok," 己亥(1599) 7.6.

failed.⁶ After his father's death, Oh Yun'gyöm 吳允謙 (1559-1636) was to rise to the very highest positions of government, such that his father was bestowed the posthumous title of Head of State Council (領議政). Though beyond the scope of this thesis, it emerges that Oh Yun'gyöm was to follow in the footsteps of the 1596 ambassador to Japan, Hwang Shin, and leave his own diary when he was sent to Japan to negotiate the return of abductees in 1617.⁷

4.1.2 THE DIARY

Oh Hūimun, of course, knew none of this when he began writing his diary in 1591. Equally unaware of the impending invasion, Oh started a modest travel diary, jotting occasional descriptions of his journey south to visit relatives and manage his assets. As news of the Japanese landing in the southeast reached him in Chōlla, he

6 Oh Hūimun had four sons and three daughters, until the youngest daughter died. By the end of the war he had nine grandsons and at least two granddaughters.

7 Oh Yun'gyöm's diary was even to share the same title as that attributed to 1596 Deputy Ambassador Pak Hongchang: *Tong sa rok* 東槎錄 (Record of Sailing to the East). Chōng Manjo 정만조, "Oh Yungyöm" 오윤겸, *Inmul sajōn* 인물 사전 (Biographical Dictionary), Hanguk yōkdae inmul chonghap chōngbo sisūtaem 한국역대인물 종합정보시스템 (Historical Persons of Korea Comprehensive Information System) (The Academy of Korean Studies, 2015), <http://people.aks.ac.kr/>.

began committing his worries to paper. Soon the diary became a daily habit, which he rarely broke over the remaining nine years. What he later named ‘*Swaemi rok*’ seems to have provided him with a sort of comfort in the midst of an unpredictable situation. His absolute consistency in writing in Classical Chinese rather than colloquial Korean means that he was placing his writing in that long and vast tradition of Chinese writing, providing a familiar context of meanings in which to make sense of the chaos.⁸ Oh’s choice of language means his whole experience is – at times implicitly, at times explicitly – set within an established literary frame of reference. Chosŏn, its officials, and all that goes on are discussed in terms of the historical (largely Chinese) precedent, in which Oh and his peers had all been brought up.

8 The creeping influence of Korean can be seen in the Classical Chinese language of *Swaemi rok*. For example, Korean sentence structure (with the verb in final position) can very occasionally be observed, e.g. in the sentence ‘I ate thirty-eight pieces [of tofu] and Yŏnmyŏng forty-eight ate’ (余食三十八串 彦明四十串食已). (Though impossible to render in translation, in this sentence the aspect-modifying morpheme has also been placed after the verb rather than before, following Korean rather than Chinese word-order.) Oh Hŭimun, “*Swaemi rok*,” 丁酉(1597) 8.7. Korean words are also written in Chinese, e.g. *ŏmŏnim* 어머니 as 母主. Yet it is significant that in ten years of writing Oh Hŭimun never once resorts to using a Hangŭl character; writing in Classical Chinese was a very deliberate choice.

This begs the question of readership: for whom did Oh write? To this there is no definite answer. He wrote at least partly for himself, and we see him looking back through earlier years of the diary already in the latter years of the war.⁹ It is unlikely that he envisaged, or that the diary enjoyed, any kind of wide audience, if only because the intensely personal account would have been of little interest to contemporaries. The changing prices of goods; what food he received from whom; that after giving birth his daughter-in-law had soup made with seaweed bought from a Jeju-island boat;¹⁰ that Oh was deeply upset when one slave starved himself to death after his partner and another slave eloped; that Oh ordered the perpetrator arrested when another slave had her head forcibly shaved by her partner's jealous former wife;¹¹ that one year mice ruined the family's silk-thread production; or that he increasingly received Japanese and Chinese goods as gifts:¹² the endless minutiae of his daily life are now invaluable to social and cultural historians but

9 For example, *Ibid.*, 丁酉(1597) 7.4.

10 *Ibid.*, 丙申(1596) 3.29.

11 *Ibid.*, 乙未(1595) 12.12–16, 4.27.

12 The presence of both Chinese and Japanese armies leads to a huge increase in cross-border trade, which is reflected in the items that Oh Hüimun records receiving. These include Chinese tea, fans, pins, and a Japanese fan. *Ibid.*, 乙未(1595) 12.24–25, 丁酉 (1597) 7.2, 戊戌(1598) 5.12.

would have had little appeal to his contemporaries.¹³ Oh's recording of military and political events as he first hears about them can now be used as valuable complementary evidence for what happened in such controversial events as the siege at Ulsan 蔚山, but they would have been old news for those who had lived through the war themselves.¹⁴ For the purposes of textual analysis, we should bear in mind that Oh will have been self-conscious when writing, expecting others to read the diary, but it is likely he envisaged sharing it only with family or close friends.

The diary was certainly prized by his family in subsequent years. In 1909, one member of the Oh family wrote that from when he was a child he had heard how the 'Head of State Council's diary' was kept by the senior descendant line. The year before, he and another cousin had determined to ask to see it, and then decided that

13 The academic study of *Swaemi rok* to date has mostly sought insights into the lives of *yangban* and slaves. For example, Miyajima Hiroshi 宮嶋博史, *Yangban 양반*, trans. No Yŏnggu 노영구 (Sŏul: Kang 강, 1996), e.g. 153; Kichung Kim, "Unheard Voices: The Lives of the Nobi in Ō Hwi-Mun's Swaemirok.," *Korean Studies* 27 (2004): 108–37.

14 The unexpected defeat of Ming-Chosŏn forces at Ulsan became the chief accusation brought against commander Yang Hao 楊鎬 as Ming factional politics spilled onto the Korean battlefield. See Li Guangtao 李光濤, "Ming ren yuan Han yu Yang Hao Yushan zhi yi" 明人援韓與楊鎬蔚山之役 (The Ming's Aid to Korea and Yang Hao's Battle of Ulsan), *Lishi yuyan yanjiu suo jikan* 歷史語言研究所季刊 41, no. 4 (1969): 545–66.

they must copy the diary in order to preserve it. The seven books of what appears to be the original manuscript written by Oh Hŭimun were then shared out to the different branches of the family in order that they could make copies.¹⁵ A note written by a member of one of the branches involved in the copying at this time is shown in Figure 6.¹⁶ The Ohs original intention had been to publish the diary, but they decided this would be difficult in the circumstances: three hundred years on, the Japanese were in Chosŏn once more and the country was in a very different state of political upheaval.¹⁷ It was not until much later in the twentieth century that a group of academics undertook the work of photographing and transcribing the diary,

15 Oh's descendants believed it to be the original, and the editors of the annotated edition concur. That it is the original is supported by the extremely rough nature of the handwriting in the manuscript, that shows no attempt to create a clean copy. Given the sizeable length of the diary, making a clean copy would have been a significant investment of time, likely deterring Oh or others from attempting the task. Regarding the history of the manuscript and its current condition, see editors' notes in Oh Hŭimun 吳希文, *Swaemi rok* 瑣尾錄, ed. Kuksa pyŏnch'an wiwŏnhoe 國史編纂委員會, 2 vols., *Hanguk saryo ch'ongsŏ* 韓國史料叢書 14 (Kwach'ŏn: Kuksa pyŏnch'an wiwŏnhoe 國史編纂委員會, 1962).

16 The image in Figure 6 is taken from "Hanguk hyangt'o munhwa daejŏn" 한국향토문화전자대전, Database, *Hanguk-hak chungang yŏnguwŏn* 한국학중앙연구원 (Academy of Korean Studies), accessed 2015, <http://www.grandculture.net/>.

17 In 1905 Chosŏn had formally become a protectorate of Japan; Chosŏn was annexed by Japan in 1910.

and making it available to wider society in an annotated edition.¹⁸ Therefore, in this chapter there can be no study of *Swaemi rok*'s influence on other texts. Instead, the contents of the diary give first-hand insight into the dynamic flow of information, people, and objects that was taking place during what we now call the East Asian War.

Section 4.2 below gives a brief outline of Oh Hŭimun's experience of the war period as related by his diary. The remaining sections supplement these experiences of Oh's with additional evidence in analyses of what *Swaemi rok* can teach us about how Chosŏn, Japan, and China were envisioned, by Oh Hŭimun and also more widely.

18 Oh Hŭimun, *Swaemi rok*, ed. Kuksa pyŏnch'an wiwŏnhoe, 2 vols., Hanguk saryo ch'ongsŏ 14 (Kwach'ŏn: Kuksa pyŏnch'an wiwŏnhoe, 1962).

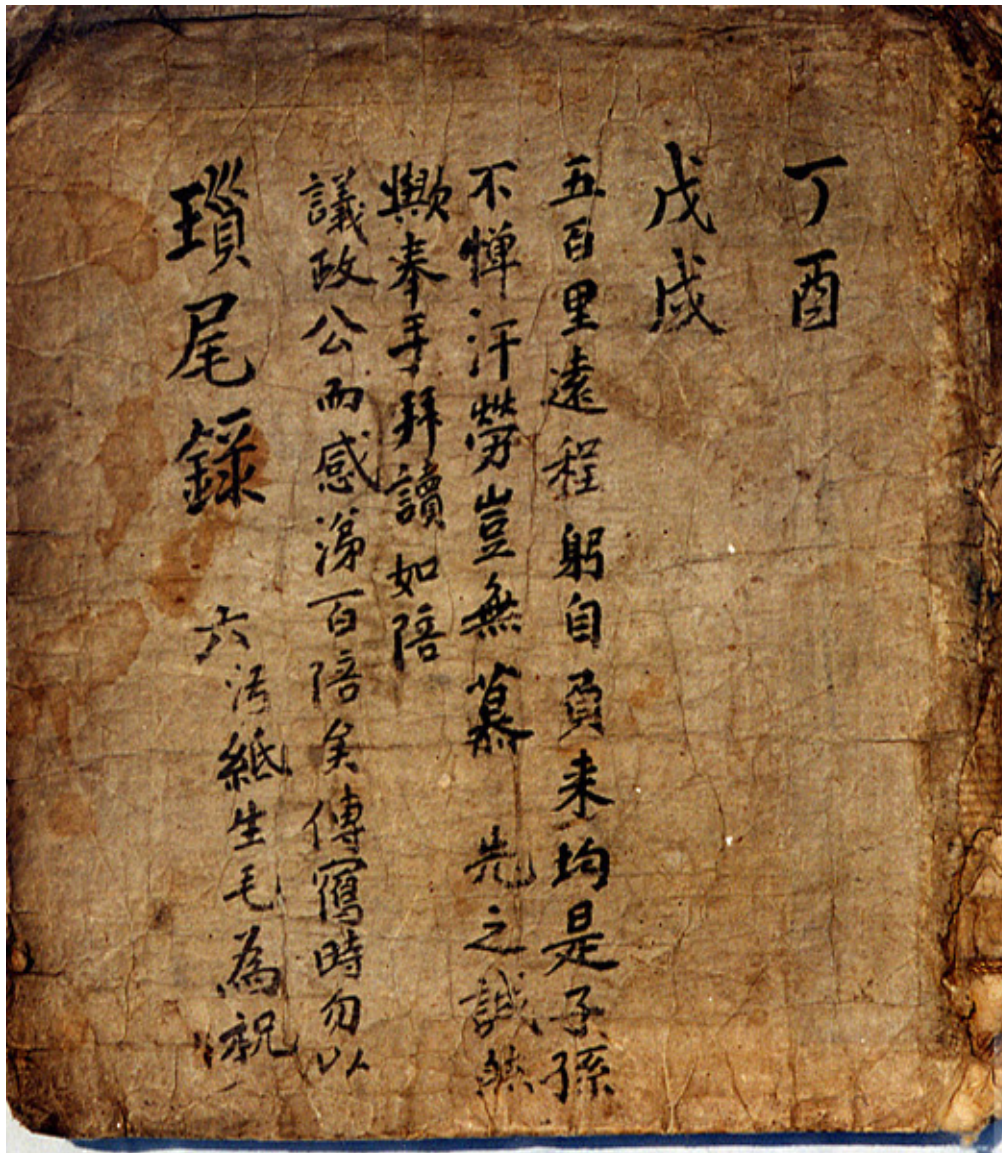


Figure 6: Note left by Oh family descendant

4.2 WITNESS TO HISTORY

4.2.1 INVASION IN 1592

At the end of 1591, Oh Hūmun had left his family at their home in the capital to travel south to Chōlla province. When the shocking reports of a Japanese invasion arrived in 1592, he took refuge with his brother-in-law's family in the hills. His brother-in-law, Yi Bin 李贇 (1532-1592), was the local official in Changsu 長水, and for a time gave Oh daily reports of the situation. The Japanese army made straight for the capital and pressed all the way up over the Chosŏn-Ming border, but Chōlla was not attacked directly. This was partly owing to Admiral Yi Sunshin blocking Japanese supply lines by maintaining Chosŏn naval supremacy on the west coast, but partly due to the efforts of self-organized defence forces such as the one led by Yi Bin, who died in battle that year.¹⁹ Oh was particularly affected by Yi Bin's death, dreaming of him for years afterwards. Around this time he also described how he cried on reading the

19 Yi Ŭnyŏng 이은영, "Yi Bin" 이빈(李贇), *Inmul sajŏn* 인물 사전 (Biographical Dictionary), *Hanguk yŏkdae inmul chonghap chŏngbo sisŭtaem* 한국역대인물 종합정보시스템 (Historical Persons of Korea Comprehensive Information System) (The Academy of Korean Studies, July 2015), <http://people.aks.ac.kr/>.

king's woeful and self-reprimanding proclamation from his position of refuge at the Ming border.²⁰ Of course, the safety of his family whom he had left in the now-abandoned capital was Oh's primary concern. Fortunately, they had managed to flee the capital in time, and Oh was reunited with them in Chölla a few months later.

While taking refuge in borrowed accommodation, Oh continues to hear rumours of events in other provinces. When a returned captive reports that Hideyoshi is supremely confident of his ultimate victory, so is in no rush to take Chölla, Oh writes that he is furious.²¹

As the months pass, securing food becomes increasingly difficult. For a time the women forgo eating rice, but it is still possible to borrow or ask for food from others.²² Oh and his wife's wide circle of relatives and acquaintances enable them to fare much better than most can have done.

At first Oh Hūimun had expected the invaders to be expelled within a few months, but the news that comes is instead of endemic desertions from the Chosŏn army. The bravery of the volunteer resistance forces and their victories earn great admiration from Oh,

20 Oh Hūimun, "Swaemi rok," 壬辰(1592) 4.16-17.

21 Ibid., 癸巳(1593) 8.25.

22 Ibid., 癸巳(1593) 5.23-28.

though he complains that many of these guerrilla groups are made up of those looking for food but not willing to engage the enemy. In response to the volunteers' calls to arms (*gyǒngmun* 檄文), which Oh saw many of, he could but sigh that he was too old and incapable to be of use to his country.

Fanciful rumours of Hideyoshi having been killed by Ryukyu assassins raised Oh's hopes briefly,²³ but it was the Ming-led victory at P'yongyang in early 1593 that appeared as the first great turning point in the war. Oh responded in jubilation by exclaiming that 'the rebirth of the Three Han [Korea] truly relies on Imperial benevolence.'²⁴ Yet the end to the invasion within a few months, which Oh had expected even before the Chinese troops' arrival, did not come. Instead famine and disease continued to attack even the parts of the country that had not suffered invasion.

The Oh family existed in a community of the *yangban* class which had superior resources to resist the onset of famine. Yet class was no safeguard against disease. Soon after the invasion began, an epidemic – or a series of them – struck, claiming untold numbers of lives. Almost everyone in Oh's family was affected, and for three

23 Ibid., 壬辰(1592) 8.10.

24 「再造三韓 實賴皇恩」 Ibid., 壬辰(1592) 7.30.

months Oh's diary was silent as he was incapacitated by illness.²⁵ This was the only significant gap in his daily recording of events and thoughts. Dysentery was widespread, affecting the Oh household but equally weakening the Chinese army, contributing to the cessation of their offensive.

From 1593 into 1594, an uneasy ceasefire betrayed the Chinese and Japanese armies' weakened state as cold, severe food shortages, and disease took their toll. In this situation it was inevitably the civilian population which suffered most. The twin forces of hunger and disease built and interacted to create a ravaging storm. In an endless stream of news, Oh heard of friend after friend, relative after relative who had died from disease; he lost one of his sisters as well as several infant grandchildren.²⁶ When the relatively well-connected Oh family is reduced to eating bark, the fate of the wider population can be imagined.²⁷ A report from Oh's slave Makjong 莫丁 gives an indication of what it was like for those of lower class: in 1594 he learned that forty of his relatives had died – only one elder brother survived.²⁸ Around Oh in Chölla, the roads were literally lined with

25 Ibid., 癸巳(1593) 1.13.

26 Ibid., 癸巳(1593) 4.

27 Ibid., 甲午(1594) 3.1.

28 Ibid., 甲午(1594) 6.2.

corpses, even while full of people on the move looking for refuge. Oh commented that there are less beggars coming to the door than last year – people say they died over the winter.²⁹ Rumours reach Oh that in the areas more directly affected by the invasion it is much worse: whereas a few months before in the capital people might have killed you to steal your rice, now they would kill to eat you, while the people of Kyöngsan province were reduced to cannibalizing family members.³⁰ The great concern was that in the entire northern part of Chölla where Oh was, field after field lay empty, while the prisons were full: the men were fleeing corvée service, and their families were being held ransom.³¹ Later in 1594 this led to increasingly open rebellion, with frequent gaol-breaks.³² Deeply moved by the suffering around him and fearful of his own desperate situation, Oh lamented the fate of the people of Chosŏn: ‘how pitiable are we people of the East!’³³

29 Ibid., 甲午(1594) 2.14, 4.3.

30 Ibid., 甲午(1594) 4.3.

31 Ibid., 甲午(1594) 4.27.

32 Ibid., 甲午(1594) 6.27. Fearing for their safety in an environment of increasing lawlessness, later his son moved his whole family to a different area to avoid bandits. Ibid., 甲午(1594) 12.2.

33 「哀我東民」 Oh Hŭimun, “Swaemi rok,” 甲午(1594) 4.27.

Even in an environment of poverty and death, Oh Hūimun never ceased to be a *yangban*: he never once did any manual labour. Instead, he spent his days with other male *yangban* friends – though many of these friends did not survive 1594.³⁴ These days of socializing were not idly spent: as he relied almost entirely on local officials passing him food, the men engaged in this socializing around the local magistrate's office were in fact cultivating the connections that guaranteed their livelihoods.

Social gatherings also allowed for sharing of news: the men shared their outrage as word of the Chinese pro-peace position fuelled rumours of friendly Ming relations with the hated invaders. Oh recorded his exasperation on hearing how one of the most prominent (and elderly) Chosŏn volunteer commanders Kwŏn Yul 權慄 (1537-1599) was beaten by Chinese commander Liu Yan 劉綎 (d. 1619) for attacking the Japanese and thus breaking the ceasefire.³⁵

A ray of hope came when an official on leave from the capital brought news of unofficial talks between monk commander Yujŏng

34 Oh notes how of the three friends he spent most time with the previous winter, two had died and one had only just managed to survive, losing his wife. Ibid., 甲午(1594) 7.2.

35 Ibid., 甲午(1594) 5.5.

惟政 (1544-1608) and Japanese commander Katō Kiyomasa, but Oh was still filled with worry:

我國兵力 決不可敵 天若助順 必成此事 豈可以子遺殘氓
更付於鋒鏑之下乎 又豈可以驅禮義之鄉 入左衽之俗乎 天
道好還 必有悔禍之時 惟此一事 猶可恃也 又聞天朝 令
劉摠兵掇兵還來云 尤無可恃矣

Our country's military strength is no match [for the Japanese]. If Heaven helps, [the plot to cause rebellion within Japanese ranks] will surely be successful. [Heaven] will surely not further place this battered remnant of a people under the sword, nor drive a land of propriety and righteousness into barbarian customs!³⁶ The Way of Heaven is to give just rewards; it must repent its violence. Of this only, can we be sure. It is also said that the Celestial Dynasty [i.e., China] has ordered Commander Liu to withdraw his forces and return. They particularly cannot be relied upon.³⁷

This excerpt captures well Oh's outlook on the wider war situation; he portrays the people of Chosŏn as helpless on the brink of being overwhelmed by the savage Japanese, unprotected by an impotent Chosŏn army, and dependent on unreliable Chinese protection.

Despite the wartime circumstances, aspects of life continued as normal. The local official Shin Ŭnggu 申應槩 (1553-1623) asked for the hand in marriage of Oh Hŭimun's eldest daughter in the summer of 1594. Shin and the family had travelled together at the

36 Regarding the word translated here as 'barbarian' (*chwa'im* 左衽) see the section 'Between China and Japan' below.

37 Oh Hŭimun, "Swaemi rok," 甲午(1594) 5.20.

beginning of the *ran* 亂 ('disorder').³⁸ We are treated to wonderful detail when Oh describes how he hid during part of the ceremony because he did not have the appropriate ceremonial robes (he had hoped to borrow them from an official, but could not as the official was occupied hosting a Ming officer's visit).³⁹ The presence of Ming officials and the burden on Chosŏn officials and the populace of providing adequate hospitality is a running theme throughout the entirety of Oh's diary. So is uncertainty: the wedding was rushed and the mother-in-law-to-be said a minimal dowry would be sufficient, because it was rumoured the Chinese might pull out very soon, and the Japanese would run amok once more.⁴⁰ This was a second marriage for Shin, who was much older than Oh's daughter, but the significance of the marriage soon becomes clear: the Oh family immediately began to receive daily food parcels brought by *gwanno* 官奴 (official slaves).⁴¹

All the time, Oh was evidently receiving a great deal of written and oral information through his meetings and correspondence

38 Ibid., 甲午(1594) 8.21.

39 Ibid., 甲午(1594) 8.13.

40 Ibid., 甲午(1594) 7.26.

41 These food deliveries continue until Shin leaves his official post at the end of the year. Ibid., 甲午(1594) 12.14.

with family and acquaintances. As an appendix to his diary for 1594 he made copies of documents he felt it was worthwhile recording. This list of documents is very informative. Oh copied out, among other things, a Ming imperial edict addressing Chosŏn, the record of a conversation between a Chinese officer and a Japanese labourer caught collecting grass, and an explanatory essay on Chosŏn by a Chinese officer for a Chinese audience. At different points Oh also included writings originating in Japan: part of Xu Yihou's report from Satsuma, and writing by Hwang Shin on his embassy to Japan in 1596.

By 1596, a prolonged period of relative peace meant that food became less scarce, as people returned to the fields to work. Oh Hŭimun was well aware that the state was still struggling, however, and worried how Chosŏn could bear the burden when he heard that Imperial Ambassador Shen Weijing 沈惟敬 (d.1598) would be passing through (on his way to Japan).⁴² The local official whom he approached to ask for food had no time for him, and hurried off to make preparations.⁴³ As to the peace negotiations in which Shen was involved, Oh's position shifted perceptibly around this time. His

42 Ibid., 乙未(1595) 4.2.

43 Ibid.

earlier anger that the Chinese would seek peace with those who had violated Chosŏn gave way to the wish only that safety from invasion could be secured. In the first month of 1596 he was still invoking Chosŏn's 'irreconcilable enmity' (不共之仇) with Japan, but by the fourth month he admitted that the peace negotiations would be worth it if only the Japanese would leave: 'the happiness and celebration of the whole country would be inexpressible.'⁴⁴

Yet the peace negotiations were not to be successful. Anxious waiting turned to panic when the bombshell of Hwang Shin's report from Japan struck in the eleventh month of 1596, and the capital exploded in turmoil.⁴⁵

4.2.2 A SECOND INVASION, 1597

In 1595, Oh Yun'gyŏm had succeeded in obtaining a post as a local official in P'yŏnggang 平康, Kangwon 江原 province (contemporary North Korea). Once he was established there, in the spring of 1597, Oh Hŭimun took his family to live in a secluded valley in

44 「一國之喜慶可言」 Ibid., 乙未(1595) 1.22, 乙未(1595)年 4.2.

45 In 1592 the capital had been abandoned and sacked and people feared the same would happen again. Ibid., 丙申(1596) 11.17.

P'yönggang.⁴⁶ This proved to be a life-saving move, not only because Yun'gyöm was able to secure the family's food supply, but because within weeks of the second invasion-force arriving, Imch'ön 林川 – where his family had been staying in Chölla – was in flames.⁴⁷ Oh's sister who had lived nearby, was less fortunate. Hūimun heard from her how their family had attempted to escape in a boat, but had been forced back to land by a Japanese vessel. She was the lone survivor of her household because they had left her for dead after she attempted suicide (ladies carried knives for precisely this purpose). The women and girls of her house, including her daughter Kyöng'on 敬溫, were all abducted, but one slave was later able to return and reported that Kyöng'on had died of illness before being transported to Japan. Oh Hūimun was deeply upset by all that happened, but found some solace in the fact that Kyöng'on died within 'the territory of our country' (我國地界) rather than being taken to Japan (日本) where no happy fate awaited her.⁴⁸

Deep in the countryside, from 1597 Oh Hūimun and his family lived in the greatest safety and comfort they had enjoyed in all

46 Ibid., 丁酉(1597) 2.16. Oh's other two sons lived separately from Hūimun throughout the war, in order to spread mouths that needed feeding.

47 Ibid., 丁酉(1597) 9.8.

48 Ibid., 己亥(1599) 2.23.

the years of the war. Yet Oh could not let go of worries about the rest of the country and the course of the war. He followed closely news of Ming commander Yang Hao 楊鏞 bringing a fresh army towards Chosŏn, and relayed how it was Yang's strict line on desertion that caused the queen and others in the capital to hesitate before fleeing.⁴⁹ In 1598, Oh's attention was concentrated on the renewed push south of the allied forces, exclaiming that the victory and defeat of the whole country rested on this one offensive.⁵⁰

One way Oh kept abreast of wider events was through correspondence. The extremities of war at no point severed the endless flow of letters. At the beginning of the war he was able to send private letters along with official post, but when this was not possible, sending letters with slaves or friends who were travelling was the normal method.⁵¹ Oh corresponded with men and women, his sisters and eighty-year-old mother also writing letters. Local people too became a source of information. In testament to the *yangban's* lack of monopoly on political and military information, a commoner neighbour was able to explain to Oh the progress of the

49 Ibid., 丁酉(1597) 3.16, 9.5.

50 Ibid., 戊戌(1598) 8.27.

51 For an example of using official post, see Ibid., 壬辰(1592) 11.30.

Ming-Chosŏn siege of Ulsan, because he had just returned from military service there.⁵² While he was in P'yŏnggang, Oh befriended his commoner neighbours, joining their celebrations and inviting them for specially prepared *tojebi* (now 'sujebi': rough-cut noodles).⁵³ This kind of relationship with those who were being repeatedly conscripted into work-gangs will have added to Oh Hŭimun's sympathy for the plight of the common people of Chosŏn that is a theme in his writing.

In the spring of 1597, when the second invasion was known to be coming but had not arrived, Yun'gyŏm successfully passed the Palace Examination (*chŏnsi* 殿試): the highest civil service examination, personally overseen by the king. As is to be expected, Oh Hŭimun was ecstatic, describing how the government heralds galloped up to their house blowing trumpets.⁵⁴ Yet his happiness turned to sorrow as he remembered his youngest daughter; 'Tana' 端兒 died of disease on the family's route north to safety.⁵⁵ The overwhelming sorrow of Hŭimun and his wife at the loss of their youngest child surpassed that of all the other tragedies of the war, and it is

52 Ibid., 戊戌(1598) 10.13.

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid., 丁酉(1597) 3.19.

55 Ibid., 丁酉(1597) 4.21.

Hüimun's confiding of this sorrow and other personal emotions in his diary which suggest that by this point it was no longer a travel diary that he could casually share with friends, but had become a deeply personal memoir.

The year 1598 saw Japanese forces finally withdraw from the peninsula. When this news arrived, it came alongside news of all the court officials celebrating. This seemed to rile Oh Hüimun, who had long been exasperated by the incompetence and propensity to bickering of the Chosŏn court. He was under no illusion that final victory came because the Japanese chose to leave, rather than being forced to do so. He furiously wrote that it was scandalous that in seven years of war Chosŏn lost countless generals, but failed to kill even one Japanese general. In contrast to his criticism of the court, Oh mourned the loss of Yi Sunshin in battle, recognizing him as having protected Chŏlla province (and therefore his family) during the first invasion.⁵⁶

Oh Hüimun's diary continued until he finally moved back to (what was left of) the family home in the capital. By this time he had turned sixty, and observed that he was coming to the end of his life,

56 Ibid., 戊戌(1598) 12.3, 12.6, 12.16.

after having been married over forty years.⁵⁷ Even at this stage he was not free of hardship: his family still struggled to find food.⁵⁸ Their return to the capital was also delayed because the capital had been overrun by Chinese troops, who were occupying empty houses, stealing, and putting tremendous strain on local resources. Oh records several rumours that the Japanese were due to attack again in 1601.⁵⁹ With hindsight we can see these were merely rumours, but Oh displays striking specificity and accuracy in the knowledge of the regency arranged for Hideyoshi's son, showing that valid information also circulated widely.⁶⁰ Oh was equally aware of events in China, recording Shen Weijing's final fate of execution in Beijing.⁶¹ From beginning to end, Oh Hūimun's writing in *Swaemi rok* integrates personal, national, and international perspectives, showing that all of them were significant to him, and contributed to his worldview.

57 Ibid., 己亥(1599) 1.1.

58 Ibid., 己亥(1599) 6.7, 6.13.

59 Ibid., 庚子(1600) 1.21.

60 Ibid., 己亥(1599) 7.24.

61 Ibid., 己亥(1599) 7.4.

4.3 CHOSŎN AS COUNTRY AND PEOPLE

4.3.1 INFORMATION NETWORKS

Swaemi rok is particularly revealing with regard to the ways in which information flowed between people; this is something less visible in sources conventionally studied in the history of the East Asian War, such as court records. We see for example the power of word-of-mouth transmission, bringing (sometimes inaccurate) news of victories and defeat to a populace ready to respond at a moment's notice should danger be coming their way. The volatile war situation meant that all in society, from the highest to the lowest, were personally invested in the course of national events. The connectedness of the Chosŏn populace was further strengthened by the country's relatively small size: this meant both that no-one was remote enough to be disinterested, and that news could spread widely at speed. Even from their secluded valley in the east, it took one of Oh Hŭimun's slaves only five days to do a round-trip to the capital Hansŏng 漢城 (Seoul) on foot.⁶² The relatively small distances involved meant that written correspondence was also frequent.

62 Ibid., 己亥(1599) 1.9.

As already noted, Oh Hŭimun was constantly receiving and writing letters. Particularly intriguing is the less-expected full participation of female relatives in these wide communication networks. Not only were all female members of Oh's wider family literate, but in mourning his fifteen-year-old daughter Tana's death, Oh incidentally reveals that she was also literate in Chinese script.⁶³ Though he gives no indication of Tana's level of ability, this indicates that the female half of the elite population was not necessarily excluded from the Chinese literary context which informed Oh Hŭimun and his peers' discussions of national events.

The marriage of Oh's eldest daughter also gives us unexpected insight into how women fitted into the world of political news and historical contextualization in which Oh lived and wrote his diary. Almost immediately after the wedding the bride appears to have been bored (her husband busy with duties, and chores probably performed by official slaves) and asked for something to read. It is what she requested that is revealing: a vernacular Korean (Hangŭl) version of *Hanch'o yŏn'ŭi* 漢楚演義, a dramatized re-telling of the fight for the empire that followed the fall of the Qin dynasty (221-206

63 For Tana's ability in Hangŭl see Ibid., 丁酉(1597) 6.20.. Regarding Classical Chinese, see Ibid., 丁酉(1597) 2.1.

BCE). Oh Hŭimun had his second daughter make a copy of the text they had at home.⁶⁴ Oh daughters' reading of these histories demonstrates that regardless of their linguistic Chinese ability, through the vernacular they were immersed in a historical Chinese world. This is the same cultural context through which Oh Hŭimun interprets the war: in his diary he directly compares Chosŏn's fate to that of the ancient state of Chu 楚 about which we see his daughter was also reading.⁶⁵ That such stories were re-told and enjoyed in the vernacular also puts paid to the too-often held assumption of a split between the cultural world occupied by elite, educated men and the rest of society. Not only did elite women have many of the same cultural reference points, given that a vernacular edition had been established it seems more likely than not that storytellers were reciting these popular Chinese tales for illiterate audiences.

4.3.2 CLASS

The question of literacy is connected to the issue of social class, which is equally important in understanding Oh Hŭimun and

64 Oh Hŭimun, "Swaemi rok," 乙未(1595) 1.3.

65 Oh's comparison of Chosŏn's situation with that of the ancient state of Chu is discussed in the section 'United in despair' below.

others' ideas about the country in which they lived. Class is an omnipresent theme in Oh Hūimun's daily life, and the three main groups of which Chosŏn society consisted all make appearances in his writing: the nobility, commoners, and slaves.

Oh referred to people and families of the privileged *yangban* class as *sa'in* 士人 or *sajok* 士族. There is no doubt that he identifies strongly with this group, and shows greatest concern for members of it. For example, when he heard of the fall of Namwŏn in 1593, he wrote:

前日避亂士人 皆入城中 咸被屠戮云 尤爲哀慘

It is said that, earlier, all the nobles (*sa'in*) seeking refuge had entered the city, and that they were all slaughtered. This is especially tragic and horrible.⁶⁶

All those in the city were said to have been slaughtered, but Oh is most upset by the death of fellow *yangban*, with whom he naturally identifies.

Towards commoners (*sang'in* 常人), Oh showed some curious amusement. In P'yŏnggang he joined some of the local festivities, and in his diary he chuckled to himself at the singing and dancing of the people there. That was after a small feast held to mark the

66 Oh Hūimun, "Swaemi rok," 癸巳(1593) 7.10.

anniversary of one of the villager's father's death. It is notable that Oh describes this as *sa'il* 死日 (lit. 'death day') instead of *ki'il* 忌日 ('taboo day').⁶⁷ The only other time he used the former word was when describing slaves; he used the latter in all cases involving nobles.⁶⁸

The line separating classes was all-important for Oh. How much so becomes clear when on another occasion he has a conversation with one man only to discover he had not realized that man's true class status. Though from his appearance he seemed to be a *yangban*, Oh discovers to his horror that he was the son of a musician who had previously provided entertainment at banquets Oh had attended. It is perhaps difficult for us to understand Oh's acute sense of embarrassment and anger upon realizing that with a man of lower status than himself he had observed the etiquette of equals (in sitting facing each other and in the language they used).⁶⁹ Oh was also upset when he heard that Ming soldiers did not differentiate between

67 Ibid., 丁酉(1597) 7.10.

68 For example of use connected to a slave, see Ibid., 庚子(1600) 12.15.

69 Ibid., 丙申(1596) 11.1.

yangban and commoners in their rough treatment of the Chosŏn people.⁷⁰

It is no surprise that Oh was strict in distinguishing the status of people: maintaining his privileged life, such as always travelling on horseback and only supervising farmwork rather than doing it, was entirely dependent on the class system that gave him slaves. *Nobi* 奴婢, male and female slaves, feature strongly in Oh's diary. His tense relationship of command and resistance with them was a cause of much distress, but looking back we can see that their relationship was also symbiotic. At least during the years of famine, those slaves who were separated or fled from their masters had little hope of finding means of survival: it was probably owing to his master's protection that Makjong outlived forty of his relatives.

4.3.3 UNITED IN DESPAIR

ONE PEOPLE

There is no space here to explore further the complex *yangban-nobi* relationship, but it is important to note that distinction and hier-

70 Oh hears from his son Yunhyŏp that 'Tang troops' beat and stole from *yangban* in just the same way as from commoners. *Ibid.*, 己亥(1599) 3.26.

archy did not preclude unity and sympathy. When performing rites for ancestors, out of pity Oh Hŭimun included those former slaves who had no descendants – such as Makjong.⁷¹ He felt deep affection for the female slaves that looked after him as a child or with whom he grew up together.⁷² He also actively interceded on behalf of his slaves in their personal disputes.⁷³ Even while Oh Hŭimun saw himself as above his commoner neighbours, he enjoyed their company, invited them as guests, and lobbied on their behalf when they were put in the impossible situation of receiving two conflicting conscription summons.⁷⁴ He was upset when his friend’s uncle was imprisoned because his friend had not appeared for duty, or on hearing a story of a man who received three conscription notices on one day and promptly hung himself.⁷⁵

Most striking is Oh’s oft-expressed sympathy for the suffering of the wider populace: those he saw all around him who were subject

71 For example: Ibid., 庚子(1600) 12.15. Makjong was the unfortunate victim of an unfaithful wife, mentioned above, who starved himself to death in response to the hurt and embarrassment of her betrayal. Oh feels his death keenly:

Ibid., 乙未(1595) 12.18.

72 Oh Hŭimun, “Swaemi rok,” 乙未(1595) 2.30.

73 In addition to the example given above of his slave being attacked, Oh has a monk arrested when he is rude to one of Oh’s female slaves. Ibid., 乙未(1595) 12.29.

74 Ibid., 甲午(1594) 7.24, 戊戌 (1598) 7.29, 10.13.

75 Ibid., 戊戌(1598) 10.06, 丁酉(1597) 12.11.

to conscription and who went without food. Just as he had identified with the nobles in Namwŏn, he identified with all the people of Chosŏn who were suffering as a result of the invasions, because despite his relative comfort he was also a victim. Throughout his commentary on the war, as he wondered what would happen next, the long-suffering people of Chosŏn were the recurring subject of Oh's writing, with himself as part of that group. It seems that when he passed empty fields and frozen corpses on the road, he felt for the suffering of those around him and wove this into the same narrative of a helpless victimhood in which he perceived himself. The following 1597 diary entry demonstrates how his lament for the people of Chosŏn is intertwined with his fears for his own safety:

夕聞越川邊安峽地 有京人來寓 令閱時中·金彥寶往問賊奇
則賊已陷南原城[...]云 未知實否 若然則日氣漸寒 陪老母
率病妻 又且上下皆無襦衣 而避入深山窮谷 必有凍餓之患
吾不知死所矣 徒自付之天而已 六載干戈 生民盡瘁 天未
悔禍 兇鋒又起 兩湖遺氓 亦將入塗炭之中 皇天仁愛下民
而豈可使朝鮮百萬蒼生 盡歸於憔悴而無遺乎

In the evening I heard that by Wŏlch'ŏn in Anhyŏp some people from the capital had come to stay, so I sent Min Sichung and Kim Yŏnbo to ask them for news of the brigands⁷⁶ [Japanese]. They say the brigands have taken the city

76 The term *jŏk* 賊, translated here as 'brigands,' was commonly used to refer to any person or group who broke the law or rebelled against authority. Oh uses the term *t'ojŏk* 土賊 ('local brigands') to describe groups of Chosŏn bandits, for

of Namwŏn... I know not whether this is true. If it is, then with the days getting colder, taking my mother and sick wife – and with family and slaves alike having no padded clothes – to take refuge deep in the mountains, we will surely freeze and starve. We know not where we will die! I can only leave it to Heaven.

After six years of fighting, the people are completely exhausted. Heaven repents not this calamity, and the forces of violence rise again. The surviving people of Chŏlla and Ch'ungch'ŏng are also set to descend into suffering. Imperial Heaven is benevolent to the lower people [i.e., people of lower classes], so how can it let all the million lives of Chosŏn be wasted and burned till there is none left?⁷⁷

Oh's distress for the fate of the people of Chosŏn was not abstract, but joined with the most real kind of fear for his and his family's survival. Impermeable class divisions were not incompatible with a sense of common victimhood.

This sense of a common fate with the suffering masses was strengthened by disaffection from higher officialdom. While Oh relies on officialdom to survive and is thrilled to see Yun'gyŏm rise in the official hierarchy, his palpable disdain for court officials is unceasing throughout *Swaemi rok*. Hŭimun is greatly angered by the endless factional fighting at court, at one point exclaiming that the

example. Ibid., 庚子(1600) 1.21. Alternative potential translations for *jök* include 'outlaws' or 'rebels'.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 丁酉(1597) 8.23.

factions will not be content until they have destroyed the country.⁷⁸

This lack of patience is probably a combination of a long-term dislike owing to people he respects falling foul of this political fighting, and his frustration and despair at the total failure of official Chosŏn forces to defend the country.⁷⁹ Such dissatisfaction must have been endemic, for as Oh pointed out, the state had precious few victories it could claim as its own, despite having suffered catastrophic losses.

‘HEAVEN MUST HAVE MERCY ON CHOSŎN’

Disaffection from the court strengthened Oh’s sense of community with his fellow countrymen who had also been made helpless victims. At the same time the war situation combined his fate with that of Chosŏn the country in a very real way, and there appears to have been no separation of country and dynasty for Oh. *Swaemi rok* records how Oh follows Chosŏn’s political-military situation anxiously, tying it to his own fate. The following diary entry makes this relationship explicit:

78 Ibid., 甲午(1594) 10.22.

79 Oh complained at length of how the family friend Hwang Shin suffers as a result of offending those in power. Ibid., 丙申(1596) 7.4. Both Hwang Shin and Oh Yun’gyŏm were students of Sŏng Hon 成渾, who at this point had fallen foul of political in-fighting. See the discussion of Hwang Shin in chapter 2.

兇賊久據邊境 侮予之患孔棘 必有掃蕩之計矣 然我國糧餉
極難 未知朝廷何以措備 草萊老生 何預國事 然每念國家
大事 不覺憂憤興歎也 況大讐未報 宗社垂亡 民生之苦 到
此尤劇 身在谷中 漆室之憂 不能暫弛于懷也 又况八十老
母在堂 病妻長在呻吟 國家平定後 吾家亦安

The vicious brigands have long occupied the borders, and their insulting us is most troublesome. A plan to clear them out is needed. Yet our country is having great difficulty with food supplies: how the court will prepare them I know not. What can a rustic old man predict of state national matters? Yet every time I think of the great matters of state, before realizing it I become worried and angry and sigh. All the more so when the great debt of vengeance has not been paid, the dynasty teeters on the edge of extinction, and the suffering of the people is greater than ever. Even living in a valley I cannot for a moment relieve myself of idle worries about the country. Especially living with an eighty-year-old mother and a wife ever moaning from illness: *when peace comes to the country, then our family too will be safe.*⁸⁰

While the cynical can forever doubt the sincerity of abstract professions of loyalty and concern for the state, in Oh's case we see how the arrival of foreign invaders aligned private interests with the fate of the Chosŏn dynasty. Given the alternative was Japanese occupation, collapse of the dynasty seemed synonymous with slaughter and mayhem. Therefore Oh's identification with the position of the state cannot be disregarded as the posturing of a Neo-Confucian gentle-

80 Emphasis added. Ibid., 丁酉(1597) 7.5.

man. Just as Oh speaks of his fate being dependent on Heaven's will, he equally says it depends on *kugun* 國運, the fate of the dynasty.⁸¹

Even in contexts where there was not perfect alignment between the fate of the Chosŏn dynasty and the Oh family's safety, it would be naïve to dismiss the strong feelings of identification with the dynasty expressed by Oh. This would be to underestimate thinking at this time that saw loyalty to and respect for one's ruler as being no less than the defining line between gentleman and savage, man and beast.⁸² An example of Oh apparently identifying with the royal house comes when he furiously records the news that the Japanese destroyed the royal palaces and looted royal graves, calling it an insult to the whole country. Taking it as given that the people of the country would be united in their desire for revenge, Oh compares Chosŏn's situation with a historical precedent:

昔懷王入秦而不返 楚人扼腕 [...] 而驪山之墳土未乾 竟爲
項籍之拔掘 雖未報當時 後世之報復亦出於楚人之手 可謂
快哉 我國之人奮腕 亦有如楚人之期報於後世者哉 於乎
痛哉

81 Ibid., 壬辰(1592) 11.29.

82 Oh copies out a letter written by his friend Hwang Shin that argues precisely this, claiming loyalty to father and ruler is also universal across time and space. Ibid., 甲午(1594) "chŏngŏn Hwang Shin sang tonggong sŏ" 正言黃慎上東宮疏.

In the past, when King Huai entered Qin never to return, the people of Chu wrung their wrists [in anger]... Yet before the earth at Mount Li [the Qin emperor's tomb] was dry, it was in fact dug up by [the Chu commander] Xiang Ji. Although they could not avenge it at the time, the vengeance of a later generation was meted out by the hands of a man of Chu. Satisfying indeed!

The people of our country are now wringing their wrists; is it that like the people of Chu we too must wait for revenge in a later generation? Oh, how painful it is!⁸³

It is easy for us to under-appreciate the severity of the insult that exhuming the bodies of former kings represented. Rites to ancestors formed a significant part of Oh's life. He sometimes prepared days in advance, and when possible made regular visits to family graves. Oh Hŭimun's son-in-law Shin Ŭnggu moves homes specifically to be closer to his family graves.⁸⁴ The continued importance of graves is evident in the well-kept appearance of Oh Hŭimun's grave today, see Figure 7.⁸⁵ For someone in Oh's position, the king also occupied a parallel position with the father of a family, and the phrase *kunbu* 君父 (lord [i.e., king] and father) was used so often it had become a

83 Ibid., 癸巳(1593) 5.8.

84 Ibid., 戊戌(1598) 2.18.

85 The photograph of Oh Hŭimun's grave in Figure 7 is taken from "Hanguk hyangt'o munhwa daejŏn."

compound word.⁸⁶ It is in this context that we must understand Oh Hūimun responding to the news by vowing ‘to not live between the same heaven and earth as these brigands.’⁸⁷ It must have been impossible to contemplate swallowing such a grievance, which helps us understand why even the *notion* of peace talks with the Japanese was unconscionable to Oh and his *yangban* friends.

86 See, for example, the use of *kunbu* 君父 in Oh Hūimun, “Swaemi rok,” 甲午 (1594) “chōngŏn Hwang Shin sang tonggong sŏ” 正言黃慎上東宮疏 (Exposition by Hwang Shin to the Crown Prince).

87 「此賊誓不與共生於天地間也」 Ibid., 癸巳(1593) 5.8.



Figure 7: Grave of Oh Hūimun in Yong'in

4.3.4 CHOSŎN'S PLACE IN THE WORLD

The comparison Oh Hŭimun made between Chosŏn and the ancient state of Chu also points to the wider historical context in which he may have understood the Chosŏn dynasty. The many examples of former dynasties in the Chinese historical record, and particularly 'regional' dynasties (in relation to the larger empires), provided precedent and points of comparison. For example, when Oh responded to news of court celebrations with acerbic criticism of the court's inability he observed, 'the lament that there is no one [of ability] at the southern court, has no longer only been seen in the Song.'⁸⁸ The Song court was forced into the south of China, much to the chagrin of many scholars, including those of the Neo-Confucian school, founded by Zhu Xi, that was so influential in Chosŏn. Oh Hŭimun clearly saw the Chosŏn dynasty as comparable to the former dynasties about which he and his contemporaries (including his daughters) read – the Chosŏn court certainly modelled itself on a Chinese dynasty. A point of difference, however, was that while states such as ancient Chu 楚 was seen to have been subsumed by

88 「南朝無人之嘆，不獨於宋見之矣」 Ibid., 戊戌(1598) 12.16.

the successive Qin 秦 and Han 漢 empires and gradually lost its distinctive identity, Chosŏn retained a sense of otherness.

‘LITTLE CHINA’

We can approach how Oh Hŭimun may have viewed Chosŏn’s distinctive position in the world through some of the documents he copied into his diary, as well as comments he made. Chosŏn’s position was of course defined in relation to what it was not: its neighbours. The Chosŏn relationship with the Ming was a complex one of suzerain and vassal, yet *Swaemi rok* points to a sharp and mutually understood border between the two countries, both physical and metaphorical. Oh Hŭimun copies down a conversation that reportedly took place between a Chinese officer and one or more Japanese labourers accosted while cutting grass. In the summary transcript reported by the accompanying Chosŏn official, the officer promises to protect the grass-cutters in return for information. What is revealing are the clear terms in which the officer describes the Ming-Chosŏn relationship when challenging the Japanese on daring to attack the Ming. He is reported to have said:

大同江以東則皆是朝鮮地方 汝來犯大同以西至義州則本大明地 大明使國王代治 故天朝遣使則國王必來迎於平壤 一路館舍天朝使价

Everything east of the Taedong river is all Chosŏn land, but you came and encroached west of the Taedong up to Ŭiju, which is originally Great Ming land. The Great Ming has the king govern on its behalf. That is why if the Celestial Court sends an emissary, the king must come and meet him in P'yongyang, and provide accommodation for the emissary on the length of his route.⁸⁹

If the reported conversation is accurate, then we may wonder what this officer hoped to achieve by lecturing a lowly Japanese conscript on Ming-Chosŏn relations. More significant here is the wider Chosŏn audience of people like Oh Hŭimun who heard this story retold. From the reported Chinese perspective, there is a clear territorial delimitation of Ming and Chosŏn territory, while the Chosŏn king's right to rule part of Chosŏn is granted by the 'Celestial Court.' That the Ming-Chosŏn border was clearly demarcated and monitored at this time, is also evident from the Chosŏn court records.⁹⁰ In the context of the East Asian War, the position of the king as invested with authority by the Ming emperor was not an abstract legitimatising construct, but a real relationship fraught with tension. Oh recorded no thoughts on the above passage, but was

89 Ibid., 甲午(1594) "Tang jang ō Wae tammun" 唐將與倭答問 (Questions and Answers of a Tang general and Japanese).

90 For example, in the period of peace before the war, officials at the border were submitting reports of 'Tang people' in search of ginseng crossing the border (the Amnok/Yalu 鴨綠 river) without permission.

evidently upset by subsequent news that Chosŏn sovereignty might be impinged upon:

皇勅曰 雜以漢官 治以漢政云 唐軍來滿京城 國用已竭云 未知國家 終何以應之 憂歎奈何 布設唐衙門 建除唐官 又以唐政治之 則我國之事操縱於唐人之手中 而我王徒擁虛位 而未知其終如何 自此國家又加多事 而民情之困瘁益甚 慨歎尤極

They say that the Imperial Edict said ‘intersperse with Han [i.e., Chinese] officials, govern with Han administrative practice.’ It is also said that Tang [i.e., Chinese] troops have come and filled the capital, and state supplies are exhausted. One cannot know how the country will meet their demands! I worry and sigh helplessly. [If they] establish Tang offices, and appoint Tang officials, and further govern them with Tang administrative practice, then the matters of our country will be controlled in the hands of Tang people, and our king will but hold an empty position. Yet we know not yet how it will all end. From this point on the country will have even more troubles, and the dire situation of the people will worsen. I sigh in the greatest desperation.⁹¹

It is not clear from which edict this rumoured order originated. Oh’s citation of the term ‘Han’ (of the Han dynasty, used here to designate Chinese) intentionally imitates Ming usage, standing in contrast to his habitual designation of all things Chinese as ‘Tang,’ i.e., of the Tang dynasty (618-907). During the war Chosŏn did cede a great deal of sovereignty, in that Chosŏn officials deferred to Chinese

91 Oh Hŭimun, “Swaemi rok,” 丁酉(1597) 7.14.

commanders on war-related matters. The tension and burden this created is evident throughout *Swaemi rok*, but this extract in particular demonstrates how for Oh the idea of reduced sovereignty was an affront to Chosŏn dignity.

A separate sense of Chosŏn dignity was of course supported by its long-established independent institutions, but whole narratives of a proud separate history had also developed. One of these appears in *Swaemi rok* told by none other than a Chinese officer. Another of the documents that had evidently been circulating and were copied out by Oh was a short essay on Chosŏn. Entitled simply *Chaoxian ji* 朝鮮記 (Record of Chosŏn), this essay by Lü Yingzhong 呂應鍾 (dates unknown), a Ming officer who served in Chosŏn, praises all aspects of Chosŏn unreservedly. Oh comments on the piece, complaining that Lü missed some of the most famous places and people, and wonders whether it was because his informant was ignorant of them.⁹² What Oh does not comment on directly is the

92 Ibid., 甲午(1594) “Chosŏn ki [Chaoxian ji]” 朝鮮記 (Record of Chosŏn). While we do not know more about the circumstances of the essay’s writing or distribution, it is possible Lü Yingzhong’s informant was Kim Pokhŭng 金復興 (1546-1604), who served as Lü’s assistant and whose poems exchanged with Lü are included in his collected works, *Kyegok jip* 谿谷集. “Hanguk hyangt’o munhwa daejŏn,” “Kim Pokhŭng” 김복흥(金復興).

narration of Chosŏn's history, which runs in parallel to, rather than as a subsidiary of, the history of Chinese rulers and dynasties:

東方無君長 神人降太白山之檀木 衆君之 謂之檀君 與堯
并立 傳世千其年 周封箕子 封於是也 一更而高麗 再變而
朝鮮 臣屬我大明 典章文物 惟華是則 號小中華

[In the beginning,] the East had no ruler. A spirit man descended on a birch on Mount Paekdu, and all took him as their ruler, calling him Tan'gun [lit. birch ruler]. He ruled contemporaneously with Yao [the mythical sage ruler of ancient China]. After a thousand years had passed, when the Zhou [dynasty] (1046-256 BCE) enfeoffed the Viscount of Ji (Kija), he was invested here. With one change [the country] became Koryŏ, with another, Chosŏn. It is vassal to our Great Ming; in its rites and legislation it takes only China (*Hua*) as its standard. It is known as 'Little China' (*xiao Zhonghua*) [alternatively, 'little civilized centre'].⁹³

The Tan'gun myth is a subject of study in its own right, but without exploring it further we can still appreciate its function in this narrative: it conveniently extends the history of Chosŏn back to the earliest times, meaning the country had a separate identity from the beginning. This precedes even the historically dubious but oft-narrated enfeoffment of the Viscount of Ji to an ancient incarnation of

93 Oh Hŭimun, "Swaemi rok," 甲午(1594) "Chosŏn ki [Chaoxian ji]" 朝鮮記 (Record of Chosŏn). '*Zhonghua*' 中華 could also be interpreted as 'civilized centre,' yet it was contemporaneously used as a name for China, synonymous with the Ming empire. See, for example, use by Zhao Shizhen in chapter 3. The use of *Hua* 華 to refer to China in the previous clause also suggests a pronominal reading.

Chosŏn. The Viscount of Ji usually serves the function of legitimizing the Chinese-like culture of Chosŏn. Here, no such role is emphasized, but the 'gentle' nature ascribed to Chosŏn culture by other contemporary Ming writers is present nonetheless. Oh's copying of this document is an example of Chosŏn-developed narratives transmitted back into Chosŏn from a Ming source. The main effect of *Chaoxian ji's* portrayal of Chosŏn is the gross simplification of the peninsula's history (unknown pre-history, Han-dynasty colonization, long-term division as multiple countries) to create one country occupying an 'Eastern' space since the beginning of civilization, with a distinct identity. The pride of Lü Yingzhong's Chosŏn informant seems to shimmer behind Lü's brush. This is particularly so when he defends Chosŏn against criticism of military incapability, once again merging multiple countries into one identity: 'it is this same Chosŏn that previously stood its ground against Tang armies of a hundred thousand, Sui armies of two hundred thousand, and Mongol armies of a million.'⁹⁴ Even if he felt the essay could have been better informed, it is difficult to imagine that Oh Hŭimun read these words and did not identify himself as part of 'this same Chosŏn.'

94 「即此朝鮮 向嘗敵唐師十萬·隋師二十萬·蒙固師百萬矣」 Ibid.

BETWEEN CHINA AND JAPAN

In Oh Hŭimun's writing, Chosŏn's outline appears in its relationship with China, but also as opposed to the invading Japanese. The latter relationship is less complex: Chosŏn's gentle and high moral nature is contrasted to the uncivilized customs of the Japanese. In fact, the *Chaioxian ji* ends by repeating a phrase often used by Oh Hŭimun and in other texts he saw: the masses of the whole country are set to fall in one fell swoop under the rule of barbarians.⁹⁵ The phrase translated as 'under the rule of barbarians' is *zuoren* (K. *chwa'im*), which literally means 'fastening one's robe to the left.' It refers to foreign peoples considered less civilized, who reportedly tied their robes to the left, in contrast to the practice of tying robes to the right in the 'civilized centre.' Its *locus classicus* is a quote attributed to Confucius.⁹⁶ Oh Hŭimun copies Confucius' phrase to lament that, 'if Chŏlla and Ch'ungch'ŏng are lost, then we will all be untying

95 「舉國大衆 行將一鼓盡左衽矣」 Ibid.

96 Confucius is quoted as having said: 'But for Guan Zhong, we should now be wearing our hair unbound, and the lappets of our coats buttoning on the left side.' (微管仲 吾其被发左衽矣). James Legge, tran., "Lun yu" 論語 (The Analects), Xian wen 憲問, The Chinese Text Project, <http://ctext.org/>. (Legge translation modified by the Chinese Text Project to reflect Hanyu pinyin spelling.)

our hair and fastening our robes to the left.’⁹⁷ One of the many Calls to Arms (*gyōngmun* 檄文) that Oh records seeks to incite action by putting the prospect of succumbing to barbarous Japanese rule in still starker terms: ‘That *chungha* (“Chinese”, or “civilized”, C. *zhongxia*) should become barbarians (or “non-Chinese”), that human kind should become beasts and birds, can this be tolerated?’⁹⁸ In the minds of Oh Hŭimun and his peers, a defining characteristic of Chosŏn was its embodiment of superior learning, morality, and custom. The Japanese practices of cutting back their hair and staining their teeth recalled the savage foreign peoples recorded in the Chinese literary world, and served as most visual reminders of their ‘barbarity.’⁹⁹

4.4 THE JAPANESE AND JAPAN

Throughout the ten years of keeping his diary, Oh Hŭimun seems to have never actually seen a Japanese person. His knowledge

97 「若失兩湖 則吾爲被髮左衽矣」 Oh Hŭimun, “Swaemi rok,” 癸巳(1593) 4.8.

98 「中夏變為夷狄 人類化為禽獸 是可忍乎」 Ibid., 壬辰(1592) 9.2.

99 More than one Call to Arms draws attention to these Japanese practices. One asks, ‘cutting one’s hair and staining one’s teeth: can it be tolerated?’ (髡頂染齒, 其可耐歟). Ibid.

of them is therefore entirely second-hand. Some information is distant rumour; Oh himself complained that Chosŏn people all ran away when they heard there are Japanese so it was difficult to obtain accurate information about them.¹⁰⁰ Yet through his diary we see how the Japanese were portrayed in the stories that circulated about them. Moreover, like most of the Chosŏn population, even if he had no direct experience of them, Oh knew people who had encountered the Japanese: escaping before capture or afterwards, or meeting them in more co-operative contexts – such as the Oh family friend Hwang Shin.

4.4.1 MILITARY PROWESS

The stories that arrived immediately after the first invasion were of savages. As well as terrible slaughter, Oh was greatly distressed by news of other barbaric behaviour. For example, when an official relayed the testimony of one of ‘the captured men and women of our country’ (我國被擄男女) who had escaped, that after raping them the Japanese were filling boats with women, forcing them to make themselves up before being shipped off to Japan.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 癸巳(1593) 7.14.

Those with whom they were not satisfied were simply repeatedly raped.¹⁰¹ Reports such as this abounded, and Oh could only exclaim ‘it is so terrible; it is so terrible!’¹⁰² The image of the Japanese that reached Oh was not simply just one of savagery, however. The seemingly unstoppable ferocity of the Japanese invasion led to a lasting terror of their martial prowess – as well as apparently violent nature.

The following entry shows how fear and distrust created the image of the Japanese as a violent and unpredictable people, of apparently self-evidently superior martial prowess to the people of Chosŏn:

聞倭賊投降者 絡繹不絕 布列諸陣 上京者亦多 一路各官少不如意 發怒致辱邑宰 或發劔擊刺 我國人傷者頗多 … 可歎奈何奈何 來八九月間 將舉兵直向京城云 若然則子遺之民 盡爲填壑之鬼矣 吾無葬地矣 唐兵亦爲降倭所怯 畏避不抗云 况我國之人乎 尤可歎也

I heard that there is a constant stream of surrendered Japanese, who are being distributed throughout the army. Many are also going to the capital. In the offices on the way, if they are even slightly dissatisfied, they become angry and disrespect the local official. Sometimes they even strike with their sword, and many of our country’s people have been injured. One can but sigh! It is said that they will attack the capital directly in the eighth or ninth month. If that is true,

101 Ibid., *Imjin namhaeng illok sŏ* 壬辰南行日錄序.

102 「尤慘尤慘」 Ibid.

then the battered remnants of the people will all be ghosts filling the ditches! We will die without a burial! They say that even the Tang soldiers are afraid of the surrendered Japanese, and keep clear of them rather than standing up to them. Then what of the people of our country? This especially makes one sigh.¹⁰³

Here and elsewhere we see that the Japanese as Oh Hŭimun came to know them were not only violent, but also feared by both Ming and Chosŏn officials. We can also note that Oh took it as a matter of course that the – ‘gentle’ – people of Chosŏn were weaker or more likely to be fearful than the Chinese. We also see how his despair at the wider situation was inseparable from his fear for his own safety.

4.4.2 JAPAN THE COUNTRY

While in the first years of Oh’s diary the Japanese predominantly appear as a violent horde sweeping the country, latterly Oh Hŭimun seems to have become more aware of the country to which the marauders belonged. This is reflected in a shift in his use of language. While in 1592 he tends to refer to them as the group wae 倭 (if not *jŏk* 賊, ‘brigands’), latterly he often talks about the country Japan, ‘Ilbon’ 日本.¹⁰⁴ This increase in discussion of Japan the coun-

103 Ibid., 甲午(1594) 7.23.

104 Ibid., 丙申(1596) 5.22, 6.4, 丁酉(1597) 2.27, 4.29.

try roughly coincides with the diplomatic engagement of Japan. The resumption of diplomatic relations – of a sort – probably contributed to highlighting the profile of this neighbouring country, rather than the archipelago simply being the ‘den’ (*hyŏl* 穴) from which raiding forces issued forth like beasts.

Following the invasions, people in Chosŏn obviously had a sudden incentive to learn more about their eastern neighbours. To meet this need for knowledge, it seems written as well as oral information flowed from all directions. Oh copied out Xu Yihou’s letter – which was evidently circulating within Chosŏn – where Xu explained the domestic political background to the 1592 invasion. He also copied out a memorial to King Sŏnjo of Chosŏn by Ming emissary Xue Pan 薛潘 (dates unknown). This would have been of interest to Oh and the wider population primarily because it expressed a Ming position on Chosŏn’s plight. It also gives insights into what Xue had managed to elucidate of the Japanese perspective. Adding to the growing Ming and Chosŏn sense of the Japanese as

fickle and duplicitous,¹⁰⁵ he reported on the suddenness of their change in position vis-à-vis negotiations:

方陷平壤[壤]之日 則云 欲假道而復仇 今則云 假道而朝貢矣 方以不能與中國抗衡爲千古遺恨 忽又以得沈惟敬可通朝貢爲幸矣

Only recently, when they took P'yongyang, they said they wished passage to settle their grievance; now they say they wish passage to pay tribute. Only recently they took not holding a balance of power with China (*Zhongguo*) as their eternal regret; suddenly they are glad to have Shen Weijing and be able to pay tribute.¹⁰⁶

Reading this memorial would have added to Oh's sense that the Japanese could not be trusted, but at the same time the discussion of their motives adds a level of complexity to Japan's image. The idea expressed here that the Japanese wished to challenge China's hegemony would have resonated with Xu Yihou's report of Hideyoshi's plans for conquest of China. Though these were crude third-hand transmissions of Japanese ideas, Oh Hüimun and his contemporaries would have understood that the Japanese were more than just raiders or soldiers; rather Japan was a country characterized by a differ-

105 Oh often comments on the Japanese being cunning and unpredictable, e.g., *Ibid.*, 丙申(1596) 6.4, 丁酉(1597) 8.17. See also the Chinese perspectives discussed in chapters 1 and 2.

106 *Ibid.*, 壬辰(1592) "haengin Söl Pan chumun" 行人薛潘奏文 (Memorial by Emissary Xue Pan).

ent way of looking at the world. Building on this, Hwang Shin and later Kang Hang's detailed (if highly subjective) accounts of Japan would have provided a further dimension of sophistication to ideas about Japan.¹⁰⁷

4.5 MEN OF TANG IN CHOSŎN

4.5.1 OH HŬIMUN'S EXPERIENCE OF THE CHINESE

In striking contrast to the very limited knowledge people in Chosŏn generally had of Japan, those of the educated class to which Oh Hŭimun belonged were immersed in Chinese history and writing. As discussed above with regard to vernacular stories, it is very likely that colourful tales of China were also known to those of other classes. Yet for all but a few people in Chosŏn, the arrival of the Ming army would have been the first time they had seen Chinese people in the flesh. Oh Hŭimun's writings about his sightings of Chinese troops betray an almost childlike keenness to goggle at these

107 Kang Hang 姜沆 (1567-1618) was taken as a prisoner to Japan after the second invasion of 1597, and wrote a lengthy report of his experiences there as well as all the information he could gather on Japan. See JaHyun Kim Haboush and Kenneth R. Robinson, *A Korean War Captive in Japan, 1597-1600: The Writings of Kang Hang* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013).

'men of Tang' (*Tang'in* 唐人), as Oh consistently refers to them. At the same time Oh was aware that marauding Chinese troops were to be avoided wherever possible. In the fifth month of 1593, Oh's son Yunhae 允諧 relays to him the impressive sight of 'Tang troops' (*Tangbyōng* 唐兵) marching in the capital, in graphic detail. Yet in the very same month he hears how people are moving home to avoid harassment from nearby Tang troops.¹⁰⁸ Conflicting senses of wonder and admiration on the one hand and fear and indignation on the other characterized Oh Hūimun's writing about the Chinese throughout his diary until it ended in 1601.

SENSE OF WONDER

Amazingly in light of his many bad experiences (see below), encountering Chinese people was always a curiosity for Oh Hūimun. When his family was in P'yōnggang, some 'Tang soldiers' came through the area begging for food. A neighbour (who sometimes did work for Oh) killed three chickens to feed the men, before local officials came to escort them away. Oh details all this but also that when they were leaving they came past his house. Though he did not

108 Oh Hūimun, "Swaemi rok," 癸巳(1593) 5, 5.8.

record their appearance for us, he evidently enjoyed the chance to have a look at them as they trooped past.¹⁰⁹

Oh had many more chances to see Chinese people after the Japanese had retreated and he was able to make short trips to the capital, to prepare the way for his eventual return and to tend to the family graves. The Chinese seem to have been a major highlight of his visits to the capital, earning daily mention in his diary. On one visit, he was at some sort of public house with some friends, when twenty or so Tang people also arrived, and started to play drinking games. This, 'was a curious spectacle indeed' (亦一奇觀), Oh writes.¹¹⁰ The previous day he had already described a Chinese feast he observed. As his sojourn in the capital continued, he commented on the bustling market full of Tang people, and particularly on seeing an officer with his escort – a similar sight to that reported by Yunhae years before.¹¹¹ He was impressed by the size of the Chinese army contingents. On one occasion he encountered Tang troops returning from training, who he said filled the road for a distance of ten *ri* 里 (2.5 miles). All fully armed, they were 'an impressive spectacle

109 Ibid., 戊戌(1598) 2.7. The neighbour, Kim Yŏnjin 金彦辰, is seen working for Oh on the 17th of the same month.

110 Ibid., 己亥(1599) 5.5.

111 Ibid., 己亥(1599) 5.6.

indeed' (亦一壯觀), Oh wrote.¹¹² He repeats the same phrase in his diary entry for the following day, but this time he had purposefully climbed a hill to see the Tang officer(s) directing training.¹¹³ Oh's spell in the capital seems to have turned into a tourist trip, with the Chinese army being the main attraction.

BRINGING IN A TIGER TO DRIVE OUT A WOLF

Oh Hŭimun's curiosity about 'Tang' troops, and his actively looking them out, stands next to a list of attacks, looting, and general abuse by the Ming army that runs as a string throughout *Swaemi rok*. There are simply too many incidents that Oh records to list them all here. As well as general looting, stories of injustices are common. For example, he hears of Chinese troops stealing people's property, getting into a fight, and then forcing the local official to punish those who resisted them.¹¹⁴ Chosŏn officials were not exempt from violence: Oh also hears that the official in charge of Kyŏng'gi province was beaten unconscious by Tang soldiers.¹¹⁵ Abuse at the hands of Ming troops was a phenomenon that affected all people in Chosŏn,

112 Ibid.

113 Ibid., 己亥(1599) 5.7.

114 Ibid., 甲午(1594) 6.4.

115 Ibid., 己亥(1599) 3.15.

from the highest officials down to slaves. The populace generally chose to vacate an area if the Ming army was due to pass through, commoners hiding in the woods by day and burying their belongings.¹¹⁶ Hearing all this, Oh was very aware of the suffering of 'people of our country' (*uri nara saram* / *agugin* 我國人) at the hands of 'Tang troops.'¹¹⁷

Supplementing what he hears in general rumour, Oh learned about Chinese mis-conduct through friends and relatives. His son-in-law Shin Ŭnggu looks after a Chinese officer in 1595.¹¹⁸ Another acquaintance tells Oh how the Ming ambassador to Japan Li Zhongcheng 李宗城, whom he had been entertaining, fails to keep his subordinates in check, leaving them to steal and to abuse Chosŏn officials.¹¹⁹ Especially after the Japanese had withdrawn, and much of the Ming army was stationed in the capital, Oh's close family more and more became victims of Tang soldier abuses. While staying in the capital, Yun'gyŏm wrote to tell his father how the Tang troops

116 See, for example: Ibid., 己亥(1599) 2.25, 丁酉(1597) 11.13.

117 Ibid., 己亥(1599) 2.9.

118 Ibid., 乙未(1595年) 6.14, 7.13, 9.7.

119 Ibid., 乙未(1595) 9.11.

are violent and trouble-making, and beat his slaves.¹²⁰ Oh Hŭimun's own slaves were robbed and beaten on multiple occasions.¹²¹

Eventually, Oh Hŭimun himself was in fact robbed by Chinese soldiers in the capital, having his fan stolen during hot weather.¹²² Earlier that month the raincoat his slave was bringing him was also stolen, so that a few days later when the heat gave way to the monsoon season, he was left in a leaking coat borrowed from another slave (who probably had to do without one).¹²³ While Oh complains at the unpleasantness of being first hot and then wet, he does not record any anger toward the Chinese perpetrators. In fact, in this post-war period, he is very mute in adding comment when he records the crimes of Tang troops. This is a huge contrast to the period after the first invasion of 1592, when anti-Ming sentiment seems to have reached fever-pitch across Chosŏn.

CHINESE INSULT ADDED TO JAPANESE INJURY

When the Ming army first arrived in Chosŏn and won a victory at P'yongyang there had been jubilation, but this quickly

120 Ibid., 己亥(1599) 3.3.

121 Ibid., 丙申(1596) 2.15, 戊戌(1598) 12.30, 己亥(1599) 3.11.

122 Ibid., 己亥(1599) 5.9.

123 Ibid., 己亥(1599) 5.2, 5.12.

soured when Ming commanders, led by Song Yingchang 宋應昌 (1536-1606) and Li Rusong 李如松 (1549-1598), insisted on a cease-fire. Before long, rumours of Chinese betrayal were running wild, and Oh even recorded a report that the Chinese were drinking and making merry with the Japanese – though he later diligently added a note that this report was false.¹²⁴ He expressed incomprehension and anger at news that the Chinese were in fact stopping Chosŏn forces from going to battle:

諸將欲入擊 約束已定 辭於唐將 則劉摠兵綏 招入朴晉等
終日結縛於庭 使不得擊賊云 非但自身不與同力攻賊 亦至
於我國諸將 不得任意擊賊 結縛致辱 若將助賊 未知其意
之所在

The commanders wanted to move in to attack, and had already agreed how to do so. When they went to take their leave from the Chinese commanders, Commander Liu Yan called in Pak Chin and the others and tied them up all day long in the courtyard, so that they could not attack the brigands, it is said. This is not only refusing to cooperate to attack the brigands, but going as far as to stop our country's commanders from attacking at will, and humiliating them by tying them up. If their wish is to help the brigands, then I do not know where their intent lies.¹²⁵

In writing this diary entry, Oh seems to become heated, and his mind jumps to the other negative reports he has heard about the Chinese:

124 Ibid., 癸巳(1593) 1.2.

125 Ibid., 癸巳(1593) 7.8.

且聞 唐兵下去湖南者 緣路民家 掠奪財物 無有紀極 如
經賊變

I also heard that the Tang troops travelling down to the Chölla area have been looting households along the way wantonly, undisciplined in the extreme. [The area] is as if struck by the brigands.¹²⁶

These are very direct criticisms of the Chinese, with Oh even doubting Chinese motives. Oh Hŭimun is also describing an assault of the Chinese army as being equivalent to one by the Japanese: blurring the lines of friend and foe. Clearly, in 1593 when the Ming command changed its offensive stance to one of negotiation, it provoked furious indignation. The result was a hotbed for rumours of the Chinese fraternizing with the Japanese and even protecting them. Oh's diary shows how rumours of such outrages mixed with intensified anger at the lawlessness of Chinese soldiers.

One of the most violently expressed sentiments in *Swaemi rok* comes when Oh Hŭimun heard one such report:

天使至 亦護衛倭賊而去云 痛憤痛憤 欲死欲死

They say that when the Celestial Ambassador arrived, he also left giving a guarded escort to the Japanese brigands (*Wae jök*). [It makes me] so painfully furious I would die, so painfully furious I would die!¹²⁷

126 Ibid.

127 Ibid., 癸巳(1593) 4.24.

In the entry where Oh expressed this exasperation, he recorded not only rumours of Chinese escorts for the Japanese, but also the issue of Chosŏn being reprimanded for breaking the ceasefire. A message from Ming commander Song Yingchang was relayed to him, where Song demanded that the Chosŏn authorities identify the culprit for a recent killing and punish him according to military law:

爾私相報復 肆行無忌若此 是倭夷效順 而朝鮮反叛亂矣
 去歲 倭奴入寇之時 該國君臣 胡不閉城效死 乃望風奔潰
 致令宗社丘墟 主君遷播 向非天朝施恤小之仁 整救焚之旅
 則朝鮮土地 委爲倭奴所有矣 曾不知感德戴恩 拱手聽令
 而尚欲架復仇之說 以戕殺零倭 覆敗之餘 吁亦可恥也

If you privately take revenge, and act so insubordinately and recklessly, that would be the Japanese (barbarians) (*Wae yi*, C. *Wo yi*)¹²⁸ being obedient, and Chosŏn rather being rebellious. Last year, when the Japanese (slaves)¹²⁹ invaded, why did the ruler and subjects of this country not close the city gates and fight to the death, instead scattering like the wind, so that the dynastic shrine is in ruins, and the ruler had to flee? If it had not been for the Celestial Court enacting benevolence in caring for the weak, preparing an army to save [Chosŏn] from the fires, then Chosŏn territory would have descended into the possession of the Japanese (slaves). [You people of Chosŏn] do not know to be grateful for mercy and obediently receive orders, and still wish to use the excuse of

128 The term *yi* 夷 by itself may not have carried so strong connotations as 'barbarian'; it was a category used to describe non-Chinese peoples, in opposition to *hua* (K. *hwa*) 華. As seen below, Song Yingchang was also earlier quoted as having used the term in the compound *manyi* 蠻夷 to describe China's neighbours, which likely had an even stronger derogatory sense.

129 'Japanese (slaves)': the term used here is *Waeno* (C. *Wonu*). For discussion of this term, see the footnote on page 55.

exacting revenge to murder individual Japanese (Wae, C. Wo). This is certainly shameful.¹³⁰

Such dismissive and unsympathetic utterances from Ming officials are plentiful in the court records, but here we see that they were circulating more widely, no doubt to the chagrin of the people of Chosŏn, if Oh's reaction is any indication. Oh is evidently not persuaded by this reported Chinese assessment of the situation, yet he recognizes that Chosŏn has no choice but to obey their Ming masters. After his venting of outrage quoted above, he goes on:

臣子死有不足言 而得罪上國 不可不計事 [...] 但我國
通天之讎 不得報 而好返其島 臣民之痛 其可勝道 然
天威亦自此而太損矣 倭賊其無輕侮之心乎

For a subject to die is nothing to speak of, but to offend the superior country, that is a matter that must be reckoned. [...]

And yet if our country's grievance that reaches as high as the heavens cannot be avenged, and they return to their islands untouched, could the pain of the subject people be expressed in words? Still, Celestial Prestige (*ch'onui*, C. *tianwei*) will from this point on be critically damaged. How will the Japanese brigands not look down on [the Ming]?¹³¹

Not only is Oh Hŭimun deeply dissatisfied with the Ming pursuit of peace, he argues that the reputation of the Empire among its neigh-

130 Oh Hŭimun, "Swaemi rok," 癸巳(1593) 4.24.

131 Ibid.

bours is at stake. He repeats the same sentiment elsewhere: ‘that the Celestial Generals want to forcibly make peace, not only greatly damages Celestial Prestige, but when will our country’s unforgivable grievance be avenged?’¹³² That not punishing the Japanese would damage China’s image in the eyes of its neighbours is the same argument made by opponents of peace in Beijing. Song Yingchang himself is recorded as having earlier admitted that defeat would damage Celestial Prestige (*tianwei* 天威) in a conversation copied out by Oh in his diary.¹³³ Here we see the same idea about the Ming empire’s international image reflected by Oh Hūimun, looking at the Ming from the outside. In that conversation with Yun Tusu 尹斗壽 (1533-1601), Song Yingchang is recorded as having spoken in boastful terms about China’s inherently exceptional position in the world:

天朝九邊皆蠻夷 今日入寇則討之 明日款貢則許之 此無他 好生惡殺之心 此天地之道也

To all sides of the Celestial Court are barbarians (*manyi*). If one day they invade then we attack them; if the next they request tribute rights then we permit them. It is simply an attitude of loving life and hating murder; this is the way of Heaven and Earth.¹³⁴

132 「天將強欲和親 非但大損天威 我國不共之讎 何時得報」 *Ibid.*, 癸巳 (1593) 4.19.

133 *Ibid.*, 壬辰(1592) “Yun Tusu sōjang” 尹斗壽書狀 (Report by Yun Tusu).

134 *Ibid.*

Oh Hŭimun never explicitly questioned this Chinese self-portrayal, but unconvinced by these Ming justifications for making peace, he was arguing that if the Ming was to continue to be viewed as the supreme world power, it must act accordingly – essentially the same argument made by Zhao Shizhen in his memorials to the throne.¹³⁵

4.5.2 CHINESE SELF-PORTRAYAL

MING MONUMENTS IN CHOSŎN

Oh's view of China was formed in the interaction between an ideal, imagined China and his experience of the reality of the Ming troops on the ground in Chosŏn, which meant it was also formed in interaction with Chinese self-portrayals. As we have seen, Oh had access to records of conversations between Ming and Chosŏn officials, also to essays and memorials written by Ming officials. During the war Chinese self-portrayals not only circulated in writing, but had physical manifestation within Chosŏn. This is nowhere more evident than in the shrines that the Ming military ordered to be built for them by the Chosŏn government.

¹³⁵ See chapter 3.

During the period covered by *Swaemi rok*, Oh Hŭimun makes deliberate journeys to visit both of the shrines to Lord Gwan 關公 (C. Guan) outside the capital Hansŏng (Seoul). Within Chosŏn, the cult of worshipping Guan Yu 關羽 (K. Kwan O) as a deity was as yet alien, but the quasi-historical tales of the Three Kingdoms period in which Guan Yu featured were already widespread.¹³⁶ It is not clear whether it is a coincidence that Oh borrows a copy of a *Samgukchi* 三國志 (Record of the Three Kingdoms) the day before his first shrine visit – it could also be that such texts had become more plentiful through the new Chinese markets.¹³⁷ In any case, it does not appear to have been interest in deity worship that drew Oh to the shrines, but the curiosity of its novelty and its Chineseness.

On his short trip to the capital in the fifth month of 1599, when he indulged in daily sight-seeing of all things Chinese, Oh went with a friend and a slave to see the shrine built outside Namdaemun 南大

136 That Three Kingdoms tales were widespread is implied by the court records from earlier in King Sŏnjo's reign. Hyuk-chan Kwon, "From *Sanguo Zhi Yanyi* to *Samgukchi*: Domestication and Appropriation of *Three Kingdoms* in Korea" (University of British Columbia, 2010), esp. 51–53. It is also supported by the multiple references to Oh Hŭimun borrowing and reading Three Kingdoms stories in *Swaemi rok*, e.g.: Oh Hŭimun, "Swaemi rok," 己亥(1599) 5.7, 庚子(1600) 3.24.

137 Oh Hŭimun, "Swaemi rok," 己亥(1599) 5.7.

門 (the southern gate).¹³⁸ He describes the shrine as being built by 'Tang generals' (*Tang jang* 唐將) though it was the Chosŏn government that reluctantly funded its construction.¹³⁹ The design must have appeared distinctively exotic to Oh, as he described it in detail. The fortune-telling practice of the 'Tang people' is also a curiosity to him. People tell him that huge numbers of Chinese people visit, and he is left with the impression that the shrine is important to the Chinese.

Another detail which he saw, and that remained in Oh Hŭimun's memory, gives us a hint as to the significance of the shrine for the Ming generals who oversaw its construction. During his tour of the shrine Oh read many inscriptions on the walls and pillars, but he wrote that on returning home he could only recall one couplet, which read:

萬古英風昭上國 新開廟貌鎮藩邦

Timeless heroic airs illuminate the glory of the superior
country,

138 Ibid., 己亥(1599) 5.8.

139 The government was forced to fund both shrines; the southern shrine being built in 1598. See Kuwano Eiji 桑野栄治, "Chosŏn Korea and Ming China after the Imjin Waeran: State Rituals in the Later Chosŏn Period," in *The East Asian War: International Relations, Violence, and Memory*, ed. James Bryant Lewis (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2015), 294–322.

The newly opened shrine's visage holds firm the vassal state.¹⁴⁰

This couplet is significant in a number of ways. Firstly, it identifies the Ming with Guan Yu, suggesting that his powerful demeanour reflects the qualities of Chosŏn's suzerain. This is not merely a literary flourish: it paired with the dominating statue of Guan Yu to reinforce its desired effect. When Oh visited the second shrine outside the Eastern Gate (Tongdaemun 東大門) in 1600 it was still under construction so without inscriptions, but he was struck by the overpowering golden statue of Lord Guan.¹⁴¹ A second intriguing aspect of the couplet is that it explicitly picks out the *appearance* of the shrine and its effect on Chosŏn. This would seem to confirm that the Ming generals wished the shrine to impress the local inhabitants. Taking the two halves of the couplet together, the reader is given the strong impression that the glittering new shrine with Lord Guan towering at its centre was built as a monument, symbolizing Ming status and authority; realizing the assertion made by Xu Xizhen of Chinese culture visually impressing the people of Chosŏn.¹⁴² It is telling that

140 Oh Hŭimun, "Swaemi rok," 己亥(1599) 5.8.

141 Ibid., 庚子(1600) 2.29.

142 Xu Xizhen claimed the Koreans were desperate to keep Chinese troops in Chosŏn, because 'the Koreans had been awe-struck by Chinese (Zhongguo) clothing and adornments' (麗人為中國服飾震懾). Xu Xizhen 徐希震, "Dong zheng ji" 東征記 (Record of the Eastern Expedition), KJ 5249, 41a,

when Oh Hūimun returned home and lifted his brush, though many details had faded, it was the overall appearance of the shrine and this couplet that had left the deepest impression upon him.

The significance of the Guan Yu shrines obviously extends much wider than Oh Hūimun's individual experience. Particularly as they functioned on the visual as well as literary level, they were both designed to and would have succeeded in making an impact on a large number of people over years. The shrines also point to the mindset of those in the Ming military. Lord Guan was not just a figure in Classical Chinese tales, but a character of the stage, in popular oral storytelling traditions, and a deity in the pantheon of first folk, then state-sponsored religion.¹⁴³ By actively co-opting this figure of wide appeal, the Ming generals were associating the Ming with what Lord Guan symbolized: a formidable martial force, but above all a force for righteousness and justice. The significance could

Kyujanggak, Seoul National University.

143 Regarding the development of the Guan Yu myth and related imagery, see: Liu Haiyan 刘海燕, "Guan Yu xingxiang yu Guan Yu chongbai de chuanbo yu jieshou" 关羽形象与关羽崇拜的传播与接受 (Spread and Acceptance of the Image and Worship of Guan Yu), *Nankai Xuebao* 南开学报 no. 1 (2006): 74–79; Li Linglong 李玲珑, "Yuan dai Guan Yu chongbai yu Yuan zaju zhong de Guan Yu xingxiang" 元代关羽崇拜与元杂剧中的关羽形象 (Worship of Guan Yu in the Yuan Dynasty and the Image of Guan Yu in Yuan Plays), *Qinghai shifan daxue minzu shifan xueyuan xuebao* 青海师范大学民族师范学院学报 17, no. 1 (2006): 34–37.

not be lost on the Ming soldiers that poured into the shrine in such numbers, nor on local people, such as Oh Hŭimun.

4.5.3 LEGACY OF THE CHINESE INTERVENTION

Swaemi rok gives us insight into the many experiences that contributed to Oh Hŭimun and his fellow countrymen's vision of the Ming, raising the question of what the lasting impression of the East Asian War may have been on the ways people in Chosŏn thought about China. After the war, the Chosŏn court promptly set about praising the great benevolence of the Ming in saving their country. Despite the terrible hardships endured in hosting the Ming army and obeying its commanders' orders, those at court were well aware that there would have been no court if it had not been for Ming intervention.¹⁴⁴ Oh Hŭimun clearly also recognizes this truth, though this did not stop him showing great consternation at the Chinese position. Oh's attitude towards the Chinese was certainly complex, such that it cannot be categorized as 'positive' or 'negative.' It is tempting to see it as containing the tension between an ideal of Chinese civilization

144 For the Chosŏn court, praising the Ming also offered some welcome distraction from their own almost total failure to defend the realm.

long held and the disappointing reality of Chinese troops on the ground. Grandly-clad Ming generals and self-aggrandizing shrines would have fed into that ideal. His fascination with even the drinking games of Ming soldiers would also seem to be increased by the special status China held for him.

Some diary entries Oh made in 1599 offer a clue as to how he reconciled conflicting elements in his vision of China. When the Ming commander Wan Shide 萬世德 (dates unknown) demanded that Oh Yun'gyōm provide him with large quantities of ginseng, it was clear to Oh Hūimun that Wan's demand for 'army supplies' was simply personal greed. Yet Yun'gyōm would have faced punishment had he failed to provide what was requested, and it seems he was having to fill the prisons with hapless subjects whom the government held to ransom for ginseng.¹⁴⁵ Oh Hūimun writes of Wan's actions: 'It is most hateful, but what is to be done, what is to be done?'¹⁴⁶ At this point, Oh contrasted the local and the central. Lamenting the corruption of the commander in Chosŏn, Wan Shide, he observed that the 'Sage Son of Heaven' (*sōng chō'nja* 聖天子) – i.e., the Ming emperor – has always been extremely caring of the *tongmin*

145 Oh Hūimun, "Swaemi rok," 己亥(1599) 9.2.

146 「痛甚奈何奈何」 Ibid., 己亥(1599) 8.28.

東民 ('the Eastern people').¹⁴⁷ By this simple and age-old device of separation, Oh Hūimun was able to maintain an idealized view of China even while complaining of the suffering of Chosŏn at the hands of Chinese officials.

147 Ibid.

Conclusions

Several themes emerge from the study of Zhao Shizhen and Oh Huimun's writings and surrounding texts. An unexpected common thread is the evocative Chinese association of Guan Yu and the perceived righteousness of China. We see this not only in a textual presentation by Chinese writer Xu Xizhen but as physical manifestation in shrines and statues erected in Chosŏn. The widespread use of the Guan Yu symbol implies that the self-portrayal of the Ming court as a force for world justice was recreated in both popular writings and within the Ming army. Readers and military conscripts alike were invited to enjoy a satisfying identification with the side of righteous distribution of justice and a position of moral and cultural superiority.

If we chose to be sympathetic with Xu Xizhen's self-aggrandizing vision, we could observe that Oh Hŭimun does indeed seem to have been impressed by Chinese 'clothing and adornments.' It remains unclear, however, what conclusions Oh Hŭimun drew in response to Chinese self-portrayals he encountered. What is apparent is a certain separation of ideal and reality in Oh's vision of China

and the Chinese. This must have been a widespread experience for those in Chosŏn who had come to associate China with morality and propriety. An official who had extensive interaction with people from the Ming bitterly complained in 1596 that the Chinese always spoke of high principles but in reality were petty and unscrupulous.⁴⁵

Yet memory is selective, and as a text like *Dong zheng ji* demonstrates, conclusion of the war allowed for rapid romanticization of it. Later generations in Chosŏn chose to sing praise of Ming benevolence, and forget the havoc wrought by Chinese troops.⁴⁶ Even before distance in time had arisen, distance in space allowed Oh Hŭimun to separate the Wanli emperor as a merciful force distinct from the corrupt Ming officials and lawless soldiers.

It is the same effect of distance that encouraged Zhao's contemporaries to conjure up images of unstoppable Japanese savages. Myth and fanciful portrayals of heroes fighting off savages were evidently as much a part of the war period as post-war tales.

45 The observation about the Chinese was made by Yi Hangbok 李恒福 (1556-1618). "Sŏnjo sillok" 宣祖實錄 (Annals of the Sŏnjo Reign), 29.11.15, National Institute of Korean History, <http://sillok.history.go.kr>.

46 Apart from court decisions to emphasize the debt of gratitude to the Ming, later histories of the war also downplayed the stories of corrupt Ming officials and lawless Ming soldiers. For example, the late seventeenth century work Sin Kyŏng 申晔, "Chaejo pŏnbang chi" 再造藩邦志, in *Daitō yajō* (Taedong yasŭng) 大東野乘 (Keijō: Chōsen kosho kankōkai 朝鮮古書刊行會, 1910).

Dong shi sheng yan suggests that failure to put down many earlier coastal raids, and the initial defeat in Chosŏn in 1592 led to myths of the Japanese as truly formidable beasts of war. With little else to go on, those in the interior gathered together the stories they heard and the sparse historical records on the 'Wo' to create an image of a fickle and violent people. This image then persisted. Though the writing of Zhao Shizhen and others proves that more information on the Japanese was available – even produced in Beijing – preconceived notions about the Japanese helped push this information out of the orthodox narratives that developed about the war. The subsequent Ming 'victory' meant that Zhao's subtly more realist assessment of China's position need not replace fanciful assertions of innate moral and cultural superiority.

For Oh Hŭimun and his contemporaries, the war was not a distant heroic romance but an earth-shaking reality. This meant that Chosŏn was also not an abstract image for Oh, but part of how he understood the horrors around him: Chosŏn defined the area and the people suffering. The war also had a unifying effect. For Oh Hŭimun, class distinction was as clear as night and day, but as common victims he cried out for divine mercy on the 'people of the East' of all stations. Despite his contempt for the court and high offi-

cials, Oh also understood his fate to be inseparable from that of the Chosŏn state. Chosŏn moral and cultural superiority over Japan was also not abstract rhetorical flourish, but appeared to be justified in the most visual and immediate terms: the barbarous invaders offended propriety by cutting back their hair and staining their teeth, and their savage nature appeared self-evident in their terrible violence. This directly lived experience was all the while complemented by an incessant flow of information from around Chosŏn and from China and Japan, full of portrayals of all three countries. This flow of text and tale powerfully demonstrates how the war brought intensified cross-border conversations on what was signified by China (Zhongguo, Zhonghua, Tang), Korea (Koryŏ, Chosŏn, Koguryŏ), and Japan (Riben/Ilbon, Wonuguo).

Part III | Beyond the Sea

When Toyotomi Hideyoshi ordered his vassals to invade the Korean peninsula first in 1592 and then again in 1597, he was changing the lives of hundreds of thousands of people across the archipelago. Those who travelled across the sea to join the invasion included of course professional soldiers, but also still greater numbers of conscripted labourers and craftsmen, as well as merchants, and even monks. For a huge number of people in Japan, this would have been their first and last experience of a foreign land. It is therefore essential that we study how this experience was interpreted if we are to understand how people at the time conceptualized Japan and its neighbours, and what these countries signified for them. This was a crucial historical moment in the development of the people of Japan's worldview not least because it was preceded and followed by periods of reduced overseas interaction. The timing of the East Asian War was also significant because it came after a hundred years of devastating civil war known as the Warring States (*sengoku* 戦國)

period. Having been so long divided and still only very loosely united, there had been little stimulus for the people of the islands to think of themselves as part of one country. This makes the evidence found in this study of a developed sense of Japan as a country – and identification with it – all the more significant.

Most recording of the East Asian War in writing – on paper and on stone – served to extol the achievements of a particular house or lord, indulging in frequent exaggeration. The memorial stele shown in Figure 8 is a typical example.⁴⁷ These narratives of glorious military heroism formed the mainstream of literature on the war during the subsequent centuries. The most influential account was probably *Taikōki* 太閤記, which recounted the events of the period with Hideyoshi at the centre. Yet such positive accounts did not hold a monopoly on memory of the invasion. Moreover, even within the genre of military writing (*gunki monogatari* 軍記物語), more

47 The *Kōraiijin teki-mikata senshisha kuyōhi* 高麗陣敵味方戦死者供養碑 (Stele of offering for our and enemy war dead on the Korean front) was erected in the Kōyasan 高野山 cemetery on the orders of the Shimazu 島津 family of Satsuma 薩摩 in 1599. Next to it a nineteenth century descendent of the family left another stele praising his ancestors' great deeds in both Japanese and English. Regarding the stele, see also Choi Kwan 崔官 and Kim Shidök 金時德, *Imjin Waeran kwallyōn Ilbon munhōn haeje* (kūnse p'yōn) 임진 왜란 관련 일본 문헌 해제: 근세편 (Japanese Documents Connected to the Imjin War (pre-Modern Edition)) (Sōul: Mun, 2010), 24.

nuanced appraisals of Hideyoshi's attempted foreign conquest can be found.

This chapter focuses chiefly on two diaries, which reveal both the nuance and the diversity of perspective among Japanese who recorded their experiences of the East Asian War. The first of these, *Yoshino nikki* 吉野日記, is the diary of a warrior who took part in the first invasion in 1592. The second is *Chōsen hinikki* 朝鮮日々記, written by a monk who followed the second invasion in 1597. Studying these diaries allows us to move beyond the central narrative on the war, already well represented in the literature on the Toyotomi government's diplomacy and the histories of the invasion which supported that government's position. These diaries are also the best sources we have for understanding how those further from the centre might have envisioned Japan, Korea, and China in the context of the war.

Starkly different in tone and content, the two diaries nevertheless reveal similarities in the worldviews of their authors. A point of convergence is an understanding of the war and its outcome as reflecting the fate of Japan and its status in the world. This grew out of a common cultural heritage, but the link in the common experience of the East Asian War is equally salient. Together, the diaries

offer us a tantalising insight into how the war made an idea of 'Japan'
powerful and relevant beyond a narrow political elite.



Figure 8: Shimazu stele at Kōyasan

Chapter 5 | Yoshino

Warrior of Japan

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Yoshino *nikki* 吉野日記 (Yoshino's Diary) is one of a number of warriors' war memoirs (*sōgunki* 從軍記) in Japan that have survived. It deserves our attention for several reasons. First of these is its close proximity to the events it records. The author describes the invasion as a witness and participant, and writes in 1593, at what he thinks is the conclusion of the war. His writing thus preserves a moment in history when the author was blissfully unaware that fighting would continue for another five years.¹ Written as a recollection of the events of past months rather than a daily diary, the author is able to design a framework in which to present the whole war to his readers back in

1 Fortresses were built to hold a beachhead in the south of the peninsula, but most Japanese forces were withdrawn and the invasion appeared all but over by mid-1593. Mary Elizabeth Berry, *Hideyoshi* (Cambridge, Mass.; London: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1982), 214.

Japan. The text thus offers a fascinating insight into his vision of Japan, the Japanese, and their relationship with the world.

The author's own identity is also important. While we know little of him personally, he was evidently of the warrior (*bushi* 武士) class, and of much lower status than the *daimyō* 大名 (feudal lords) commanders of whom he speaks with reverence.² The supreme commander Hideyoshi's world-view has long been a subject of academic interest, while Konishi Yukinaga, Katō Kiyomasa and other commanders receive attention as participants in the much-studied negotiation process.³ *Yoshino nikki* represents the view of one of the far wider group of people who actively participated in the conflict but were excluded from decision-making and – often – from history. The developed thinking about his country and the world that the author displays removes any doubts that the 'voiceless masses' were also devoid of a wider world-view. Furthermore, as warriors

2 Throughout Yoshino's narration, he describes himself as outside the *daimyō* and their immediate circle. He uses honorific verb-endings to describe his lords, and laments their having to suffer hardship to which they were not accustomed.

3 Most histories of the East Asian War narrate its course in terms of these men and their counterparts. They also attract more focused attention. See, for example: Berry, *Hideyoshi*; Kitajima Manji 北島万次, *Katō Kiyomasa: Chosen shinryaku no jitsuzou* 加藤清正: 朝鮮侵略の実像 (*Katō Kiyomasa: The Truth of the Chosŏn Invasion*) (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan 吉川弘文館, 2007).

enjoyed increased status and political influence under centuries of a military-dominated government, warriors' tales and the values they espoused became highly influential in the shaping of mainstream values of society as a whole.⁴

Yoshino nikki is also not alone among warrior memoirs in displaying a developed Japan-centred world-view. As space does not allow for a full analysis of all the war memoirs, this text is selected as a case study. It serves well as an example, in part because the author's world-view shares the same key elements as the view expressed in other warriors' memoirs.⁵ It is these core elements, such as the Three Lands view of Buddhism, the story of Empress Jingū's previous invasion of Korea, and the idea of Japan as Land of the Gods, that are discussed in the following analysis of the text.

Finally, *Yoshino nikki* is significant as an account of the war that continued to be read and valued by those interested in the war in

4 It has been argued that warrior values became dominant values in the latter Middle Period (12th-15th centuries) through their dissemination in a variety of texts. While this may be overstated, that warrior-centred literature was influential cannot be denied. See: Saeki Shin'ichi 佐伯真一, "Yoshisada gunki to bushi no kachikan" 『義貞軍記』と武士の価値観 ("Yoshisada Gunki" and Warrior Values), in *Nit-Chū-Kan no bushōden* 日中韓の武将伝, ed. Inoue Yasushi 井上泰至, Nagao Naoshige 長尾直茂, and Chōng Pyōngsōl 鄭炳說 (Tōkyō: Bensei 勉誠, 2014), 7–20.

5 For discussion of other memoirs see section 5.4 below.

Japan. There is evidence of repeated copying, lending, and continued appreciation of the authenticity of the text as a first-hand account.

To date, a modern translation of the text has only been made into Korean.⁶ Japanese scholars have discussed the text, but no in-depth study seems to have been made.⁷ This is the first study of the text in English.

5.1.1 HISTORY OF THE TEXT

There are two known extant versions of *Yoshino nikki*.⁸ These are included in the nineteenth-century documentary collections *Zoku Gunsho ruijū* 続群書類従 (Classified Collection of Books Continued) and *Chūgai keii den sōkō* 中外經緯傳草稿 (Draft Account of Matters Domestic and Foreign) respectively.⁹ The two versions do not

6 Kim Shidōk 金時徳 (Kim Shiduck), “Yoshino Chingojaemon Pimangnok” 요시노 진고자에몬 비망록 (Memoir of Yoshino Jingozaemon), *Munhōn gwa haesōk* 문헌과 해석 no. 63 (2013): 1–17.

7 See, for example: Kitajima Manji 北島万次, “Tajira Akitane no ‘Kōrai nikki’” 田尻鑑種の「高麗日記」, *Rekishi hyōron* 歴史評論 no. 8 (1973): 110–28.

8 *Yoshino nikki* 吉野日記 is the title as recorded in *Chūgai keii den sōkō*, with *Kōrai morokoshi no sōshi* 高麗もろこしの草子 (Notes on Korea and China) recorded as an alternative title. *Zoku Gunsho ruijū* gives the primary title as *Yoshino Jingozaemon gakusho* 吉野甚五左衛門覺書 (Memoir of Yoshino Jingozaemon).

9 *Zoku Gunsho ruijū* is a collection of Japanese literary and historical works that is attributed to Hanawa Hokiichi 塙保己一 (1746–1821), though it was not

appear to be direct relations, but in terms of the text body, there are only minor differences.¹⁰ In terms of information about the text, both versions record the author as being a man called Yoshino Jingozaemon 吉野甚五左衛門, but offer little further information about his identity. All that remains is Yoshino's signature, copied in the version included in *Chūgai keii den sōkō*, which gives his identity as a vassal of Matsuura Shigenobu 松浦鎮信 (1549-1614).¹¹ From this we can establish that he travelled to the peninsula as part of the First Army, led by Konishi Yukinaga, of which Matsuura's army formed a part.¹² This means Yoshino arrived in Korea with the first part of the Japanese invasion force in 1592, and his account continues until the

completed or published in his lifetime. *Chūgai keii den sōkō* was the unfinished work of Ban Nobutomo 伴信友 (1773-1846), collecting notes on historical relations with Chosŏn and Ryūkyū, with the second-half dedicated to the East Asian War under the title '*seijū ibun rui*' 征戎遺文類 (Remaining documents from the conquest of the barbarians).

- 10 Kim Shiduck points to textual difference to prove this point. "Yoshino Chingojaemon Pimangnok," 2.
- 11 The signature reads *Matsuura Hizen nyūdō hōin-sō seishi Yoshino Jingozaemon* 松浦肥前入道法印宗靜士 吉野甚五左衛門 and is followed by *kaō* 花押 (indicating where the original seal of the author was impressed). Ban Nobutomo 伴信友, "Chūgai keii den sōkō" 中外經緯傳草稿 (Draft Account of Matters Domestic and Foreign), in *Ban Nobutomo zenshū* 伴信友全集, vol. 3 (Tokyo: Kokusho kankōkai 國書刊行会, 1907), 347.
- 12 That Yoshino belonged to the house of Matsuura is further corroborated by the body of the text, as Yoshino's narrative raises Matsuura's importance to be almost equal with the leading commander Konishi. Kim Shidōk, "Yoshino Chingojaemon Pimangnok," 2.

following year when he returns to Japan as a result of the Sino-Japanese peace negotiations.

What happened to the text in the first years after Yoshino's return is not clear, but we know that by the eighteenth century there were many copies. The editor of *Zoku gunsho ruijū* apparently consulted at least two versions, as the text is annotated throughout marking alternative versions of words or phrases. Dating earlier than this, the *Zoku gunsho ruijū* version further contains a note (*shikigo* 識語) by a copyist named Kodama 兒玉 dated 1787, which explains part of that version's history. He begins by exclaiming that there is no way to know how many times the text had changed hands. His knowledge of its history extends back to it being held in the house of the Osaka merchant Kimura Kenkadō 木村兼葭堂 (1736-1802). Kimura showed it to Anbe Nobuchika 安部信允 (1728-1799), lord of Okabe 岡部 (present-day Saitama), when he was on official duty in Osaka. Nobuchika reportedly took such a liking to it that he had one of his men copy it, mimicking the original even down to the shade of the ink. It was from Nobuchika, before he

returned to the capital, that Kodama was able to borrow the text and make his own copy.¹³

From Kodama's account we can see that although the text was never put to print, it continued to attract interest. That it was not printed may have been due to government prohibition of texts relating to Hideyoshi's Korean invasion, rather than a lack of a market for the text.¹⁴ The memoir's continued appeal for later readers was the authenticity of the text as a first-hand account. Kodama describes Nobuchika prizing the text as an unpolished account written in the midst of battle.¹⁵

Yoshino nikki may be unpolished in terms of literary style, but it seems unlikely it was written as a diary during the actual campaign. The author himself describes the account as being written on board a ship at Pusan 釜山, the Korean harbour from which he

13 *Zoku Gunsho ruijū* 續群書類従 (Classified Collection of Books Continued), vol. 20 下(卷 591) (Tokyo: Zoku gunsho ruijū kansei kai 續群書類従完成会, 1923), 387; Kim Shidōk, "Yoshino Chingojaemon Pimangnok," 1-2.

14 Under the rule of the Tokugawa 徳川 shogunate (1603-1868), there was an official ban on publications relating to Hideyoshi and his Korean invasion. Choi Kwan 崔官, *Bunroku • keichō no eki: bungaku ni kizamareta sensō* 文禄・慶長の役 (壬辰・丁酉倭乱): 文学に刻まれた戦争 (The Bunroku-Keichō Expeditions (Imjin/Chōngyu Waeran): A War Engraved in Literature) (Tokyo: Kōdansha 講談社, 1994), 238.

15 Hanawa Hokiichi, *Zoku Gunsho ruijū*, 20 下(卷 591):387.

was to return home. Thus the text appears to be a memoir written immediately after the event.

5.1.2 STRUCTURE OF THE TEXT

Yoshino's memoir is not a long text, at just over five thousand characters. It is written in classical Japanese. For the most part it is a narrative of the war seen through Yoshino's own experiences, and focusing on major battles in which he took part. The exception is the brief prologue-like section which precedes the main body of the memoir. This frames the author's experiences by explaining Japan's position in the world and relationship with Korea. A final note at the end of the text reads, 'As this was written on a ship it will be very difficult to read; begging your pardon. / In the port of Pusan. / 4th day, 7th month, 2nd year of Bunroku reign [1593].'¹⁶ Below is a summary of the memoir's narrative, which is followed by a more in-depth analysis of what the text reveals about the author's world-view, beginning with the particularly informative prologue.

16 「船中にてかき申候間彌見え間敷候、萬幸々々 / 釜山浦にて / 文禄二年七月四日」 “Chūgai keii den sōkō,” 354a; *Zoku Gunsho ruijū*, 20 下(卷591):387a.

5.1.3 YOSHINO'S STORY

After explaining Japan's place in the world and its history, Yoshino describes how the *daimyō* of Japan (Nihon/Nippon 日本), receiving an imperial decree (*tenka no goshuin* 天下の御朱印), set out to cross the sea and pacify a foreign country (*ikoku taiji* 異国たいぢ). From Ikinoshima 一岐島 (which belonged to Yoshino's lord Matsuura) the fleet set sail on the 12th day of the third month to Fuchū 府中 on Tsushima 對馬, arriving in Pusan on the 12th day of the fourth month.¹⁷ Yoshino then moves directly into a description of the siege of Pusan. Fearsome Chosŏn defences serve to offset the rapid and decisive nature of the Japanese victory. The First Army to which Yoshino belongs enjoyed victory after victory, as it captured Tongnae 東萊, Miryang 密陽, the capital Hanyang 漢陽 (Seoul), Kaesŏng 開城, and finally P'yongyang. It was while holding their position at P'yongyang that Yoshino and his comrades had their first encounter with a Ming force. According to Yoshino, Zu Chengxun 祖承訓 (dates unknown) caught the defenders totally unawares when

17 The lunar calendar used in Japan differed from the Ming/Chosŏn one. As such, while the 12th day of the third month corresponded to the same day in the Ming/Chosŏn calendar, the 12th day of the fourth month in Japan corresponded to the 13th day in Ming/Chosŏn. As matching of dates is not relevant to the discussion here, subsequent discrepancies will not be noted.

he launched his assault on the city in the early hours of the 16th day of the seventh month. That the defenders were still in a dreamlike state when an allied force attacked once again serves to better illustrate the valour of the Japanese in their successful defence. When Japanese-held P'yongyang did finally fall, it was to a force that the author later heard numbered a million men. Even so, the defenders would have held their ground if it had not been for starvation: the besieged Japanese simply ran out of food.

As victorious advance turned into defeat and flight, a lack of supplies and the harsh cold of winter on the peninsula becomes the main theme for the remainder of the text. Yoshino describes the collected Japanese forces facing the enemy at Hanyang in an atmosphere of despair. All the commanders gathered for a military council every day, but from Yoshino's perspective, with supplies exhausted there was no way to carry on. The Ming negotiator Shen Weijing's 沈惟敬 (d. 1597) timely arrival from Kaesŏng to further negotiations was welcomed by head of the First Army, Yukinaga. Yoshino then describes a general (and his own) return from Hanyang as the result of promising negotiations with Shen Weijing, totally omitting the fact that the Japanese retreated after suffering a defeat at

the hands of the Koreans at Haengju.¹⁸ At this point, it becomes clear the warrior Yoshino is justifying his army's inglorious return from war. He describes Shen Weijing first promising and then actually delivering hostages, in spite of Japanese suspicions. The Japanese army is said to have attributed the success of the negotiations to the 'martial fortune' (*buun* 武運) – i.e. destiny to win – of the First Army, and its chief Yukinaga. The purported completion of the negotiations in turn led to the happy return of Yoshino and his comrades to Japan. In this way, what was a partial defeat and retreat of the Japanese army is portrayed as a success – despite the Japanese not having actually gained anything meaningful through the negotiations.

Given the earlier Japanese victories against the odds, Yoshino's memoir is able to recall the expedition in a triumphant tone. Though there are both high and low points in the story, suffering freezing weather and near starvation only prove the warrior's mettle. Yoshino's somewhat abstract closing comment both reaffirms the necessary character of a warrior and justifies the final with-

18 Kim Shidök, "Yoshino Chingojaemon Pimangnok," 4.

drawal: ‘Those who are born as warriors must be strong of bone and sharp of mind; to act rashly is foolish.’¹⁹

5.2 JAPAN AND THE WORLD

The most significant part of the diary for understanding the author’s world view is the introduction. Framing as it does the whole expedition and Japan’s very position in the world, the introduction would have also made a strong impression on how the diary’s later readers thought about the East Asian War. It is worth quoting the first section of the diary in full:

抑むかしよりうっしおかれし世界の繪圖を見るに、唐をば四百餘州、天竺は十六の大國、十千の小國、南蠻高麗までつゞき渡て、その堺國は大河有と見へたり、日本は東海はるかに隔だゝつて。わづかの嶋たり、大國にたくらぶれば、九牛が一毛たりといへども、日本は神國たりよつて神道猛勇のき有、人の心の武き事三國にもすぐれたり、其故に仁王十四代ちうあい天皇のきさき神功皇后女帝の身として三韓をきりしたがへ給ひしより已來、異國にもしたがはず、返て高麗りうきうより毎年我朝にくわん物をそなへ奉る、是は上代のせん禮たり、今は百王の末となり、末世末代におよんで、國をあらそひ弓箭をもよほすこと、たうろうが斧とぞおもへる

19 「武士に生まれん人々は、きこんしやうぼねつよくあり、むしやうにしてはおろかなり」 “Chūgai keii den sōkō,” 354a; *Zoku Gunsho ruijū*, 20 下 (卷 591):387a. For this and all subsequent citations from *Yoshino nikki*, references to both versions are provided but the Japanese text provided is from the *Chūgai keii den sōkō* version.

If one looks at the world maps passed down from the days of old, Kara [China²⁰] has over four hundred provinces, India has sixteen large countries and ten thousand small countries; continuing over to Namban²¹ and Korea (Kōrai), it can be seen that there is a great river in these border countries.

As for Japan, it is but an island far in the eastern seas. If it is compared to a large country it is but one hair among nine oxen. Yet, Japan is the Land of the Gods (*shinkoku*), and as such has the force of the Way of the Gods (*shintō*) and dauntless courage; the valour of its people's hearts surpasses that of all the Three Lands. Therefore, ever since Empress Jingū, wife of the fourteenth-generation emperor Chūai, in the female body of an empress conquered Korea (San Kan), Japan has not been conquered by another country, but rather tribute (or 'taxes', *kammotsu*) has been offered up to our court every year by Korea and Ryūkyū.²² This was the ritual precedent of previous eras.²³ But now, when we are on the end of the hundred kings, and into the End Time (*masse matsudai*), to fight over territory (or 'countries', *kuni*) and as-

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- 20 The term Kara 唐 should not simply be translated, as is the following *Tenjiku* 天竺 (India), because it contains an important ambiguity. The Japanese had no direct contact with India so conception of it could remain simple. Kara is used to refer both to China and more widely to non-Japanese, even within *Yoshino nikki*. This is discussed further below.
- 21 Namban 南蠻 refers to the islands to the south of Japan, e.g. Luzon, or the people or things therefrom. At this time it included the Portuguese who came to Japan from those islands.
- 22 Ryūkyū (present-day Okinawa): In *Zoku Gunsho ruijū* version Liaodong is given in place of Ryūkyū, but this is likely a misreading of りうきう as りうとう. Such an error would have been encouraged by Liaodong appearing later in the text. During this period emissaries came regularly from Ryūkyū, whereas there was no official contact between Liaodong and the islands.
- 23 Ritual precedent: This is a translation of 'せん禮.' This unusual spelling is homophonous with *senrei* (先例, 'precedent') but the character 禮 has been used instead of 例, so the word literally reads 'former ritual' instead of the usual 'former example' (i.e. precedent).

semble arms, I think is like to the mantis which opposed the carriage.²⁴

Yoshino's points can be briefly summarized as follows: (1) Japan is both small and distant (implying insignificance); (2) but being the Land of the Gods, it has a force and military strength that surpasses other countries; (3) in the past this has meant it has not been conquered but rather has conquered its neighbours and received tribute from them; (4) but in the current era, as (it is implied) Japan is weaker, it is foolish to attempt war of conquest. While the outline of the argument may be more or less clear, this short paragraph is a dense concentration of culturally-loaded terms: Three Lands, Land of the Gods, End Time. If we are to understand the historical significance of what Yoshino is saying, and why he might think in this way, we must first look at the history that these terms represent.

5.2.1 THREE LANDS

An important part of Yoshino's world-view is the idea of the 'Three Lands' (*sankoku* 三國). When he is describing his impression

24 Regarding the allusion to the mantis and the carriage, see the section 'Past glory and present defeat' below. "Chūgai keii den sōkō," 347b; *Zoku Gunsho ruijū*, 20 下(卷 591):378b – 378a.

of the world he begins by mentioning two of these, Kara 唐 and Tenjiku 天竺. Tenjiku refers to India, being a Japanese rendition of the Chinese transliterated name of that country. Kara uses the character for the Tang Dynasty (618-907), and primarily refers to China.²⁵ The third of the 'Three Lands' was Japan.²⁶ This view of the world is born of Buddhism, and is first seen in Buddhist histories. *Nihon ryōi ki*²⁷ is the earliest known collection of Buddhist stories, written in the eighth to ninth centuries. It explicitly sets out to counter Sino-centric histories of Buddhist saints, showing that Japan, too, was a land of the Buddha (佛國土). In doing so it claimed equal status for Japan with India and China, the countries where Buddhism respectively originated and was transmitted. Through also praising the morality and wisdom of the Japanese emperors before Buddhism reached Japan, it further seeks to establish Japan's equal status with China as

25 The term Kara was also used much more widely, as discussed below.

26 Yoshino does not use the Buddhist name *Shintan* 震旦 for China, common in discussion of the Three Lands in earlier Buddhist texts. To refer to Japan, as well as Nihon/Nippon 日本 he uses *wa(ga)chō* 我朝 ('our court') in the section quoted above, rather than the *honchō* 本朝 seen in many earlier texts. For examples of earlier texts, see: Maeda Masayuki 前田雅之, *Konjaku monogatari shū no sekai kōsō* 今昔物語集の世界構想 (Imagining the World in "Anthology of Tales from the Past") (Tokyo: Kasama shoin 笠間書院, 1999), esp. 99–127.

27 *Nihon genhō zenaku ryōiki* 日本現報善惡靈異記 (Record of immediate consequence for good and evil and the miraculous and strange in Japan), attributed to Kyōkai 景戒.

an enlightened country even before Buddhist transmission occurred.²⁸ The tenth-century *Sanbōe* 三寶繪²⁹ collection continues a strong awareness of Japan's position in the world, going further by claiming that Japan was where Buddhism reached its apex. This is conceived in an 'Indian origin – Chinese transmission – Japanese culmination' sequence, which was an inversion of the lament of many important Buddhist figures that Japan was at the end of the chain, last to receive Buddhist teachings both in geographic and temporal sequence.³⁰ The widely-influential eleventh-century collection of stories *Konjaku monogatari shū* 今昔物語集, does not so brazenly claim Japanese superiority, but reinforces the Three Lands view, being in fact compiled in three parts, each containing stories from one of the countries.³¹ As a result of this Buddhist influence, the world came to be seen in terms of the Three Lands, and the term Three Lands came to represent the whole world.³² Yoshino's claim that Japanese valour is unmatched in the Three Lands is therefore

28 Maeda Masayuki, *Konjaku monogatari shū no sekai kōsō*, 99–107.

29 *Sanbō e kotoba* 三寶繪詞 (The Three Treasures in pictures and words).

30 Maeda Masayuki, *Konjaku monogatari shū no sekai kōsō*, 107–10; Narusawa Akira 成沢光, *Seiji no kotoba: imi no rekishi o megutte* 政治のことは: 意味の歴史をめぐって (Words of Politics: On the History of Meaning) (Tōkyō: Heibonsha 平凡社, 1984), 133–39.

31 Maeda Masayuki, *Konjaku monogatari shū no sekai kōsō*, 112–27.

32 *Ibid.*, 212.

that Japanese valour is unmatche

Yoshino's comparison of Japan with China and India was made in the context of a long tradition of such comparisons, but the preceding review of the Buddhist texts which helped establish this world-view also highlights the non-religious nature of Yoshino's comparison. His is a comparison based purely on size, even if his conception of size has its root in the Buddhist canon.³³ After reminding the reader of the grand sizes of other countries, he describes Japan as 'but an island far in the Eastern Sea.' Of course, as the whole section essentially deals with the relative power of countries, Buddhist concerns with sequence or potency of transmission are irrelevant, whereas size is of great importance. Yet what we see is that an originally Buddhist conception of the world has become a commonplace framework through which to understand the world, even for someone writing from a military perspective.

Yoshino's comparison of countries demonstrates an excruciating awareness of Japanese's relatively miniscule size: 'one hair among nine oxen' (九牛が一毛). In this feeling he was not alone; modern Japanese historians refer to this sense of being a minute

33 The 'sixteen large countries and ten thousand small countries' originate in early Buddhist texts. Narusawa Akira, *Seiji no kotoba*, 133.

modern Japanese historians refer to this sense of being a minute country on the periphery as *hendo (shōkoku) ishiki* 辺土(小国)意識. The Buddhist canon presented a view of a vast world, in which Japan could only be placed on the periphery as a 'small country.' This sense of inferior size and position was likely compounded by Japanese contact with the Tang dynasty, and knowledge of the two country's relative sizes. As we have already seen in *Sanbōe*, some Buddhist historians managed to convert inferiority into superiority by making Buddhism's 'final' destination also its fulfilment.³⁴ Even the story collections that did not claim this, inflated Japan's position by making it one of the Three Lands, rather than simply one of innumerable small countries. Concerned as he was with relative power and military prowess – who could conquer whom – Yoshino had to use a different strategy to compensate for Japan's inferior size. For this purposes he invokes the idea of Japan as Land of the Gods.

34 Even when this inversion was not performed, Japan's 'lesser' status was never taken as a basis for sustained pessimism, but rather as justification for a particular teaching.

5.2.2 LAND OF THE GODS AND KOREA

The idea that Japan was the ‘land of the gods’ (*shinkoku/kami no kuni* 神國)³⁵ was originally the concept that the country was a place of spiritual and/or Buddhist power.³⁶ The idea was a broad one, encompassing Japan as a land protected by the gods, a land where worship of gods was widespread, and a land where the emperor and people were descended from the gods.³⁷ Satō Hirō makes a careful study of the contexts in which we can see the term *shinkoku* used, and finds that domestically it was used in debate and dispute between different shrines and temples and different sects, while in foreign affairs, the protection of the gods was famously called upon with a huge number of offerings at the time of the Mongol invasions.³⁸ Yet even before the Mongol invasions of the 12th

35 Though translations in this thesis use ‘Land of the Gods,’ the Japanese term *kami* 神 can refer to the spirits in objects or nature as well as more ‘god’-like deities.

36 Satō Hirō 佐藤弘夫, *Kami, butsu, ōken no chūsei* 神・仏・王権の中世 (The Middle Period: Spirits, Buddha, and Monarchy) (Hōzōkan 法藏館, 1998), 335–36.

Native Japanese deities were re-interpreted as manifestations of the Buddha or Buddhist deities. (Narusawa Akira, *Seiji no kotoba*, 157; Satō Hirō, *Kami, butsu, ōken no chūsei*, 321–25.)

37 Maeda Masayuki, *Konjaku monogatari shū no sekai kōsō*, 232. Regarding not only the emperor but the people of Japan all being descended from the gods, see Satō Hirō, *Kami, butsu, ōken no chūsei*, 333.

38 Satō Hirō, *Kami, butsu, ōken no chūsei*, 328–34.

century, the idea appears with particular frequency in relation to Empress Jingū's 神功皇后 semi-mythical conquest of the Korean peninsula. Legend had it that Empress Jingū launched an expedition and conquered the *San Kan* 三韓 (K. *Sam Han*, C. *San Han*), a historical name for the Korean peninsula.³⁹ This story was recorded in the famous history of Japan, *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 (The Chronicles of Japan). In fact, the first known use of the phrase 'Land of the Gods' (*shinkoku* or *kami no kuni*) is in this *Nihon shoki* story.⁴⁰ There has been much modern debate about its historicity, but for the purposes of the discussion here, suffice it to say that there is no evidence that it was doubted at the time of the East Asian War. Rather, Yoshino's account of Japan as unconquered since the Empress's Korean conquest reflects the on-going importance of this myth in how Japanese foreign relations were conceived. Centuries before the Mongol invasions, when ships from the kingdom of Silla on the peninsula made raids on the islands, an imperially commissioned address to be used at a shrine (告文) claimed that since Empress Jingū had conquered the *San Kan* (i.e., Korea), foreign ships dared not attack for fear of the

39 Originally, *San Han* was how historians of the Han 漢 dynasty (202 BCE – 220 CE) referred to the three groups/polities that occupied the southern part of the peninsula beyond Han control.

40 Maeda Masayuki, *Konjaku monogatari shū no sekai kōsō*, 232.

gods.⁴¹ This idea seems to have persisted. Around the time of the Mongol invasions, we find claims strikingly similar to Yoshino's account. For example, the *Hachiman gudōkun* 八幡愚童訓 states, 'though the *San Kan* submitted to this land, our court has never belonged to another country.'⁴² Thus the aspect of the Land of the Gods discourse that pertained to foreign relations, seems to have often been linked with the peninsula, with Empress Jingū's conquest as the defining moment.

Yoshino invokes the Land of the Gods narrative to counter Japan's inferior size. His claim is that having this status, Japan 'has the force of the Way of the Gods (*shintō* 神道) and dauntless courage; the valour of its people's hearts surpasses that of all the Three Lands.' He continues that it is for this reason that Empress Jingū's conquest was possible. This logic can be interpreted as an adaptation of an older idea to the specific context of the East Asian War. Earlier repulsions of invasions could be attributed to the power of the gods in a general sense, but Yoshino is a warrior, and personally witnessed the contrast of the warrior tradition in Japan and the relative lack of one

41 At that point in time it was more specifically the emperor who was subject to the gods' protection; the sources being used are imperially commissioned appeals to the gods. Satō Hirō, *Kami, butsu, ōken no chūsei*, 319–20.

42 「雖三韓歸此土 吾朝未屬他國」 Cited in *Ibid.*, 333.

on the peninsula.⁴³ For him, Japan as the Land of the Gods is the cosmological explanation for the greater valour of the Japanese warrior, a valour that would be proven even as Japanese fighters were overwhelmed by superior numbers.

5.2.3 PAST GLORY AND PRESENT DEFEAT

Explaining how Japan's smaller size and peripheral position is compensated for by divinely-bestowed valour, Yoshino proves Japan's status by pointing to the submission of its neighbours: '[ever since Empress Jingū] conquered Korea, Japan has not been conquered by another country, but rather tribute has been offered up to our court every year by Korea and Ryūkyū.' He further adds, 'this was the ritual precedent of previous eras,' affirming this state of affairs as the proper order of the world. At this point his brush turns, however: 'But now, when we are on the end of the hundred kings, and into the End Time, to fight over territory and assemble arms, I think is like to the mantis which opposed the carriage.' This is not the triumphant voice of a warrior beginning his tale of glorious

43 The surrender and pleas for mercy of the Koreans make a deep impression on Yoshino, and the contrast with his power as executioner intensifies his warrior identity. See the section 'Gods of war' below.

conquest. Though somewhat indirectly, Yoshino is making an unmistakable contrast between the order of old, established after Jingū's conquest, and the current expedition. The pessimistic appraisal of the final metaphor is striking, especially when viewed in the context of the largely glorifying accounts of the war that formed the mainstream Japanese textual tradition on the war.⁴⁴ The idiom he uses refers to the Classical Chinese story of an insect fiercely attempting to block the passage of an approaching carriage, unaware of the ridiculous mismatch in strength.⁴⁵ In not so many words, Yoshino is saying in 1593 that the war was hopeless from the start, and represented a huge underestimation of the opponent's strength.

The idea of a 'fallen' present after a glorious past – the End Time – is the device by which Yoshino reconciles Japan's supremacy and its weakness. Here again, Yoshino is drawing on a Buddhist idea. The End Time (*masse, matsudai* 末世末代) refers to the final of three eras following the Buddha's death, when it becomes more difficult to reach enlightenment. This was a widespread view from at

44 Though there was a proliferation of accounts claiming glory for each house that took part, the Hideyoshi-centred *Taikō ki* 太閤記 is the classic example.

45 The story has its origin in the classical text known as *Zhuangzi* 莊子. Chen Guying 陳鼓應, *Zhuangzi jin zhu jin yi* 莊子今注今譯 (Zhuangzi: Modern Annotations and Translation) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 2001), 人間世(三) 128–29.

least the eleventh century, with the *Nihon ryōi ki* stating that it was already the *masse* in the tenth century.⁴⁶ It is not clear exactly what religious connotations the term may have had for Yoshino, but in this context, it certainly implies a time less than that which went before. Yoshino grew up in a Japan torn by decades of civil war.⁴⁷ ‘On the end of the hundred kings’ seems to point to a time when central power has broken down, and a glorious conquest led by a powerful monarch is the stuff of distant legend. In this way, it was possible to imagine Japan as both possessing superior warrior qualities, and yet in this latter era no longer in a position to assert its authority over its neighbours.

It is necessary to understand Yoshino’s preface against the historical background of the ideas he uses, but also as part of the larger text as a whole, and of his own experience expressed therein. The following section therefore analyzes the themes in the main body of the memoir: Yoshino’s account of his war experience.

46 Maeda Masayuki, *Konjaku monogatari shū no sekai kōsō*, 99–107.

47 It is common for Japanese East Asian War memoirs (*sōgunki*) to implicitly or explicitly describe the present times as turbulent. Kim Shidōk, “Yoshino Chingojaemon Pimangnok,” 3.

5.3 VICTORIOUS DEFEAT

5.3.1 GODS OF WAR

Yoshino nikki focuses on vivid descriptions of battles. Unsurprisingly for a warrior's memoir, it describes the formidable nature of the opponent in order to emphasize the difficulty of defeating them. This begins with Yoshino's first description of Chosŏn: arriving at Pusan they see the enemy is well prepared, and Yoshino details the wide array of defensive weapons, concentric fort walls, and their height.⁴⁸ This sets the scene for a show of overwhelming force by the Japanese: musket fire – such that 'the world became dark' – is sustained over four hours until the defence is decimated.⁴⁹ Once the Japanese entered the city, the battle descended into a massacre, but Yoshino does not shy away from describing the slaughter:

家のはざまや床の下、かくれがたなき者どもは、東の門
にせきたゝみ、みな手を合せてひざまづき、聞もならは
ぬから言、まのらまのらと云事は、助よとこそ聞へけれ
夫をも味方きゝつけず、きりつけうちすてふみころし、

48 "Chūgai keii den sōkō," 348a; *Zoku Gunsho ruijū*, 20 下(卷 591):379a.

49 "Chūgai keii den sōkō," 348a – 348b; *Zoku Gunsho ruijū*, 20 下(卷 591):379a – 379b.

是を軍神の血祭と、男女も犬猫も、みなきりすてゝきり
くびは、三萬ほどゝぞみへにける

Those [of the enemy] who could not hide in narrow spaces or under the floor in the houses gathered at the eastern gate.⁵⁰ They all put their hands together and dropped to their knees. Their calling in a Kara speech which was unfamiliar to us, ‘*manora, manora!*’ sounded like ‘save us!’⁵¹ Yet our side did not listen to that either, and chopped them down and stamped them to death. Making this our blood sacrifice to the God of War (*ikusagami*), man and woman, dog and cat, we cut them all down.⁵² The enemy’s heads were seen to be around thirty thousand.⁵³

The horror of what he is participating in is not lost on Yoshino. After appearing to conclude the account of the battle by recording when the siege started and ended, he cannot help returning to reflect on the massacre:

かゝるためしを見る事は、あび大せうのざい人が、あほ
うらせつの責をうけ、呵責せらるゝかなしさは。助たま
へと手を合せ、おめきさけぶと聞へしも、かくやあらん
と思ひけん、夫はめいどの物がたり、今げんざいに見る

50 One version has river (川) in place of gate (門). Kim Shidōk points out this is likely due to the similarity of the two characters’ cursive script forms, and he chooses to read the word as river. Kim Shidōk, “Yoshino Chingojaemon Pimangnok,” 16fn7.

51 ‘*Manora*’ may be the author’s interpretation of *marūra* 마르라, the negative imperative verb-ending in Middle Korean.

52 Blood sacrifice: *chimatsuri* 血祭り, a sacrifice made before a battle or at the start of a military campaign.

53 The *Chūgai keii den sōkō* reads ‘*manora*’ instead of ‘*manō*’: one is a visual copying mistake of the other, but which is original is unclear. “*Chūgai keii den sōkō*,” 348a – b; *Zoku Gunsho ruijū*, 20 下(卷 591):379b.

事は、我こそ鬼よ恐しや、思へばいとゞ武士の、いさみ
は彌まさりけり

Seeing such a happening, it was the anguish of sinners in deepest hell, suffering as they are punished for their deeds by the demons. The way we heard them clasp their hands pleading for help and cry out, we thought ‘this is what it must be like’ – it was a tale of the afterlife. To see it here and now, we were frightened that we had in fact become demons. But as I thought this my courage as a warrior grew greater.⁵⁴

Yoshino is clearly shaken by the pitiful nature of the Koreans begging for mercy. After the next battle at Tongnae, he describes the scene of elderly parents fleeing after their children were killed, and says ‘one could not bear to look.’⁵⁵ Yet, by overcoming his horror and concentrating on the power of his position as executioner, he increases his own sense of ‘courage.’⁵⁶ There is a sharp contrast between the Korean defenders who cower like animals waiting for slaughter and the vicious attack of Yoshino’s own army. This experience would have surely bolstered his claim made in the introduction, that the ferocity and valour of the Japanese were unmatched in the

54 In the original text, it is unclear whether the first person pronoun is singular or plural. “Chūgai keii den sōkō,” 348b; *Zoku Gunsho ruijū*, 20 下(卷 591):380a.

55 *Zoku Gunsho ruijū*, 20 下(卷 591):380b; “Chūgai keii den sōkō,” 349a.

56 In any case, to show weakness would not have been proper in his warrior’s tale. For discussion of warrior values in the context of storytelling, see Saeki Shin’ichi, “‘Yoshisada gunki’ to bushi no kachikan.”

world. Indeed, the confidence of Yoshino and his comrades in their own supremacy would have swelled as, after Tongnae, defending forces increasingly dissolved before even waiting to engage them. Yoshino compares the Japanese armies ease of victory at this point to a hawk catching small birds.⁵⁷

5.3.2 PEOPLE AND COUNTRIES BEYOND JAPAN

As well as the content, it is important to note the *language* Yoshino uses to describe the different sides in the conflict as he narrates its progression. His repeated use of the country name Japan (*Nihon/Nippon* 日本) to describe the army is potentially surprising. Yoshino was fighting under the house of Matsuura, and begins the account of the expedition by explaining how the feudal lords, or *daimyō*, each set out with their own armies.⁵⁸ Rivalry between houses was to be expected, and the country had been in a state of civil war until just a few years before. Despite this, in the context of ‘conquest of a foreign country’ (*ikoku taiji* 異國たいぢ) – how Yoshino describes

57 *Zoku Gunsho ruijū*, 20 下(卷 591):381a; “Chūgai keii den sōkō,” 349b.

58 “Chūgai keii den sōkō,” 347a; *Zoku Gunsho ruijū*, 20 下(卷 591):379b. The lords are said to set out after receiving a command signed with the vermilion seal (御朱印, held by Hideyoshi). This statement may in itself be speaking of the centralized will characterizing the campaign.

the expedition⁵⁹ – Japan is a determinedly unified actor. At Tongnae it is ‘the (amassed) Japanese’ (*Nihonshū* 日本衆) who claim a sweeping victory, and this term is used throughout the text.⁶⁰ Yoshino makes a more intriguing statement when they arrive at Hanyang (Seoul) only to find the palace deserted:

唐國さして落にける、みかたはやがて公 中に、はや打入
て陣を収、七珍財寶金銀や、けんふのたぐひに至るま
で、みな取すてゝにげゝれば、日本の寶となりけり

[The Chosŏn court had] fled towards Kara (*Karakuni*, i.e., China). Our army quickly stormed the palace and took up positions. All sorts of jewels, treasures, gold, and silver... As they all fled without taking them, it became Japan’s treasure.⁶¹

It is not clear from this description what physically happened to this bounty of treasure: did the commander Konishi Yukinaga take guardianship of it? Or did the soldiers each grab what they could? Whatever the case, it is revealing that Yoshino invokes the abstract concept of ‘Japan,’ when he could be expected to talk in terms of the lords present (e.g. Matsuura, Konishi), or even simply ‘our side’ (*mikata* 味方), a phrase he also uses. This is particularly so when the

59 *Zoku Gunsho ruijū*, 20 下(卷 591):379a; “Chūgai keii den sōkō,” 347b.

60 “Chūgai keii den sōkō,” 349a; Hanawa Hokiichi, *Zoku Gunsho ruijū*, 20 下(卷 591):380b.

61 “Chūgai keii den sōkō,” 349b; *Zoku Gunsho ruijū*, 20 下(卷 591):381b.

very next sentence reminds the reader that the Japanese army was a coalition of Hideyoshi's vassals: Yoshino describes how Yukinaga et al waited for armies under other commanders, such as Katō Kiyomasa, to join them.

Yet Yoshino's portrayal of his army as representing 'Japan' in the abstract is not surprising if we recall how he begins his memoir. While the narrative of the invasion starts by describing the different *daimyō* setting out, they are all 'the lords of Japan.'⁶² More importantly, this is after Yoshino sets the scene with an apologetic for Japan's position in the world. If we reflect on this opening in combination with the main narrative, where 'our side' is synonymous with 'Japan,' we realize that Japan is no less than the subject of the tale. Yoshino is the witness and storyteller, but the events he describes are greater than himself. The Japanese warriors are the collective hero of this tale, which is a tale about Japan in the world.

If this is a story about Japan and the valour of the Japanese, then to whom are 'the Japanese' opposed? The labels used for the enemies in *Yoshino nikki* do not neatly correlate to the categories we might expect: e.g. 'the Chosŏn people (/army),' 'the Ming army,' or

62 "Chūgai keii den sōkō," 347b; *Zoku Gunsho ruijū*, 20 下(卷 591):379a.

'the Koreans,' 'the Chinese.' Taking as example the Pusan attack quoted above, to describe the well-prepared defence, Yoshino says: 'it was as if the Kara people had been waiting for the Japanese (*Nihonshū*).' The term 'Kara people' (*Karabito/Tōjin* 唐人) is here used to identify what was exclusively a group of Korean defenders. As Yoshino correctly describes the arrival of Chinese troops as occurring later (once he is at P'yongyang), we also have no reason to doubt he was confused regarding the defenders' origin. Rather, as was common practice, he was applying the term Kara to include most non-Japanese.⁶³ This is significant, as it creates a single category into which both the Chinese and Koreans are placed. The result is that a simplified battleline of Japanese (*Nihonshū*) vs. non-Japanese (*Karabito/Tōjin*) permeates Yoshino's narrative.

An exception is the description of the first battle of P'yongyang (1592), where Yoshino makes a special point of explaining to which groups their besiegers belonged.

63 During this period, the term was used to describe all people who came to Japan from the continent or simply from that direction. Seki Shūichi 関周一 and Tanaka Takeo 田中健夫, "Chūse goki ni okeru 'Tōjin' o meguru ishiki" 中世後期における「唐人」をめぐる意識 (Awareness around "Tōjin" in the Latter Middle Period), in *Zen-kindai no Nihon to Tō-Ajia* 前近代の日本と東アジア (Japan and East Asia in the Early Modern Period) (Tōkyō: Yoshikawa kōbunkan 吉川弘文館, 1995), 61–77.

こゝに一つの大事あり、唐高麗のさかひなる、りうとう
國と云國と、おらんかい（日本國にはゑぞといふ。唐土
よりは。たつたん國。高らいよりはをらんかい）の兩國
の武士どもが、六萬よきをもよほして平安の城にかゝり
けるを、夢うつゝにもしらずして

At this point there was a major event. On the border of Kara [China] and Kōrai [Korea] there is the country known as *Ryōdō* [Liaodong] and the *Orangkai*. (Called *Ezo* [i.e. Ainu] in Japan; called the Tartar [*dattan*, C. *dada* 韃靼] country in Kara land; and in Kōrai, *Orangkai*.)⁶⁴ Never in our dreams had we known that the warriors of both the countries would attack P'yong'an castle [Py'ōngyang] together, with more than sixty-thousand steeds.⁶⁵

The Ming force was despatched from Liaodong (the northeastern area beyond the Great Wall). Deputy Superintendent (副總兵) of Liaodong, Zu Chengxun, led a force of a few thousand men to attack P'yongyang. The *Orangkai* refers to the Jurchen peoples living in what was later known as Manchuria, and with whom both the Ming dynasty and Chosŏn had difficult relationships.⁶⁶ There is no record of their help having been enlisted on the Chinese or Korean sides.

64 The section in parantheses does not appear in the *Chūgai keii den sōkō* version. It seems highly likely it is a later explanatory addition, but it is not distinguished from the text body in the *Zoku gunsho ruijū* version where it appears.

65 "Chūgai keii den sōkō," 351a; *Zoku Gunsho ruijū*, 20 下(卷 591):383a.

66 In present-day standard Korean, the final diphthong in *Orangkai* has simplified to a monophthong: *Orangkae*. As the note in *Yoshino nikki* explains, this was a Chosŏn term for the peoples on the country's northern border, originating from the name of a group that once lived in that area.

Rumours among Japanese troops were likely inaccurate, but Yoshino's account nevertheless relieves any doubt that he was in ignorance of the distinct groups of which the enemy consisted. This makes his persistence in subsuming the Koreans into the category of 'Kara people' all the more intriguing.

The above-quoted section helps to clarify Yoshino's notions of geography. In the introduction to the memoir he referred to Kōrai as a border country, suggesting that it is situated at the periphery of Kara, near the border with Japan. While Kara is also used in a sense which includes the Koreans, we see that it maintained the specific meaning of China when used in opposition to Kōrai. This was the case above, when the Chosŏn court 'fled towards Kara' (i.e. China). Incidentally, Yoshino never refers to Korea by the official name of the country, Chosŏn 朝鮮. Instead he refers to the country only as San Kan (once, in the context of Empress Jingū's invasion), Kōrai (when distinguishing it from China), or simply as part of a wider Kara (for example, when talking of Kara people).

Yoshino particularly emphasizes the different origin of the attackers probably to maximize the ferocity of the attack which the Japanese successfully repulsed. This becomes apparent as he narrates the aftermath of the victory:

唐の帝は聞召、りうとう國の兵は、大國一の鏑つき也、
切日本の兵に、叶ふまじとせんぎあり。りうとう國に名
を得たる、ゆうけき將軍勅使にて、しうじう五騎にて来
りたり、日本國する唐人に。文をもたせて真先に、平安
の城に持参り

The emperor of Kara, on hearing [the Liaodong forces had been defeated], pronounced at a meeting: ‘the soldiers of Liaodong are the finest lancemen in our great land (*daikoku*). Yet they are no match for the soldiers of Japan.’ A commander (*yūgeki shōgun*, C. *youji jiangjun*) who had earned his fame in Liaodong, came as Imperial Emissary (*chokushi*) accompanied by five horsemen. He gave a document to a Kara person who knew Japan, who brought it straight into P’yong’an castle [Py’ōngyang].⁶⁷

By constructing Liaodong as a land with the fiercest horsebacked warriors, what was a small Japanese victory suddenly becomes a triumph over all of China. It is true that the comprehensive defeat of Zu Chengxun’s force came as a shock to the Ming court. They sent representatives to negotiate a settlement as a means to buy time while a much larger army was mobilized. Under Yoshino’s storyteller’s brush, this became a recognition of Chinese inferiority.

Notable in Yoshino’s description is the recognition he confers on the Ming emperor. He uses the term also used for the Japanese emperor (*mikado* 帝), and an honorific form of the verb ‘to hear,’

67 “Chūgai keii den sōkō,” 351b; Hanawa Hokiichi, *Zoku Gunsho ruijū*, 20 下(卷 591):383b – 384a.

kikimeshi 聞召 . Elsewhere in the memoir, honorific forms are reserved for the *daimyō* of Japan. Of course, the elevated status of the emperor is instrumental to aggrandizing the recognition won by the brave warriors of Japan. Yet it interesting to note in this regard that no claim of universal rule was made for the Japanese emperor; on the contrary, his imperial status was arguably constructed in opposition to the Chinese emperor.⁶⁸ Therefore while for Korean and Chinese writers (with the significant exception of Xu Yihou in Japan) the exclusivity of Ming imperium had to be maintained, there is no such problem for Yoshino.

5.3.3 HONOURABLE DISCHARGE

The successful defence of P'yongyang is the last real victory which Yoshino narrates; the rest of his account deals with the awkward subject of Japanese defeat and retreat. Yoshino justifies retreat in the normal ways: the warrior-cum-storyteller's artistic licence with the numbers and potency of the enemy, and extenuating circumstances.

68 Maeda Masayuki, *Konjaku monogatari shū no sekai kōsō*, 213; Yoshida Takashi 吉田孝, *Nihon no tanjō* 日本の誕生 (Birth of Japan) (Tōkyō: Iwanami shoten 岩波書店, 1997), 97.

The chief such extenuating circumstance relied upon by Yoshino is lack of supplies, which was undeniably an important factor impeding the Japanese campaign. Chosŏn was not an excessively wealthy country, and it is too much to ask of any land to support three active armies at once. The combined burden of the Ming, Chosŏn, and Japanese armies fighting on the peninsula was crippling for the local population. The situation was exacerbated because much farmwork was discontinued from mid-1592, as farmers fled for their lives. This inevitably led to severe food shortage from the following winter.⁶⁹ Japanese supply lines were also under pressure from Korean resistance on land and at sea. On top of all this, there was disease: even while stationed at P'yongyang, Yoshino tells of dwindling numbers.⁷⁰ Finally, there was the bitter Korean winter, so cruel that it disfigured even the fair beyond recognition.⁷¹ Yoshino emphasizes the hardship the Japanese forces endured,

69 Devastating starvation occurred even in the relatively unaffected west of the country, with tales of cannibalism abounding. This is a dominant theme for these years in Oh Hüimun's diary. Oh Hüimun 吳希文, "Swaemi rok" 鎖尾錄 (Record of a Refugee), Jangseogak Royal Archives, <http://yoksa.aks.ac.kr>.

70 "Chūgai keii den sōkō," 351b; *Zoku Gunsho ruijū*, 20 下(卷 591):384a. Cross-population contact brought on epidemics with an extraordinarily high death toll among the local populace as well. See: Oh Hüimun, "Swaemi rok," 1592–93.

71 "Chūgai keii den sōkō," 353a; *Zoku Gunsho ruijū*, 20 下(卷 591):386a.

repeatedly explaining that it was a lack of food that made further endurance impossible.

At the second battle of P'yongyang – an unequivocal defeat for the Japanese defenders, who were routed – Yoshino claims the enemy cavalry numbered an incredible one million.⁷² Following this, Yoshino did not admit general defeat, but intersperses tales of the subsequent fighting with an account of the on-going negotiations, which eventually lead to 'success' and a pass home for the Japanese troops. Just when the Japanese army is being tested to breaking point (owing to the extenuating circumstances), Shen Weijing is true to his word and brings 'hostages.' This, the *daimyō* exclaimed, was not something easily attainable, and was certainly their *buun* 武運 (martial fortune).⁷³

Yoshino thus tells a story of valour proven and honour maintained, against incredible odds. While the fact that the Japanese end the campaign without any tangible gain is difficult to conceal, there is victory in defeat: they proved themselves superior warriors. Of key importance in the narrative, therefore, is the Ming emperor's

72 The combined total of combatants on the peninsula on all sides likely never reached this number at any point during the war.

73 "Chūgai keii den sōkō," 353b; *Zoku Gunsho ruijū*, 20 下(卷 591):386b. The identity of these 'hostages' is not clear.

recognition of their superiority. As the highest authority in the vast land of Kara, his reported admission of inferiority is tantamount to announcing a Japanese victory. And yet, Yoshino knows that the Japanese army could not hold out against the ‘millions’ of Kara riders. This is the message reflected in his introduction, when he claims a superior warrior nature for the Japanese, while conceding Japan attacking China-Korea to be like ‘the mantis which opposed the carriage.’

5.4 WARRIOR TALES OF THE EAST ASIAN WAR

The preceding analysis of Yoshino Jingozaemon’s narrative sought to shed light on his view of the world and the invasion’s place in it. The natural question that follows is how his view sits among those presented by others writing at the same time. If *Yoshino nikki*’s account of the war is compared with other East Asian War memoirs in Japan (*sōgunki* 從軍記), then points of both similarity and difference can be found.

Setting the 1592 invasion against the background of Empress Jingū’s historical invasion was not unique to *Yoshino nikki*. On the contrary, it is a common theme among contemporary and subsequent Japanese accounts of the war. Kim Shiduck points out

that other accounts also join Yoshino in contrasting the glorious past with a turbulent present, and mention 'tribute' previously paid by Korea.⁷⁴ Some of the texts to which Kim is referring are later retellings, however, while the focus of this study is on those first texts which went on to serve as primary sources. Narrowing our gaze to accounts of first-hand experience, an example of a memoir comparable to *Yoshino nikki* is *Kōrai nikki* 高麗日記 (Korean diary).

Kōrai nikki is attributed to Tajiri Akitane 田尻鑑種 (dates unknown) of Chikugo 筑後 (on the south-western isle of Kyūshū, from where Yoshino and most of the invading army came). Also the memoir of a warrior who fought on the peninsula from 1592 to 1593, it does not place the historical background of the invasion so neatly at the beginning as an introducing framework. Instead, in the middle of the account of a battle, Tajiri launches off on a tangential narration of Empress Jingū's conquest of the *San Kan*. In his study of the memoir, Kitajima Manji 北島万次 notes the justifying function of this narrative for the current invasion. Referencing *Yoshino nikki* as well, he argues that these writings evidence a spread of *shinkoku* (Land of the Gods) thinking among the warrior class.⁷⁵

74 Kim Shidōk, "Yoshino Chingojaemon Pimangnok," 3.

75 Kitajima Manji, "Tajira Akitane no 'Kōrai nikki,'" 112.

While Yoshino's portrayal of the world appears largely consistent with the writings of other contemporary warrior authors, there is one intriguing feature that distinguishes his memoir from all other major accounts of the period. This is an important omission in his war narrative, which has been highlighted by Kim Shiduck in his introduction to the text: the total absence of the Battle of P'yokch'egwan (1593).⁷⁶ After routing the Japanese from P'yongyang, Chinese commander Li Rusong 李如松 led his cavalry in hasty pursuit of the enemy, only to be ambushed and badly defeated at P'yokch'egwan 碧蹄館. This was an important event, as it showed the Chinese that a swift rout of the Japanese from the peninsula was not possible once they retreated into mountainous terrain. For later Japanese recording the war, in such texts as *Taikōki* 太閤記, it was important as a (rare) decisive victory over the Chinese. Therefore in *Yoshino nikki* it is noticeable by its absence. Kim Shiduck suggests that this reflects thinking in the Japanese army in early 1593, when the memoir was written, just weeks after the battle. If this is the case, then it reiterates the value of this source as a truly contemporary account, and the comparison with the slightly later texts is revealing

76 Kim Shidök, "Yoshino Chingojaemon Pimangnok," 3.

of retrospective efforts to emphasise the positive in the campaign. Another factor to consider, however, is that the victory at P'yokch'egwan belonged to Katō Kiyomasa and his men, whereas Yoshino belonged to the First Army under Kiyomasa's rival Konishi Yukinaga. Yoshino may have been disinclined to praise a rival force, or simply omitted the battle because he was not present at it.⁷⁷

5.5 FURTHER OBSERVATIONS

Japanese accounts of the East Asian War are to be expected to glorify and justify the invasion.⁷⁸ This generalization applies to *Yoshino nikki* to some extent, but this text is far more nuanced than that generalization implies.

Yoshino's is a tale of Japan and a tale of the warrior.⁷⁹ He glorifies the Japanese warrior as unmatched in the world, but he feels Japan's inferiority with peculiar acuteness: an insect against a

77 Yoshino's narrative seems to essentially follow his own movements, though we cannot of course verify whether he was present at all the battles he describes.

78 Individuals and houses needed to justify their participation, and could take the opportunity to gain status as great warriors. When Korean and Chinese versions of the war reached Japan, there was also a reactive creation of justifying counter-narratives.

79 It is not by coincidence that the memoir opens with an apologetic for Japan's status, and ends with an affirmation of how a warrior should live.

carriage; a single hair among a herd of oxen. The metaphors he chooses seem an unwarranted belittlement of his country's size. Yoshino and the Japanese army endured real hardship during the campaign, but it seems what left the deepest impression on him was the huge force of the Chinese army. We are inclined to dismiss figures such as 'a million steeds' as ridiculous exaggeration: more glory-seeking from Japanese chroniclers. But a close reading of Yoshino's memoir suggests these numbers reflect a deep shock at disparity in strength, perhaps not previously anticipated.⁸⁰

In his imagining of the world, Yoshino is drawing on well-established ideas, but his particular application of them reflects his own immediate experience. The basic ingredients of the world-view demonstrated in the memoir can be seen in Japanese texts of centuries earlier, dating back to the *Nihon shoki* of 720 CE. The significance of this text is that unlike the *Nihon shoki*, it is not an official history, nor is it the work of monks involved in diplomacy, such as the diplo-

80 It was likely not only Yoshino that was deeply impacted in this way. In 1597 Hwang Shin was to report that the commander of Yoshino's army, Konishi Yukinaga, became committed to pursuing negotiations after his experience of defeat at the hands of the Chinese at P'yongyang. "Sŏnjo sillok" 宣祖實錄 (Annals of the Sŏnjo Reign), 1596.12.21, National Institute of Korean History, <http://sillok.history.go.kr>.

mats' manual *Zen rinkoku hōki*.⁸¹ There is therefore weight to the claim that *Yoshino nikki*, along with other similar memoirs, represent the spread of a 'Land of the Gods' narrative among wider society – particularly the warrior class. Lacking a sufficient source base with which to make comparisons, it is impossible to judge how prevalent such ideas were before the war. What we *can* observe, is the way in which Yoshino interpreted the world through 'Three Lands' and 'Land of the Gods' ideas, but also how his experiences shaped his use of these ideas. It is difficult to imagine his having put such intense emphasis on Japan's inferior size had he never left the country, for example.

It is striking that someone far from government and diplomacy would so identify with Japan – such that the writer's own status as a warrior was intimately linked to Japan's status. Rather than countries, we might have expected a warrior to associate more in terms of the feudalistic loyalties that made up much of 'Japan.' After all, before Hideyoshi brought temporary peace, there had not been a functioning unified state within living memory. Evidently, a tradition that was likely oral, written (e.g. Buddhist story collections),

81 *Zen rinkoku hōki* 善鄰國寶記 (Treasured Record of Good Relations with a Neighbouring Country), dated 1466 CE.

and visual – Yoshino mentions seeing maps – maintained a Japan with a unified identity and a clear status in the world.

While Yoshino's *Nihon/Nippon* corresponds roughly to the entity we project back as 'Japan' today, his view of the rest of the world is not of neatly-bounded, independent, and equal countries. Yoshino is evidently deeply influenced by the Three Lands world-view. Despite his time spent in Korea, and fighting both Korean and Chinese forces on separate occasions, he talks in terms of Japan and a Chinese (*Kara*) space. His mental map acknowledges Korea and other distinct areas such as Liaodong, but as part of *Kara*. His original description of Korea as a border land (*sakai kuni* 堺國), makes its status vis-à-vis China unclear. However his consistent use of the term 'Kara people' 唐人 to refer to Chinese and Korean without distinction, leaves no doubt that Korea and the Koreans belong to a greater Chinese space in Yoshino's mind. The world for Yoshino is identified in terms of three significant spaces: China, India, and Japan.

The importance of *Yoshino nikki* for our understanding of Japanese identity is the well-developed conception of, and identification with, an idea of Japan that it reveals. Yoshino's identification with Japan permeates his tale, with the author displaying both sides

of the inferiority-superiority complex: lamenting the inferior size of his country, while asserting its special status and superior martial prowess. His readers would also have been expected to share in his identification, partaking in the glory of Japanese military supremacy. While from a few sources we cannot judge how widespread such thinking was, memoirs such as *Yoshino nikki* demonstrate that at the end of the sixteenth century a culture of understanding the individual in terms of his/her country had developed in Japan. Yoshino's understanding of the East Asian War as a test of the warriors of Japan against the world also shows how the war served to reinforce such a sense of identity.

Scholarly attention on Japanese identity has focused a great deal on the Edo period (17th-19th centuries). Historians have traced how scholars developed the idea of Nihon/Nippon and its place in the world, as well as how wider literate society seemed to imagine and identify with their country.⁸² The Edo period has probably been a focus due to the relative abundance of source material, and also because it relates more closely to the development of modern nation-

82 Susan L. Burns, *Before the Nation: Kokugaku and the Imagining of Community in Early Modern Japan* (Durham, NC; London: Duke University Press, 2003); Mary Elizabeth Berry, *Japan in Print: Information and Nation in the Early Modern Period* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2006), esp. 209–52.

alism. The growth of Japanese identity outside of a small elite evidently dates to earlier than Edo, however. Written by warriors living far from the capital, *Yoshino nikki* and *Kōrai nikki* are examples of how the major upheaval of the East Asian War played a powerful role in the evolution of people of the islands vision of themselves as Japanese.

Chapter 6 | Keinen

Longing to escape

6.1 INTRODUCTION

C *hōsen hinikki* 朝鮮日々記, or ‘Daily Diary of Chosŏn,’ was written by the monk Keinen 慶念 from Kyūshū, who joined the second invasion ordered by Hideyoshi in 1597. It describes his observations and feelings during his perilous journey across the sea and through the bitter Korean winter, climaxing with a narrow escape from death in the siege of Ulsan. Returning to the temple of which he was abbot, he left his experiences for posterity in the form of a diary written in classical Japanese prose complemented with *waka* 和歌 poetry.

Chōsen hinikki has special historical value as one of the few Japanese sources to detail the treatment of civilians during the East Asian War. What makes it even more significant is the relatively sympathetic gaze with which it describes human suffering compared to the writings of other Japanese witnesses and participants in the invasion. Likely for this reason, it received little attention until the

second half of the twentieth century, when the author's apparent 'anti-war' stance resonated with a rejection of imperialism by Japanese intellectuals.¹

Chōsen hinikki is highly relevant to this study for several reasons. Firstly, a great number of Japanese monks were involved in the invasion, and their relatively high literacy means that as a group they had disproportionate influence on the inscribing of the memory of the war. Secondly, Keinen represents someone steeped in central tradition who suddenly found himself in a foreign land with foreign people. As someone who had received an education in a respected establishment in the capital now thrust beyond the periphery, Keinen's interpretation of his experiences embodies a central-periphery dynamic in action. By writing in an established style with references to the classics, he was translating his experience of a foreign world for a central audience. Finally, Buddhism was a powerful force in Japanese society and thought. Keinen's diary offers us insight into what the East Asian War, China, Korea, and Japan, might mean to devout followers of this faith. In fact, his diary

1 Hayashima Yūki 早島有毅, "Keinen no shōgai to bunkateki soyō" 慶念の生涯と文化的素養 (The Life and Cultural Background of Keinen), in "*Chōsen hinikki*" o yomu 朝鮮日々記を読む (Kyōto: Hōzōkan 法蔵館, 2000), 141–42.

reveals interaction between ideas central to warriors' accounts of the invasion – such as Japan as the 'Land of the Gods' – and core Buddhist beliefs.

All this means that no investigation into contemporary writings on the East Asian War can afford to overlook *Chōsen hinikki*. This chapter examines what we know about Keinen and his experiences, outlines the diary's characteristics and contents, and then proceeds to look at the main themes in Keinen's writing. Comparison with other Japanese writings, and *Yoshino nikki* in particular, reveals some basic commonalities in the ways Japan is described, while also highlighting the greater and lesser significance of the country for each author.

6.1.1 THE AUTHOR

Keinen was reportedly the son of the lord of Kakegawa 掛川 (Enshū 遠州, present-day Shizuoka 静岡 prefecture) before he chose to eschew worldly ties and become a monk of the Jōdō Shinshū 浄土真宗, or Pure Land Buddhism.² When Keinen left for the peninsula,

2 This is according to *Anyōji sōen roku* 安養寺莊嚴錄, a later history of the temple. Ibid., 147.

he had for several years been the abbot of the small temple Anyōji 安養寺 in Usuki 臼杵.³ He was already in his seventh decade, and had a large family including grandchildren. As he signs the diary giving his age and marks his birthday in his diary, we can calculate that Keinen was born in 1536. A later temple record gives his year of death as 1611.⁴ It was at the call of the lord of Usuki, Ōta Kazuyoshi 太田一吉 (d. 1617), that he joined the invasion force in 1597. His chief purpose seems to have been to act as a doctor for Ōta.⁵

Beyond this circumstantial information, we can know little of Keinen the man other than what is revealed in his diary. One pertinent aspect of his life experience that *is* known to us, is that he lived and studied in Hongan ji 本願寺 temple in Ōsaka for a number of years.⁶ His study at this centre of learning before he was sent to take up a post in the provinces would have been a formative experience for him: his studies would have given him deeper and wider histor-

3 Keinen is recorded as the founding abbot of the temple, though some sources disagree on this. *Ibid.*, 152. The current abbot identifies himself as a successor in an unbroken line beginning with Keinen. (Interview, Usuki, April 2013).

4 *Ibid.*, 146, 154.

5 He records performing this duty during the seige of Ulsan. Keinen 慶念, “Chōsen hinikki” 朝鮮日々記 (Chosŏn Daily Diary), in “Chōsen hinikki” o yomu 朝鮮日々記を読む, ed. Chōsen hinikki o yomu kenkyūkai 朝鮮日々記研究会 (Kyōto: Hōzōkan 法蔵館, 2000), 72–72 (12.23).

6 Hayashima Yūki, “Keinen no shōgai to bunkateki soyō,” 150–51.

ical and cosmological perspectives in which to frame his experience and the world around him. The breadth of textual learning that he was exposed to at Hongan ji is reflected in Keinen's ability to quote secular and religious classics throughout his diary. These include, for example, the Ise and Genji monogatari (伊勢、源氏物語, 'Tales of Ise' and 'Tale of Genji').⁷ His references to classical literature are considered to be mature, showing that he had fully absorbed them and pondered over their implications.⁸

Given his stage in life, it likely came as a shock to Keinen to learn he was to leave his place of work and family behind and be thrust into a foreign war-zone. Keinen's sudden proximity to the violence of war was made all the greater by the aggressive position his master took in the battlefield: Ōta Kazuyoshi commanded his small army almost as an independent force, always seeking to be in the vanguard.⁹ Protesting he had no wish to go, in his diary Keinen repeatedly laments the hardship of making the journey at his elderly age. As joining Ōta Kazuyoshi meant danger from the outset and

7 Keinen, "Chōsen hinikki," 17 (8.14), 41 (11.5), 66 (12.11).

8 Hayashima Yūki, "Keinen no shōgai to bunkateki soyō," 145.

9 Nakao Hiroshi 仲尾広, "Teiyū-keichō no eki senjō to Keinen" 丁酉・慶長の役戦場と慶念 (Keinen and the Battlefield of the Teiyū-Keichō Campaigns), in "Chōsen hinikki" o yomu 朝鮮日々記を読む (Kyōto: Hōzōkan 法蔵館, 2000), 172.

proved to be a cruel test of endurance, we have no reason to doubt Keinen's protestations. Yet, George Elison does note that in professing reluctance to travel in his travel diary, he was following an established literary tradition.¹⁰

In any case, as a Buddhist monk travelling with the Japanese army he was by no means alone. Monks went in significant numbers, and several famous monks are known to have taken part. Their functions during the invasion included practising medicine, communication (through knowledge of Chinese writing), record-keeping, as well as carrying out religious rituals.¹¹ Other monks have also left accounts of their time in Korea; one notable example is Tenkei of Myōsin ji 妙心寺天荊 and his *Sai sei ki* 西征記, a diary of the 1592 invasion. What is distinctive in Keinen's writing is the depth of his Buddhist faith. While *Sai sei ki* records what Tenkei enjoyed eating and drinking, Keinen's faith and doubts permeate the entire diary. Similarly, while other monks were known to take part

10 George Elison, "The Priest Keinen and His Account of the Campaign in Korea, 1597-1598: An Introduction," in *Nihon kyōikushi ronsō: Motoyama Yūkihiko kyōju taikan kinen rombunshū* 日本教育史論叢：本山幸彦教授退官記念論文集, ed. Motoyama Yūkihiko kyōju taikan kinen rombunshū henshū iinkai 本山幸彦教授退官記念論文集編集委員会 (Kyoto: Shibunkaku shuppan 思文閣出版, 1988), 25-41.

11 Nakao Hiroshi, "Teiyū-keichō no eki senjō to Keinen," 177.

in cultural plunder, Keinen sees the rampant looting before him through Buddhist eyes: as a manifestation of greed and spiritual ignorance. For Keinen, his status as a monk was not just an occupation; his Buddhist belief was probably the most defining characteristic of him as a person.

6.1.2 HISTORY OF THE TEXT

Because one of the functions assigned to monks joining military expeditions was keeping record of their masters' movements and achievements, it has been postulated that it is from such notes that Keinen's *Chōsen hinikki* might have been born.¹² The other account of Ōta Kazuyoshi's army's movements, *Chōsen ki* 朝鮮記 (Record of Chosŏn), written by Ōta's vassal Ōkōchi Hidemoto 大河内秀元 (1576-1666), would certainly have been based on notes taken in this way. A comparison of *Chōsen hinikki* and *Chōsen ki* highlights Keinen's omission of basic details key to a *gunki* 軍記 (military record) commissioned by or written for one's lord, however.¹³ If

12 Ibid.

13 Nakao Hiroshi looks at the two accounts together, using *Chōsen ki's* greater detail of objective circumstances to better place Keinen's account. Nakao Hiroshi, "Teiyū-keichō no eki senjō to Keinen."

Keinen had been ordered to take notes, then he would have made an effort to record place names, details of battles, and numbers of men. These all form an integral part of the narrative of *Chōsen ki*, yet Keinen is rarely specific even about place names, let alone other military details. This lack of specificity points to a differing purpose of writing: it suggests Keinen kept his own diary on his own initiative.

Keinen expresses his purpose in writing as wanting to preserve what he thought and felt for posterity.¹⁴ His desire to transmit his observations and experiences can explain his choice of writing style: in the period of upheaval in which Keinen lived, *waka* 和歌 poetry (lit. *wa* (Japanese) songs, in opposition to *Kanshi* 漢詩, Chinese poetry, for example) took on a role of recording daily life experiences.¹⁵ More than a simple record, though, Keinen was consciously writing literature, as Elison rightly points out.¹⁶ His sensitivity to form is evident in his extensive use of the poetic verse to capture a scene or feeling that he experiences: holding a single moment in time,

14 Hayashima Yūki, “Keinen no shōgai to bunkateki soyō,” 144.

15 Ibid., 144–45.

16 Elison, “The Priest Keinen and His Account of the Campaign in Korea, 1597–1598: An Introduction.”

as does a work of art. The conscious use of literary form should not surprise us, of course, given his wide reading.

Yet Keinen's thoughts and feelings and literary creation were probably not appreciated by a wide audience until 1879, when his diary was printed by Tokyo University.¹⁷ Of course, we can never know how many people read the diary previously, but the limited number of surviving copies and lack of other recorded references to the work point to a narrow readership focused on Anyōji temple. There are two copies of the text held at Anyōji. Beyond these, the oldest known copy was made in 1832 by the well-known scholar Gotō Sekiden 後藤碩田 (1805–1882). Gotō wrote that he obtained access to one of the copies held at Anyōji with the help of a friend, who presumably had the necessary personal connections. He describes the diary as 'a well kept secret' (禁秘之一).¹⁸ That Gotō thought the diary to be 'secret' implies two things: on the one hand, the diary was certainly not well known in the early nineteenth century, on the other, it had also not been forgotten at the bottom of a chest, but was known of and valued by a small group of people. As

17 Okamura Kishi 岡村喜史, "'Chōsen hinikki' no shohon" 朝鮮日々記の諸本 (Versions of *Chōsen Hinikki*), in "*Chōsen hinikki*" o yomu 朝鮮日々記を読む (Kyōto: Hōzōkan 法蔵館, 2000), 140.

18 Ibid., 139–40.

to why the text was to be kept secret, we can recall that during the Edo period texts recounting Hideyoshi's invasion were officially banned. It is not impossible that the author's acerbic commentary on the samurai was also considered sensitive. The subsequent printing of the diary in 1879 took place under the reformist Meiji 明治 (1868-1912) government. This Meiji printing was of the copy made by Gotō. It was only in the second half of the twentieth century that *Chōsen hinikki* began to be discussed in academic writing, used as a historical source, and re-printed with examination of the Anyōji manuscripts.¹⁹

¹⁹ Ibid., 140.

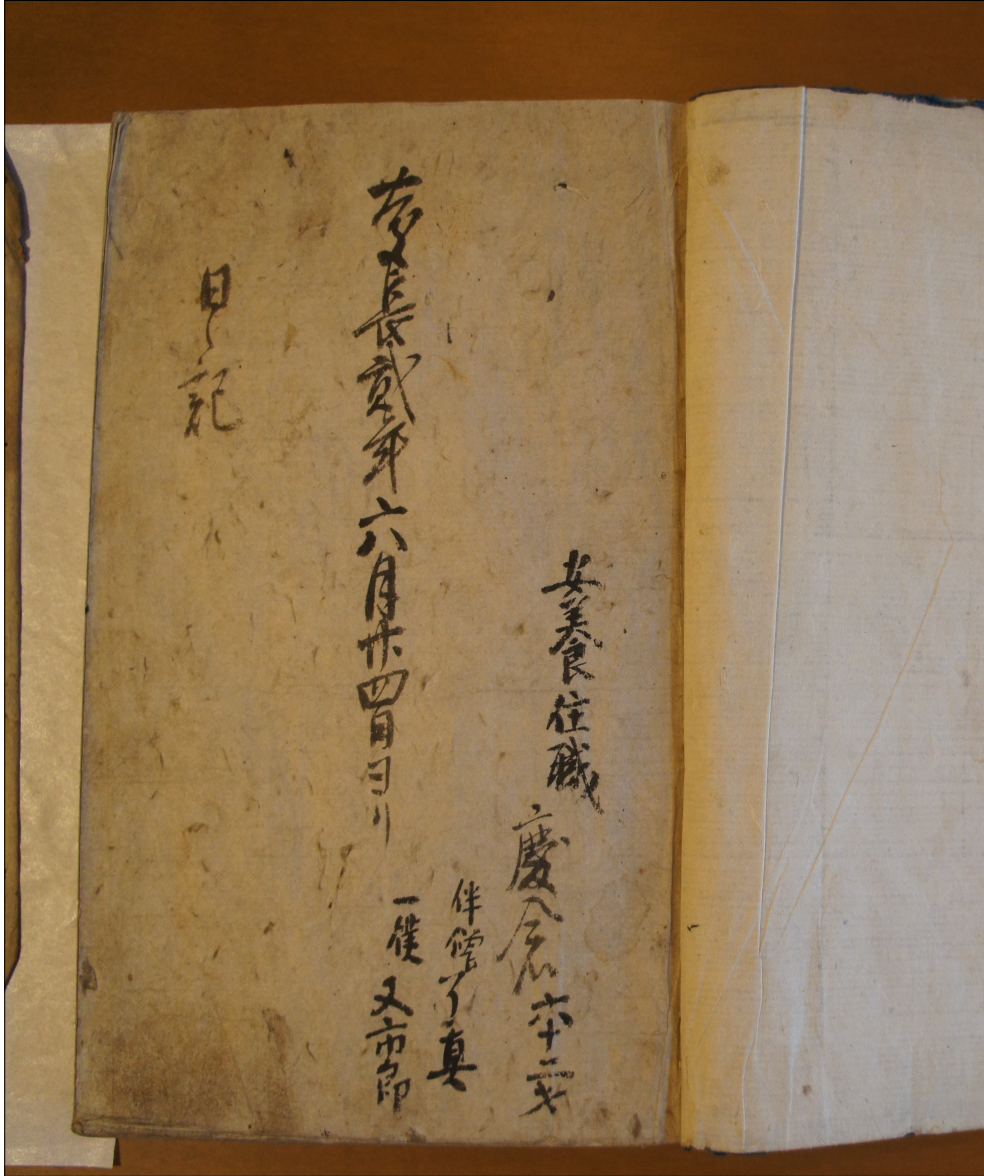


Figure 9: Manuscript B held at Anyōji Temple

Returning to the two manuscripts at Anyōji, one is considered to be an original (hereafter, Manuscript A), whereas the second is a copy thought to have been made in 1728 (hereafter, Manuscript B). The cover of Manuscript A is missing, so it is on Manuscript B that we read the signature 'Keinen, Abbot of Anyōji, sixty-two years-of-age' (see Figure 9). Otherwise, there are no significant differences between them in terms of the text. Leading the research on these manuscripts, Okamura Kishi uses its physical characteristics, such as size and consistency of ink, to argue that Manuscript A would not have been written while Keinen was travelling. Rather, it was a clean copy made afterwards, yet most likely at the beginning of the seventeenth century, considering the paper used and calligraphic style. Okamura's conclusion is that while this cannot be proved conclusively, we may take Manuscript A to be Keinen's own hand, including the corrections made to the text.²⁰ It is worth pointing out that this may be wishful thinking on the part of the historian, as it is equally likely to be an early copy by another hand.

For the purposes of this study, we can draw two conclusions from what is known about the history of the text. The first is that the

²⁰ Ibid., 131–38.

text was probably edited into its current form by Keinen himself or a roughly contemporary copyist at the temple. The second is that the two manuscripts held at Anyōji probably never left the temple. The text's stationary history implies that before the nineteenth century its readership did not exceed a relatively small social network around Anyōji – though to conclude such a limited readership obviously pre-supposes that the extant copies were the only copies made, of which we can not be sure. Yet, this supposition is supported by Gotō Sekiden's belief that the text remained secret. As a final incidental point, given the evidence available, we cannot be sure who assigned the title '*Chōsen hinikki*' to the text; within the diary the country name Chōsen is not used, 'Kōrai' (K.: Koryō) being used in its place.

The version of the text used here is the carefully annotated version produced by the *Chōsen hinikki o yomu kenkyūkai* (Research Society for the Reading of *Chōsen hinikki*), which is based on the manuscripts held at Anyōji.²¹

21 *Chōsen hinikki o yomu kenkyūkai* 朝鮮日々記研究会, ed., "*Chōsen hinikki*" o *yomu* 朝鮮日々記を読む (Reading *Chōsen Hinikki*) (Kyōto: Hōzōkan 法蔵館, 2000).

6.1.3 KEINEN'S JOURNEY: THROUGH HELL TO PARADISE

Keinen left his home to set sail for Chosŏn in the summer of 1597. After his ship set out from Takedazu 竹田津 (in modern-day Ōita prefecture), taking the traditional route via Tsushima, Keinen arrived in Pusan on the seventh day of the seventh month. The Ōta entourage of which Keinen was a part was initially hampered in its movements by the Chosŏn navy, but after Japanese forces won effective control of the sea through a decisive victory, they finally gained access to the Chŏlla provinces (the southwestern part of the peninsula which was largely untouched in the initial invasion of 1592-1593). Keinen's diary plots their journey through this region up to Namwŏn 南原, where Ōta joined the Japanese siege of the city. The Ming-Chosŏn alliance had long anticipated the need to defend this strategic gateway, but they were overwhelmed by combined Japanese forces of over fifty thousand men in the middle of the eighth month. It was in fact Ōta Kazuyoshi and his attendants who were able to claim first entry into the city. Unsurprisingly, *Chōsen ki* narrates in graphic detail this moment of glory and the recognition Ōta received.²² In contrast, Keinen's diary does not narrate the battle

22 Quoted in editorial note in *Ibid.*, 104.

as such, using only a line to record Ōta's achievement. Keinen's brief mention of military accomplishment comes amid an on-going description of the slaughter he has witnessed since the army started progressing north. The following day's entry describes how after the fall of the city. 'the sum of people in the city, man and woman, were struck down without remnant; no one was taken alive.'²³ Tellingly, while Keinen did not respond to his lord's day of glory in this way, he wrote this terrible massacre into a poem:

むさんやな
知らぬうき世の
ならひとて
男女老少
死してうせけり

They know not what they do!
By the ways of this transient world
which remains unknowing,
man, woman, young, and old
all dead and gone.²⁴

Unsurprisingly given that Keinen was not a military man, the violence he witnessed during this period left the deepest impression on him.

23 「城の内的人数男女残りなくうちすて、いけ取物ハなし」 Keinen, "Chōsen hinikki," 17 (8.16).

24 Ibid., 18 (8.16).

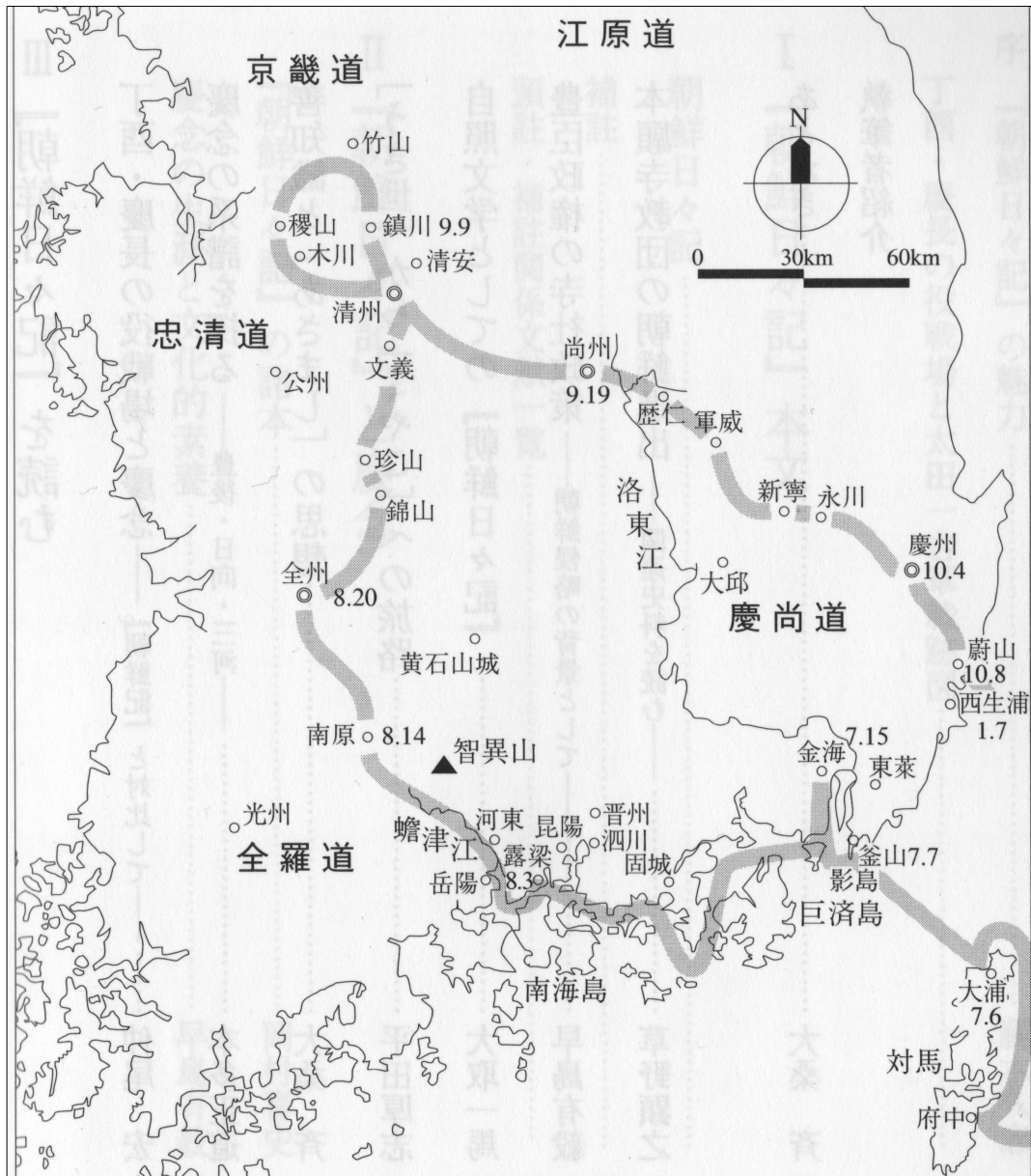


Figure 10: Route taken by Keinen in 1597

Keinen stayed in Namwŏn for ten days, tending to the wounded. They then went via Imsil 任實 to Chŏnju 全州, where the defence had already collapsed at the news of Namwŏn's fall.²⁵ Figure 10 shows how Ōta's entourage continued their progression north and then turned southeast.²⁶ Winter weather had already set in by the time they arrived at Ulsan 蔚山 on the eighth day of the tenth month of 1597, and before long ice and snow become themes in Keinen's writing.

Having initially been on the offensive, by this point Kiyomasa and the other Japanese commanders (Ōta with them) were essentially retreating and consolidating their position. The Ming-Chosŏn opposition had rallied under Ming commander Yang Hao 楊鎬 (d. 1629), who eventually brought a large army to lay siege to the fortress at Ulsan at the turn of the lunar year. Keinen waited with the rest of the army at Ulsan for almost three months. In this time he witnessed the fortress being built by forced labour, and a thinning of the ranks as guerilla attacks, food shortages, and cold took their toll. The climax of Keinen's experience was undoubtedly the dramatic

25 Nakao Hiroshi, "Teiyū-keichō no eki senjō to Keinen," 186.

26 This map is a detail of the map produced in Chōsen hinikki o yomu kenkyūkai, "Chōsen hinikki" o yomu, viii. It is based on names and dates extracted from both *Chōsen nikki* and *Chōsen ki* (though some dates differ in the latter).

siege of Ulsan. Having once again lost control of the sea to Chosŏn admiral Yi Sunshin 李舜臣 (1545-1598), the Japanese supply lines were cut off, reducing the Ulsan defenders to starvation and then to death from thirst. The fortress defences had not been completed in time, and the outer walls fell to the attackers, though not without huge Chosŏn and Ming casualties. Yet, perhaps assuming their fate would be the same as the defenders of Namwŏn should the fortress fall, the Japanese in Ulsan resisted the siege despite their desperate lack of supplies.

We know from other sources that when Japanese reinforcements appeared on the horizon, Yang Hao decided to retreat, and a near-victory suddenly turned into a rout for the Ming-Chosŏn forces. From Keinen's perspective, however, once the siege began he became convinced that the end was nigh. As the situation around him more and more resembled hell on earth, and death seemed certain, he had a moment of epiphany: taking faith in the promise of the Bodhisattvas that those who will it can be reborn in the Pure Land, he was suddenly released from fear of death and began to anticipate release from this world with excitement.

When Ming-Chosŏn forces unexpectedly retreated and the beleaguered defenders were suddenly free to move, Keinen was told

by his lord that he would be returning to Japan immediately. This was more than Keinen could have hoped for, but still he wrote that with his renewed faith, his longing for the next world was now greater than his longing for home in Usuki. Of course, travel was dangerous, and he observed that death may yet await him on the road home. Nevertheless, Keinen did make it safely back to Anyōji. It was there that he would have organized on paper this tale of a journey through hell-on-earth and to the gates of paradise.

6.2 THEMES IN KEINEN'S DIARY

6.2.1 OUT INTO THE WIDER WORLD

Keinen's reluctant departure for Korea was undoubtedly a traumatic and uncertain moment in his life. Not only was he well settled with a family and coming to the end of his career, but by going to war he could not be certain he would see his family again. From his diary we learn that his tearful parting with family members hung on his heart. In a poem he wrote:

残しておく
其たらちねの
妻や子の
なけきをおもふ
かせそ身にしむ

The wind,
that recalls the sorrow of
the mothering wife and children
I leave behind,
sweeps through me.²⁷

We can suppose following an army implied danger, causing Keinen and his family to worry, but he did not write about this directly. Rather, what he appears to have been most conscious of was that travelling to 'Kōrai' (Koryō, i.e. Korea) represented a huge distance. In an intriguing parallel with Yoshino Jingozaemon's diary, the sea is the focus of this sense of distance:

万里の波渡をしのき、爰にかうらいまでおのおの御出陣
も、たゞ一身をうき世を御すこし候はんとのため、たか
きもいやしきもさらにかわる事ハひとつもなし

Even for each of those noble men who endured the crossing of ten-thousand miles of waves, and coming here to Kōrai, given that they will live as one body in this transient world, nobility or lowliness changes not one single thing.²⁸

In *Yoshino nikki* too, the author introduced his tale with a literary flourish which focused on the distance over the sea: 'far, far over the sea of cloud after cloud, to conquer a foreign land.'²⁹ Psycholo-

27 Keinen, "Chōsen hinikki," 7 (6.24). It was (and still is) common for Buddhist monks to marry in Japan, which was not the case in China and Korea.

28 Ibid., 48 (11.18).

29 Hanawa Hokiichi 塙保己一, *Zoku Gunsho ruijū* 續群書類従 (Classified Collection of Books Continued), vol. 20 下(卷 591) (Tokyo: Zoku gunsho ruijū

gically, it seems the separation by the sea held symbolic value as a wide barrier. When Keinen wrote of ‘enduring’ (しのぐ, also overcoming [hardship]) a sea crossing of ‘ten-thousand miles’ he reveals his apprehension of this arduous journey. Having both moved between islands on the Japanese archipelago, neither Keinen nor Yoshino would be unfamiliar with boats, but the crossing to the peninsula was an unprecedented experience of the open sea. All the more so for this reason, a defining part of Keinen’s experience of travelling to Korea was the gulf between Korea and Japan that the sea represented.

Incidentally, it is fair to talk of the separation as being between ‘Kōrai’ on one side of the sea and ‘Japan’ (*Nippon* 日本)³⁰ on the other, because these are the terms used by Keinen. Having left his family in his uncertainty, and facing the hardship of military expedition, Keinen’s homesickness naturally continues to be a feature of his time in Korea, and appears many times in his writing. At these points, he

kansei kai 續群書類従完成会, 1923), 379a; Ban Nobutomo 伴信友, “Chūgai keii den sōkō” 中外經緯傳草稿 (Draft Account of Matters Domestic and Foreign), in *Ban Nobutomo zenshū* 伴信友全集, vol. 3 (Tokyo: Kokusho kankōkai 國書刊行会, 1907), 347b.

30 Two pronunciations of the proper noun referring to Japan continue to be used in standard Japanese today: *Nippon* and *Nihon*. For simplicity, only ‘*Nippon*’ is used here. This variation is chosen as it fits the metre of Keinen’s poetry, implying he may have pronounced the word this way.

uses 'Nippon' to refer to the place where his home is. Near the beginning of the tenth month, he worries about the temple and his family when news comes that a typhoon had struck; here again the location of the typhoon is 'Nippon.'³¹ This news comes at the same time Keinen receives a letter from his family: he corresponds with them more than once, also receiving a letter from his wife after arriving in Pusan.³²

Keinen's comment quoted above, that 'nobility or lowliness changes not one single thing,' is an example of the way that his world-view is fundamentally affected by a Buddhist vision of the cosmos. In this case, it provides a perspective that transcends worldly hierarchy. Buddhism is ever-present in the diary, and clearly distinguishes it from *gunki* writings, such as Yoshino nikki. For example, while Yoshino told us about the fierce defences awaiting the Japanese army, when Keinen arrives in Pusan he writes of a visit to a Buddhist temple there.³³ This temple may have been Kōtok-
uji 高德寺 (K. Kodōksa), established in the decade before 1592 by another monk of the Pure Land School, Jōshin 淨信, who also trained

31 Keinen, "Chōsen hinikki," 32 (10.9).

32 Ibid., 13 (7.28).

33 Ibid., 9 (7.11).

at Hongan ji.³⁴ Crossing the sea to spread the faith, Jōshin represents a different image from that of the reluctant Keinen, who ceaselessly laments his age and the hardship of his travels. Yet the broad-reaching vision of his peers could hardly have left Keinen unaffected. Moreover, Keinen demonstrates in his writings that his Buddhist learning not only gives him a transcendent perspective on individual human existence, but vision of the world beyond the land of his birth. In fact, Keinen professes to have been inspired to follow in the footsteps of those teachers of the Dharma who moved across the ‘Three Countries’:

けに一日本・天竺・大唐に三国をめくり一たまひて、仏法をひろめたまひし聖人賢人も、むかしハあまたましけれハ、たとい凡下なり共、大唐・天竺までも渡りて見はやと、有る時ハおもひし也

Truly, truly were there so many wise and virtuous ones who travelled the Three Countries, to Nippon, India (Tenjiku), and Great Kara (i.e. China), spreading the Buddha’s teaching, that even an ordinary person [like my-

34 Jōshin was a former vassal of Oda Nobunaga, who is said to have crossed to Pusan in 1585, returning to Japan immediately before the Imjin invasion. After the war Kōtokuji was re-established in Karatsu 唐津, and still exists today. Yun Kiyōp 尹紀燁, “Kaehwagi Ilbon bulgyo ui p’ogyo yangsang gwa ch’u’i” 개화기 (開化期) 일본불교의 포교 양상과 추이 (Aspects and Development of the Propagation of Japanese Buddhism in the Period of Enlightenment), *Wōnbulgyo sasang gwa chunggyo munhwa* 원불교사상과 종교문화 no. 54 (2012): 260.

self], sometimes thought of crossing to see Great Kara and India.³⁵

In a second entry for the same day, Keinen repeats this once held desire, this time more specifically to enter and see for himself the land of Great Kara.³⁶ Yet now his circumstances have changed:

しかれ共、わかよはひハ六十三なり、いまをも知られる老か身二、まつまつ歸朝させられんならハ、はやく歸朝して、御同行知音の人々にも今すこしなりとも法儀をすすめ申たき一つ、又ハ一たひ御開山さまへ御礼を申たき念願計に、雨山ののそミなりけれハ、一時片時もいそき歸朝の大望ハつくしかたくて也

Yet, I am now sixty and three years of age. With this old body, for which even the present is not certain, above all I wish to return to Japan (*kichō*) quickly if I am but allowed to return. There I want firstly to perform rites for all my brothers and confidants; my other great wish is to pay my respects to the Founder [i.e. Shinran 親鸞 (1173-1262)]. This is such a deep longing, that it is my greatest desire that I should be able to return but even a moment sooner, and this desire is inextinguishable.³⁷

The term he uses for return to Japan, *kichō* 歸朝, refers specifically to returning to Japan from abroad, as – especially in the context of the Three Countries – Japan was also known as *Honchō*, lit. this court or

35 Keinen, “Chōsen hinikki,” 68–69 (12.16).

36 Ibid., 68 (12.16).

37 Ibid., 69–70 (12.16).

dynasty.³⁸ These entries show how Buddhist tales of old broadened Keinen's vision of the world. Long before he ever crossed the sea, Keinen dreamed of following 'the wise men of Nippon' (日本の智者), whom he believed had travelled not only to Kara but even to India, in search of Buddhist teaching.³⁹ They are also representative of the pervasiveness of Buddhism in Keinen's recording of his thoughts and feelings.

6.2.2 WITNESS TO SUFFERING

The above quotes are from the twelfth month of 1597, and reflect the crescendo of Keinen's longing for home reaching its full towards the end of the diary. Another theme that continues throughout the diary is the shocking treatment of other humans that he witnesses. While his horror continues into his stay in Ulsan, he discusses it most in the earlier period – during the Japanese advance,

38 The terms *Honchō*, Kara, and Tenjiku are central to the structure of the famous Buddhist collection of tales *Konjaku monogatari shū*. See Maeda Masayuki 前田雅之, *Konjaku monogatari shū no sekai kōsō* 今昔物語集の世界構想 (Imagining the World in "Anthology of Tales from the Past") (Tokyo: Kasama shoin 笠間書院, 1999), esp. 112–27.

39 As is pointed out in an editorial note in the annotated edition used here, it is not clear to whom Keinen refers, as there is no record of a Japanese monk travelling to India. Keinen, "Chōsen hinikki," 68.

soon after his arrival. Of his group's landing at Noryang 露梁, on the fourth day of the eighth month, he writes:

はやはや船より我も人もおとらしまけしとて物をとり人
をころし、うはひあへり躰、なか一目もあてられぬ氣色
なり

They rushed from the ships, not willing to fall behind, and competed to take things and kill people. These pillaging bodies formed a scene which one could hardly meet with one's eyes.⁴⁰

Yoshino also writes of men competing with each other in the advance, but while his description is praise of valour, Keinen is clearly disturbed by what he sees.⁴¹ Keinen's account of killing a few days later is also reminiscent of Yoshino's description of the slaughter after the 1592 landing, as they both use the metaphors of hell and its demons:

かうらい人子共をハからめとり、おやをはうちきり、二
たひとみせず、たかひのなけきハさなから獄率のせめ成
りと也

They bind and take the children of the people of Kōrai and kill the parents, not letting them see them even once more. Their crying for one another is like the punishment of the demons of hell.⁴²

40 Ibid., 14 (8.4).

41 For Yoshino's descriptions of warriors rushing enthusiastically into battle, see: *Zoku Gunsho ruijū*, 20 下(卷 591):379b; "Chūgai keii den sōkō," 348a.

42 Keinen, "Chōsen hinikki," 15 (8.8).

As with almost all his observations of suffering, he follows this with a poem:

あわれなり
してふのわかれ
是かとよ
おや子のなけき
見るにつけても

So pitiable.
Was it like this,
the parting of the four birds?
Even as the sorrow of parent and child,
I see.⁴³

What Keinen sees are soldiers set loose on the local population, free to vent their frustrations and desires, and to seek profit in looting and the capture of slaves.⁴⁴ He describes this as mayhem around him, continuing for days, such that the hills and the fields burned, and there was human suffering in every direction he

43 The third line is a literary allusion to a story about a mother parted from her offspring. See note in *Chōsen hinikki o yomu kenkyūkai*, “*Chōsen hinikki*” o *yomu*, 104. The line breaks used in the translation of this and subsequent poems are employed to recreate a poetic effect, but are not always faithful to the rhythm or (for grammatical reasons) the order of the original text.

44 The invasion presented huge opportunities for merchants in both goods and people, and they followed the Japanese army as it moved. Keinen describes slave traders driving their ‘stock’ at Ulsan: Keinen, “*Chōsen hinikki*,” 49 (11.19). For a study of slave capture in the war, see Naitō Shunpo 内藤雋輔, *Bunroku-Keichō no eki ni okeru hirojin no kenkyū* 文禄・慶長の役における被擄人の研究 (Research on Abductees in the Bunroku-Keichō Campaign) (Tōkyō: Tōkyō daigaku 東京大学, 1976).

looked.⁴⁵ The parallel *Chōsen ki*, and other writings such as *Yoshino nikki*, also describe widespread slaughter and capture for slavery. Yet, Keinen's writing is distinctive in the different significance that the soldiers' behaviour has for him in light of his firm Buddhist beliefs. Forever in his mind is the life to come, and the need to overcome base desires and spiritual ignorance. This is all the more so in the midst of the mayhem he is witnessing on their penetration into southern Chōlla province: watching those around him take what they please as their own bounty, Keinen finds he suffers from temptation himself, and immediately starts to worry about his prospects for rebirth. He reprimands himself in a poem:

はつかしや
見る物ことに
ほしかりて
心すまさる
妄念の身や

Shameful it is,
to covet
those things I see.
Body with impure heart,
and deluded mind.⁴⁶

45 Keinen, "Chōsen hinikki," 14-15.

46 Ibid., 15 (8.7).

6.2.3 VICTIMS AND PERPETRATORS

Not willing to accommodate greed in his own thinking, Keinen was naturally also not endeared to the soldiers who were carrying out the slaughter and pillage. In his diary he makes this explicit somewhat later, in the eleventh month. The earlier entries show shock at the unrestrained violence and pity for the victims, but in some later entries shock has been replaced by thinly-veiled anger.

In the middle of the eleventh month (12-16th), the focus of Keinen's diary becomes once again people's suffering, but this time it is conscripts brought from the archipelago whom he is discussing. At this point, Ōta's entourage was stationed in Ulsan, and preparations for the fortress's defence were in full swing. Blacksmiths seem to make a particular impression on Keinen, but he describes an array of craftsmen, boatmen, and infantry, who are forced to work into the night in hurried preparation. If they faltered through exhaustion, they could expect to be beaten. Those out collecting wood were sometimes killed by the enemy (Korean guerillas), and even within the camp, at any time they might also face decapitation and public display of their head on trumped up charges.⁴⁷ Keinen rationalizes

⁴⁷ Ibid., 44-45 (11.11-12).

the cruel hardship of these people by understanding it is as the manifestation of their karmic burden (*toga* 咎 / 科). He also takes the punishments meted out to them, such as being put in stocks or branded, as reminders of the terrible fate that can await one in hell.⁴⁸

Of course, the soldiers consumed by greed and craving are among the ranks of those who Keinen expects will face torment in their next life. Looking on them he sees a lamentable and shocking failure to realize what awaits them.⁴⁹ As the pace of the building of the castle is stepped up such that work continues both day and night, Keinen's patience and pity seems to run dry. A sharply critical voice appears as he blames the greed of the samurai:

とかくことごとく人界の有さまハ三毒のつミよりほかハ
へつのなす事とてハなしと見えたり、侍をはしめて物を
ほしかり、むりに人の財宝をうはひとりんとたくミよ
りほかハ、子細ハさらさらなかりしなり

侍の
あすをしらすと
のたまへと
とんよくしんの
くちハはなれす

48 Ibid., 45-47 (11.12-16).

49 He expresses his shock and distaste using the term '*akimashiki*,' which is given dedicated study by Ōkuwa Hitoshi. See Ōkuwa Hitoshi 大桑齊, "Zenchishiki to 'asamashi' no shisō" 善知識と「あさまし」の思想 (Kalyāṇa-Mittatā and 'asamashi' Thinking), in "*Chōsen hinikki*" o yomu 朝鮮日々記を読む (Kyōto: Hōzōkan 法蔵館, 2000), 247-69.

I could see that among all manner of things in the human realm there is nothing which is other than the sin of the Three Poisons [i.e. desire, anger, delusion]. From when they began as samurai, there was never anything apart from desiring objects and plans to forcefully take others' treasure.

Though the samurai,
say they know not the morrow,
the foolishness
of a lustful heart
leaves them not.⁵⁰

Though he is criticizing the intensive building work, the concept of greed as a motivating force is revealed as the framework through which Keinen understands the whole effort in which the samurai are engaged. This is in fact biting, subversive criticism: it completely undermines the glorifying *gunki* accounts, which portray the samurai as exponents of valour and endurance.

6.2.4 CENTRE AND PERIPHERY

Such criticism endears Keinen to historians of a pacifist leaning, yet other elements of his thinking are more difficult for critics of the Japanese invasion to accept. First of these is his positive view of Hideyoshi. Standing in juxtaposition to his loathing of the greed and spiritual ignorance of the samurai around him, is Keinen's admira-

50 Keinen, "Chōsen hinikki," 46 (11.13).

tion for and gratitude towards the ‘Lord of the Realm’ (天下さま). Just as Keinen is observing the terrible predicament of the conscripts, who are being pressed ever harder, an order for their release reportedly arrives from Hideyoshi:⁵¹

天下さまよりの御朱印のおもむきは、歸朝の日よりをよ
くよくしらへ、人夫一人もとりのこし候ハぬやうに念を
入候て、船をのり候へとおほつかハし候事なり、さて
もさてもかたしけなき御定とて諸人よろこひ候也

國々の
百性ともを
大こうの
おほしめさるる
御朱印そかし

The main import of the [order carrying] the Vermillion Seal from the Lord of the Realm, is the long-awaited command to make careful preparation for the fair weather to return Japan (*kichō*), and to board the ships taking care not to leave even one of the conscripts behind. How gratefully is this command received! All men rejoice.

It is the Vermillion Seal
of the Taikō
who is concerned for
the common people
of all the provinces.⁵²

51 There is no corroborating historical record of Hideyoshi sending an order for a comprehensive withdrawal at this time, and the Japanese did not initiate a retreat. We can only surmise it was a rumour circulated in an army desperate to return.

52 Keinen, “Chōsen hinikki,” 47 (11.17). Taikō was Hideyoshi’s official title at this time.

Even if Hideyoshi had specified in an order that all should return, it seems unlikely that he would have done so out of compassion. Keinen is projecting a surprising degree of compassion onto this 'lord of the realm.' It cannot be coincidental that his positive conception of this lord forms a sharp contrast with his view of the samurai around him. On the same day he makes a second entry, which brings this comparison into relief:

かくのこつくこそ百性をハふひんにおほしめし候に、うちさいなミ、かつえほうたひに、ふちかたハしかしかともたまわらず、山におひやりすて物にハ、いかかなさけなき事と見へまいらせて候也

大こうに
おもひたまひし
百性を
すて物にする
つらき心や

Thinking of the common people with sympathy in this way, shows how heartless it is that [the conscripts are] beaten and harried, left to starve, and not receiving their proper rations, chased into the mountains and abandoned.

The cruel heart
that makes into refuse
the common people
cared for
by the Taikō.⁵³

53 Ibid.

By most measures, it is Hideyoshi who is ultimately responsible for the invasion and all the suffering it incurs. At least from Keinen's perspective, however, it is the samurai carrying out Hideyoshi's orders, slaves to avarice, who are responsible for the cruel treatment of the conscripts. Here we see a mental separation of centre and periphery, which is instantly reminiscent of what has been (and is) done in other places and at other times. There is a striking similarity with Oh Hūimun (subject of chapter 4), for example. In 1598 Oh curses the Ming official posted to the Chosŏn capital for his blatant corruption, only to contrast him with the benevolent emperor Wanli, whom he believes has always been sympathetic to the people of Chosŏn.⁵⁴

While this is a common phenomenon, there are also factors specific to Keinen's admiration for Hideyoshi worth considering. Ōkuwa Hitoshi argues that during the period of great turmoil in Japan that had preceded the invasion, the followers of the Pure Land sect had been hoping for the appearance of a unifying leader, one who could save the suffering people. After the defeat of religious forces in the Ishiyama Hongan ji War (1570-1580), they could but put

54 Oh Hūimun 吳希文, "Swaemi rok" 鎖尾錄 (Record of a Refugee), 乙亥(1595) 8.28, Jangseogak Royal Archives, <http://yoksa.aks.ac.kr>.

their faith in the secular unifying leader that emerged.⁵⁵ There is room to doubt this assertion, given that as Ōkuwa states himself, owing to a paucity of source material, we actually know little about the beliefs of Pure Land followers in the sixteenth century.⁵⁶ Yet the pre-eminent position of the leader-figure in the sect's thinking and ritual is reflected in the deference and great importance accorded to its founder Shinran by Keinen. We see this when Keinen explains one of his two foremost wishes before he dies is to pay respects to Shinran (presumably before his statue). It is possible some of this deference for a central authority figure was transferred to the grand and distant Hideyoshi in Keinen's mind.

Another factor may have been Keinen's esteem of the centre and disdain for the periphery, born of his study at the Hongan ji temple in Ōsaka. Two weeks earlier in his diary, when he expresses his frustration at the company he is forced to keep, he links spiritual level and distance from the capital (*miyako* 都) in an intriguing way:

さてもミヤこへのほり仏法の庭にまじる物ならハ、いか
はかりもうれしくおもひ侍らんに、かやうのあさましけ
なるゑひすの国へハ来りけるカ、ミル人もきく人もとん

55 Ōkuwa Hitoshi, "Zenchishiki to 'asamashi' no shisō," 267–68.

56 Ibid., 267.

よくを心のままにおこし、しん意いかりはかりにてあけ
くれをもしらす

Ah, if it were but someone whom one met on going up to the capital to the hall of the Dharma [i.e. Hongan ji], then how happy I would be! Is it because I have come to a barbarian (*ebisu*) land of ignorance such as this? The people I see and the people I hear all let greed arise as it appears in their heart, and know no rest in their hatred and anger.⁵⁷

Keinen uses the word *ebisu* ('barbarian') on only this one occasion, so it is difficult to elucidate precisely what the term signifies for him. Yet from context, the opposition with the capital (*miyako*) and with Buddhist wisdom can clearly be seen. It may seem unfair for Keinen to be judging the Korean peninsula in these terms, when he had no chance to communicate or really observe people of culture or of Buddhist devotion during his time there. But this is perhaps to over-rationalize Keinen's response: his experience was to be thrust into a brutal environment dominated by base desires, which was 'ten thousand miles' from all peoples and places that he loved and respected. His complaint nevertheless betrays a potent notion of the superiority of centrality. It is also unlikely this is his feeling alone. Other monks from Hongan ji had been busying themselves establishing Kōtokuji in Pusan before the war, and the stated ambition of the

57 Keinen, "Chōsen hinikki," 38 (10.29).

chief monk behind this project, Jōshin 浄信, was no less than to spread the Dharma to Great Kara.⁵⁸ Thus, within the Pure Land school, there was a view that Korea and China required enlightenment – even if Buddhism was originally transmitted through those same lands. Implicit in both their on-going project and Keinen’s diary entry, is the idea that truth emanates from the centre: the home of enlightenment is the capital. It is worth noting that in the writings of the Pure Land founder Shinran, as well as the overseer of its revival, Rennyo 蓮如 (1415-1499), the word for capital that Keinen uses – *miyako* – is also used to refer to the Pure Land itself.⁵⁹

In discussing Keinen’s positive view of the centre and of Hideyoshi more specifically, an important caveat is that Keinen does not express approval of the campaign as a whole, despite it being Hideyoshi’s initiative. His gratitude is for Hideyoshi’s supposed care for all the common people conscripted to join the campaign. Keinen’s perspective on the East Asian War is intriguing precisely because he does not conceive of it in terms of politics or strategy. For

58 See Kusano Kenshi 草野顕之, “Honganji kyōdan no Chōsen shinshutsu” 本願寺教団の朝鮮進出 (The Advance of the Hongan ji Religious Organization into Chosŏn), in “Chōsen hinikki” o yomu 朝鮮日々記を読む (Kyōto: Hōzōkan 法蔵館, 2000), 351–82.

59 Chōsen hinikki o yomu kenkyūkai, “Chōsen hinikki” o yomu, 105.

him what is important is salvation from suffering, and what he sees while with the Japanese army are the 'three poisons' unbridled.⁶⁰ When watching the frantic strengthening of defences at Ulsan, whether or not the defences will prove sufficient to withstand the oncoming Ming-Chosŏn assault does not seem to be on his mind. He is ambivalent towards the success of the very army of which he has been made a part. And yet, when allied forces finally surround Ulsan, his position as a disinterested observer is put to the test, as his fate is inextricably tied to that of the Japanese army.

6.2.5 JAPAN VERSUS KARA

After being disgusted by the brutality he sees around him, in the last part of the eleventh month, Keinen retreats from observation of his surroundings to prayer and meditation, expounding on the teachings of Buddhist sutras.⁶¹ At this point he uses his diary as a place to record what he would be telling listeners in Usuki, should he be back at his temple. He is putting into practice what he writes at the end of the tenth month: that though he has travelled far across

60 The Buddhist concept of the 'three poisons' can be variously translated, but roughly refer to desire, anger, and delusion. Ibid., 38.

61 Keinen, "Chōsen hinikki," 50–60 (11.21–29).

the sea, in his heart he is still at his temple, before the Buddha.⁶² This self-consoling statement is in fact written later on the same day as his bitter complaint at his distance from enlightened company and surroundings quoted above. Keinen's explaining the sutras without an audience must have provided much-needed solace during his long wait at Ulsan.

In the twelfth month, however, all of a sudden the world around him presses on Keinen with great immediacy. The 'people of Kara' (Karabito 唐人)⁶³ arrive in force, and before long the prospect of their taking the fortress becomes very real. As much as he may have despised the samurai around him, in a crowded fortress Keinen would have been very much exposed to the rumours and fears that circulated among the defenders. On the 23rd day, he records attending to the injured Ōta Kazuyoshi, and this would have also been an opportunity to learn about the battle situation. The result is that into Keinen's diary suddenly pour descriptions of battle: where the 'people of Kara' penetrated one of the gates, and how Ōta played a

62 Ibid., 39 (10.29).

63 The word 唐人 can also be read *Tōjin*, however on some occasions Keinen spells the word part phonetically as から人, implying to him the word is 'Karabito.'

part in the defence.⁶⁴ For the first time, 'Nippon' and 'Kara' appear as opposing players in a narrative. Still more interestingly, Keinen begins to use the terms *mikata* 味方 (our side) and even *warera* 我等 (us), to refer to the Japanese in battle.⁶⁵ While such terms are standard in a text like *Yoshino nikki*, in *Chōsen hinikki* prior to this point Keinen does not identify with the Japanese soldiers: on the contrary, he separates himself from them.

Yet, at the very same time as identifying himself as on the Japanese side, Keinen steps apart from and above the conflict. Keinen's response to the crisis of the defence is to transform fear into anticipation, by re-affirming his will to be re-born in the promised Pure Land, and his faith in that certain future. His other-worldly view raises him above taking sides in a battle. From the perspective of where one is re-born, the denominations of Kara and Nippon seem irrelevant:

日本からの人々かいかほとおおくとも、おそらく只今往生をとけ申たらハ、神通自在ニ身を變し、大快樂をうけて、心のままにいかなる所へもかけはん事ハ、人おおく共まれならんぞ

64 Keinen, "Chōsen hinikki," 72–73 (12.23).

65 Ibid., 72–73 (12.23–24).

あら不便の此城中の物共やと、二人なからかほを見あわせて、心ハかりは涙なれ共、さすかに面にハ出さず、いまやいまやと往生をまち申はかりの内に

死の縁ハ
まちまちなれハ
即徳の
往生やかて
不退てんなり

かやうに臨終のうたを詠して往生をまち候へ共、時尅も来らす候や、日本の御うんもつきす候や、から人も引入候なり

Regardless of how many people there are of Nippon and Kara, even if there are many, there will probably be few cases where, at this moment, choosing their next life, they transform their body into one of power and freedom, and accepting the great joy of enlightenment, go wherever their heart takes them.

'Oh, the poor people in this castle!', I think when two of us face each other and meet eyes, though there are tears in my heart, as expected I withhold it from my face; as I only wait for the next life, wondering each moment whether it will be now:

As karma at death
is each different,
having obtained
the next life,
there is no return.

Though I sing the song of impending death like this, waiting for the next life, the Karabito retreat.⁶⁶ Is it that the Time has not come? Is it that Nippon's fortune is not yet spent?⁶⁷

When it comes to spiritual choice, karma, and re-birth, which side one is on in the battle – the country to which one belongs – is irrelevant. This is in line with the sympathy Keinen shows for those who suffer, regardless of whether they are Korean civilians or Japanese conscripts. Yet regarding more earthly matters, Keinen goes as far as to elevate the significance of the outcome of the Battle of Ulsan to the level of Japan's fortune (*un* 運) as a whole. This is not out of place if we consider how, since placed in the siege, Nippon and Kara become his labels for the defenders and the attackers. Yet it stands out in the context of his general disinterest in discussing strategic – or political-level matters. Here too, of course, the outcome of the war is only his concern in so far as it affects the timing of his death. Nevertheless in this moment he demonstrates that he has a way of thinking about the war akin to that seen in Yoshino's diary: the outcome of these battles reflects Japan's status as a country. The entry above is also not the only place Keinen demonstrates an equation of the army and Japan

66 The final retreat is not until several days later, so Keinen is probably referring to the attackers withdrawing to their camp after their assault that day.

67 Keinen, "Chōsen hinikki," 74–75 (12.23).

in the abstract: there is a still more striking instance before the siege ends, following an unexpected turn of events.

6.2.6 LAND OF THE GODS

Keinen describes how by the end of the twelfth month those inside the fortress did not have food or even water to drink.⁶⁸ Some sought to use the cover of night to make their way to a well outside, but Ming-Chosŏn forces were waiting for them. Then, just as the fortress of Ulsan's fall to the 'people of Kara' seemed imminent, a miracle occurred: rain fell. While the attackers were cursing their bad luck, inside the castle the rain was received as no less than divine salvation. Two days after he wonders whether Japan's fortune is not yet exhausted, Keinen responds to the miraculous arrival of water with a poem:

日本ハ
神國なれハ
あはれミの
あめをふらして
人をうるほす

Because Nippon

68 Ibid., 75 (12.24). *Chōsen ki* also describes the lack of food and water at Ulsan in great detail. See Chōsen hinikki o yomu kenkyūkai, "Chōsen hinikki" o yomu, 118.

is the Land of the Gods,
a rain of mercy
was sent down
to water the people.⁶⁹

This poem continues the idea that the disparate armies the western *daimyō* had brought to Ulsan combined to represent a unified Japan against its enemies, and that their victory or defeat was tantamount to the fate of the country. Here the narrative of Japan's special protected status is invoked to explain the divine favour shown in the fall of rain. As the rain came down, we can imagine that Keinen was not the only one thinking of Japan's status as 'Land of the Gods.' Rather, the opposite is more likely, that this was commonly being talked of in Ulsan, and Keinen was inspired to write it into his poem. The poem's significance lies in the fact that even Keinen – for whom the country and the war meant as little as to anyone – subscribed to this narrative of Japan's special position in the world.

The unexpected appearance of the 'Land of the Gods' (*shinkoku* 神國) in Keinen's diary has perplexed modern scholars who otherwise find in Keinen a fellow critic of militarism (his positivity towards Hideyoshi awkwardly notwithstanding). In *Nihon no rekishi*

69 Keinen, "Chōsen hinikki," 76 (12.25).

日本の歴史 (History of Japan), Fujiki Hisashi quoted this poem of Keinen's to argue that:

There is no doubt that the *San Kan* conquest [conquest of Korea] type of 'Land of the Gods' thinking that was traditionally deeply rooted at the bottom of society in the Middle Ages, in the form of an opposition to *ka-i* [C. *hua-yi*] thinking from China, supported the Toyotomi government's war of invasion aiming for Beijing, and, as an incendiary ideology, widely enveloped and mobilized the population.⁷⁰

The editors of the more recently produced annotated version of *Chōsen hinikki* seem to concur with Fujiki, lamenting that even Keinen was not free of 'Land of the Gods / *ka-i*' thinking.⁷¹ Keinen's use of the term 'Land of the Gods' is indeed significant, and serves as a point of focus to discuss what his and other writings of the time tell us about how Japan was imagined at this time. Yet, before coming to conclusions about Keinen's submission to a mobilizing ideology, we must take a step back and re-consider both the questions being asked by historians, and the wider context of Keinen's experience and thinking.

70 Fujiki Hisashi 藤木久志, *Nihon no rekishi. Oda-Toyotomi seiken* 日本の歴史 15 織田・豊臣政権 (History of Japan: Oda-Toyotomi Governments) (Tōkyō: Shōgakukan 小学館, 1975), 374–75.

71 *Chōsen hinikki o yomu kenkyūkai*, "Chōsen hinikki" o yomu, 119.

When approaching the question of Land of the Gods narratives of the East Asian War period, special care is needed if we are to separate them from the later development and use of such narratives in modern nationalist discourse. For scholars of the twentieth century and present day, the phantom of modern Japanese imperialism is all too close, and risks obscuring our understanding of what Land of the Gods meant to someone like Keinen at that historical moment. Fujiki's use of language, such as 'ideology' and 'mobilize,' carries modern implications that are not appropriate to the period in question. While in the modern period the idea of the 'Land of the Gods' was built into a comprehensive ideology that was used to mobilize all parts of Japanese society, there is no evidence that the Toyotomi government did either of these things. The descriptions of cruel slave-driving of conscripts in Keinen's diary hint only at the continuation of the essentially feudal system of forced service to one's lord: the *daimyō* were obliged to answer Hideyoshi's call to war, and they in turn demanded service from their vassals and the unfortunate peasant population in the lands they held. This was the same system as operated in the wars within Japan, where Land of the Gods ideology would have been irrelevant. Therefore based on the evidence we have, it is going too far to say that Land of the Gods

ideas became a mobilizing force in wider society; we can at most suppose that it was an asset to Hideyoshi as a justifying narrative.

While maintaining an awareness of this tendency to project later ideological projects backwards, we can acknowledge that Keinen's poem does affirm that belief in the 'Land of the Gods' narrative was widespread. While we necessarily have access only to the writings of the literate – and therefore an 'elite' of some description – the notion that as samurai, monks, and conscripts mixed on the campaign, such narratives were exclusively discussed by a small elite is improbable. Particularly at an event such as the sudden falling of rain, it seems far more likely that the simple and appealing Land of the Gods explanation was part of how the desperate defenders talked about the event with each other.

As evidence of the prevalence of Land of the Gods thinking at this time, the editors of *Chōsen hinikki o yomu*, cite the famous opening of Hideyoshi's declaration banning Christians in 1587: 'Nippon is a Land of the Gods...' (日本ハ神國たる處...)⁷² Yet if it were not for diaries like Keinen and Yoshino's, we would not have evidence that this idea was far more widespread than the highest official circles.

72 Ibid.

Both the diaries studied here show how the narrative was part of their interpretation of the events of the war. This tells us that for a large number of the participants, not just the leaders, the campaign came to be more than a tale of battles won and lost, of bravery and suffering, but of a duel between Nippon and Kara: their country and its enemies.

6.3 FURTHER OBSERVATIONS

6.3.1 KEINEN THE PACIFIST?

Among the many glorifying accounts of Hideyoshi's invasion, historians critical of the invasion have wished to embrace Keinen as an exemplar of an anti-war stance. Yet some scholars complain that he is 'inconsistent' in this position.⁷³ The two points which stand out as awkward in the diary are Keinen's admiration for Hideyoshi and his belief in the Land of the Gods narrative. Yet, these only become inconsistencies when the standard which Keinen is measured against is a twentieth-century one. For historians writing after the Second World War, the 'Land of the Gods' myth is toxic, associated with

73 Nakao Hiroshi, "Teiyū-keichō no eki senjō to Keinen," 163–64.

ultra-nationalism and mobilization of the population for imperialist enterprise in the twentieth century. But to suppose Keinen subscribed to such ideas is anachronistic. The Land of the Gods myth undoubtedly held a link with conquest, as evidenced in Yoshino's recounting of it. It was historically most associated with defence, however – divine protection, rather than attack; the most famous example being defence of Japan by *kamikaze* 神風 (divine wind).⁷⁴

Once modern associations are stripped away, the apparent inconsistency in Keinen's position also dissolves: throughout his diary he remains disgusted by violence, which he sees as suffering caused by ignorance and desire. Because his position is based on a much broader cosmic understanding of what violence means, it is also misleading to label him as 'anti-war' or a pacifist. As Ōkuwa Hitoshi points out, rather than merely being revolted by war, Keinen is revolted by this world;⁷⁵ it is rebirth in paradise he longs for, rather than peace on earth. As regards his praise of Hideyoshi, this was in regard only to Hideyoshi's imagined care for the downtrodden –

74 Satō Hirō 佐藤弘夫, *Kami • butsu • ōken no chūsei* 神 • 仏 • 王権の中世 (The Middle Period: Spirits, Buddha, and Monarchy) (Hōzōkan 法藏館, 1998), 232, 328–34.

75 Ōkuwa Hitoshi, "Zenchishiki to 'asamashi' no shisō," 265–66.

standing in contrast to the cruelty of the samurai. An appreciation of his reverence for the *miyako* (capital) as a centre of true learning, and for the image of a noble leader, help us understand why he might have been more disposed to imagine Hideyoshi in a positive light. If we understand Keinen's 'Lord of the Realm' and 'Land of the Gods' in their proper context rather than assigning him guilt by association, then the author of *Chōsen hinikki*, whose idiosyncrasies we can also understand, is restored to us. We also stand at a better vantage point from which to assess the wider significance of the ideas expressed in the diary.

6.3.2 THE EAST ASIAN WAR AS A DEFINING MOMENT

The Battle of Ulsan can be seen as a microcosm of the whole war in terms of the effect it has on Keinen. Of the people least likely to identify with Japan in the war, it would be difficult to find a candidate that exceeds Keinen: he damns the entire effort as one motivated by greed, and eventually hopes for the quick defeat of Japanese forces so as to expedite his departure from this world. Yet war by nature fosters enmity, which amounts to a hardening of the sense of self and other. It is only natural that as he recorded what the soldiers around him related about the progress of the battle, Keinen

identified more and more with one side. The same would be true of people who remained in Japan reading accounts of the war. In this sense, Keinen's individual experience informs us about the influence this huge military operation would have had on the hundreds and thousands who took part in it. Written accounts of the invasion – mostly of the *gunki* variety – as well as its representations in plays, hint at how this experience would have been widened out to an even greater number of people – not to mention the oral recounting of experience that has left no trace.

That an event on this scale had a large psychological impact is beyond question, but assessing what this impact entailed is difficult. The most important insight from *Chōsen hinikki* into what the war would have meant, comes through Keinen's interpretation of these events' significance in terms of Nippon: Japan the country. Stories of victory and defeat can be devoid of narratives of the country. Ancient tales recount heroism and adventure, and Fortune favours and rejects the individual or the family, not the country. For Yoshino, 1592 meant valour; for Keinen, 1597 meant suffering: yet both writers link the war to the status of the country. What is most telling, is that even Keinen – whose loyalties are expected to lie elsewhere, for whom this world is but a passing nightmare – even

Keinen, understands victory and defeat on the peninsula to signify the fortune of Japan the country. Against the background of a series of military accounts of the war that all do the same, this is a powerful indication that through direct experience and its retelling, the war gave real and immediate meaning to the abstract notion of Nippon. Just as the Kara armies pressed down upon them, heaven came to their rescue, 'for Nippon is the Land of the Gods...'

Conclusions

Chōsen hinikki and a tale such as *Yoshino nikki* are similar in the most basic sense that they tell the story of an extraordinary journey to an exotic land. Yet they immediately diverge, as Keinen keeps his focus on his own personal observations and feelings, while *Yoshino nikki* tells the tale of the army of which he was a part. *Yoshino nikki* is also not free of the emphasis on the bravery and heroic deeds of certain samurai, which is characteristic of *gunki* tales, being as they were often written hoping for reward from those being praised.⁴⁸ Yet *Yoshino nikki* does not fully conform to common expectations of *gunki* tales of the East Asian War: while these normally justified the invasion, *Yoshino nikki* implies that the campaign was folly from the start. Nevertheless, *Yoshino* joins with the writers of *Chōsen ki* and the other military chronicles in glorifying the battles. In this context, Keinen's unmasked disdain for the samurai as a group is striking. Rather than a world in which warrior qualities are esteemed, he

48 Hayashima Yūki 早島有毅, "Keinen no shōgai to bunkateki soyō" 慶念の生涯と文化的素養, in "Chōsen hinikki" o yomu 朝鮮日々記を読む (Kyōto: Hōzōkan, 2000), 146.

offers the totally different starting point of a world of suffering resulting from lust, anger, and delusion, which must be overcome. Ultimately, this difference in values is reflected in the way the authors relate to Japan. For Yoshino, the size and strength of Japan is vitally important, and he calls up the idea of the Land of the Gods to explain Japanese greater 'ferocity.' In *Chōsen hinikki*, there is no hint of such a concern. On the contrary, Keinen's pity for all suffering beings crosses the boundaries of 'Nippon' and 'Kara.' And yet despite this, for Keinen as much as for Yoshino, the success of the Japanese armies in battle signifies no less than the fate of Japan itself; the difference between the authors' positions is merely one of how personally invested they are in that fate.

While the two authors' lives as a samurai and a monk represent diverse positions in society, they draw on elements of a common cultural pool of knowledge. Even on Yoshino, the influence of Buddhist ideas and imagery is profound. Thus, both men make almost identical comparisons between the horror they witness (or partake in) and the torments of the demons of hell. Also, in terms of conceptualizing the geography of this world, both think in terms of the 'Three Countries.' In this view, Kōrai is often subsumed in a greater Kara, and it is Kara that stands in opposition to Nippon. In

the greater part of Keinen's writing this is not pronounced, and he often uses the word Kōrai. It is when he is caught in the ferocity of the Battle of Ulsan that the other side clearly takes shape as the 'people of Kara.' It is at the same moment that Nippon comes to centre stage and he for the first time explicitly identifies with it. This is not a new designation or identification, however: earlier in the diary too, Keinen discusses events at home using Nippon. The context of the battle momentarily increases the significance of Japan as a defining association for him, but the Buddhist and other tales which he had read throughout his life had already established the world in terms of India, China, Japan, and their differences. Japan as Land of the Gods was simply part of this inherited knowledge.

The war in Korea was a defining moment in terms of identification with Japan, but was evidently not creating something new. The common cultural heritage drawn upon by *Chōsen hinikki* and *Yoshino nikki*, in the form of the Land of the Gods story and the Buddhist tradition of organizing the world with Japan as one of its three constituent parts, is well attested in the literary canon from before this time. Yet it is difficult to assess how widespread these ideas were in earlier centuries. While the assertion that the Land of the Gods myth was an ideology mobilizing a wide part of society goes

too far, the evidence examined here testifies to its widespread recognition and acceptance during the East Asian War. The military action of the East Asian War was fed into this narrative, strengthening it and bringing it to life. The fact that such huge numbers were involved in the war would have ensured that identification with the country, its history, and place in the world that might once have been the preserve of a few at the cultural-political centre, spread out to a wide section of society.

Conclusion

IDENTITY IN THE EAST ASIAN WAR

The introductory chapter identified ‘boundaries,’ ‘content,’ and ‘process’ as the three main aspects this thesis sought to address in its study of ideas about China, Korea, and Japan. In this concluding chapter, the results of this study are again discussed in relation to these three aspects, in the following sections addressing the ‘where’ (boundaries), ‘what’ (content) and ‘how’ (process) of Chinese, Korean, and Japanese identities in the East Asian War.

WHERE THE BORDERS LAY

This investigation opened by questioning whether the boundaries that defined the most meaningful identities always fell along the same lines as the borders between China, Korea, and Japan. Of course, this question is dependent on context, and the context of the East Asian War brought the three countries to the fore. Yet, with the Ming and Chosŏn co-operating to fight a common enemy, it seemed

probable that the common cultural sphere which the two countries occupied – as contrasted with the Japanese – would figure prominently in people’s identification. Analysis of the primary sources reveals that the similarities in custom between the two countries were indeed emphasized, but in a way that in fact strengthened a distinct Chosŏn identity rather than weaken the conceptual boundary between the two countries and their peoples. In both Chinese and Korean texts, a genteel and praiseworthy civility became Chosŏn’s defining characteristic. From the Chinese side, the East Asian War seemed to re-affirm this notion, as the people of Chosŏn’s love for the civil and literary over the military offered a neat explanation for the collapse of the Chosŏn defence in the face of the Japanese advance. The example of *Chaioxian ji* 朝鮮記 demonstrates how this image was also re-inforced through a circular exchange: a Chosŏn self-representation informed a Chinese depiction of the country, which in turn circulated within Chosŏn. Particularly at a time when the Sarim school of Neo-Confucianism was dominant, many literati in Chosŏn would have been keen to have their country recognized as a land of exemplary men of learning.⁴⁹ The result was that a point of

49 Liam Kelley studies a similar attitude among Vietnamese literati. Liam C. Kelley, *Beyond the Bronze Pillars: Envoy Poetry and the Sino-Vietnamese*

potential commonality with China was used by people on both sides to define Chosŏn's distinctive identity. Such a supporting narrative was a contributing factor to the strong sense of a separate 'Eastern country' and 'Eastern people' that Oh Hŭimun displays in his writings.

Less expected at the outset of this investigation was the extent to which Korea and China could merge into one space in Japanese writings. For both Yoshino and Keinen, the greater 'Kara' space readily swallowed up the political boundary between the Ming and Chosŏn – though these men were aware of the boundary. For Yoshino and Keinen, however, the incorporation of Chosŏn into China was the result of the traditional Buddhist division of the world into Three Lands, not because the Ming and Chosŏn shared a common elite culture. The armies of the two countries fighting shoulder-to-shoulder against them would have only intensified the presence of 'Kara people' as a category among the Japanese on the peninsula and waiting at home. Yoshino's opening explanation of Japan's unique position in the world seems to resonate with the 'us' against 'all of them' situation implied by the Japan vs. Kara experi-

Relationship, Asian interactions and comparisons (Honolulu: Association for Asian Studies, 2005).

ence in the war: Japan was the only land blessed by the gods, full of warriors greater than those of any other country.

Even while Korea and China could merge into one, the connection made by Yoshino and others between the 1592 invasion and Empress Jingū's mythical conquest shows that Korea's distinctive identity was crucially important to many in the Japanese warrior class. Empress Jingū's conquest of the peninsula was cited by Yoshino as the incontrovertible evidence of Japan's strength. Yoshino pointed to Japan's 'conquest of a foreign country' and resisting (the Mongol) invasions to compensate for what he felt to be Japan's inferior size. The monk Genso's reported holding of the Koreans to blame for their part in the Mongol invasions suggests Yoshino was by no means alone in identifying Korea as a distinct entity, enmeshed in the tale of Japan's fate.⁵⁰

50 As cited in an earlier footnote, monk-diplomat Keitetsu Genso 景轍玄蘇 (1537-1611) is quoted as having claimed it was only just that Japan have retribution on Korea for its part in the Mongol invasion. "Sŏnjo sujŏng sillok" 宣祖修正實錄 [Revised Annals of the Sŏnjo Reign], 1591. 閏 3.1, National Institute of Korean History, <http://sillok.history.go.kr>.

WHAT DEFINED CHINA, KOREA, AND JAPAN

The analyses in the preceding chapters unsurprisingly revealed as many viewpoints as people, yet common tendencies can be observed in the way China, Korea, and Japan were characterized.

One tendency in the writings considered was for the authors to define the countries in terms of the qualities they personally most valued. There is a certain commonality between the two most military-minded individuals studied, Zhao Shizhen and Yoshino Jingozaemon, in that they each argued for the military supremacy of their own country. On a more subtle level, their arguments converge by implicitly assigning primary importance to a country's size. Size is acknowledged by some other authors, but none of them emphasize it in the same way – Xu Yihou comes closest, when he discusses Japan's size in the context of giving military advice. To the warrior, relative size is of self-evident importance, and so to Zhao and Yoshino it became a – if not *the* – defining feature of China and Japan. For Zhao size was *the* decisive factor, while Yoshino, who was excruciatingly aware of being on the losing side of the comparison, had to introduce the second feature of divine blessing to compensate.

For the less militarily inclined, the degree of moral and cultural attainment of a country became the yardstick by which it

was judged. Xu Xizhen's *Dong zheng ji* is just such an appraisal: a celebration of Chinese moral and cultural superiority. In the writings produced by men of Chosŏn, be it the Oh Hŭimun, Hwang Shin, or Pak Hongjang diaries, or the Calls to Arms that Oh copies down, Japan is equated with barbaric customs – clearly beyond the pale of civilisation. The authors of all of these documents had grown up memorizing texts which told how the enlightened Song dynasty – source of Neo-Confucian wisdom – had fallen to the barbarian Mongols. The violence and brutality of the Japanese invading army, combined with their practices of cutting their hair and staining their teeth, appeared to be the very embodiment of the classical barbarian. Educated men in Chosŏn were even more likely to see the Japanese in this way because for decades the dominant form of Neo-Confucian thought had placed great emphasis on the moral and cultural superiority of the Chinese orthodoxy. This was born out of both the Southern Song origins of Neo-Confucian thought, when Zhu Xi and others lamented the fall of northern China to an ethnic other, and of Chosŏn's own identity as a dynasty founded on allegiance to the Ming against the Mongols. Yet, despite all this, the two diarists who travelled to Japan showed the ability to look past cultural bias and make positive observations about Japan, in areas from food, to

aesthetics, to governance. Such positive appraisals buck the trend observed by historian Han Myōng-gi, of characterizations of Japan having become exclusively negative since the rise of the Sarim school of thought in Chosŏn.⁵¹ The intense violence of the East Asian War notwithstanding, this was after all a time of unprecedented interaction, which led to a deepening of understanding on all sides. It should also be noted that, while cultural comparison coloured the Chosŏn self-positioning against Japan, Oh Hŭimun's sense of a distinct Chosŏn identity seems to extend beyond a narrow definition in terms of high culture, because it includes the uncultured commoner.

Keinen's viewing the Japanese capital as the centre of enlightenment is in the same vein as Chosŏn and Chinese literati imagining their countries to be characterized by moral attainment. His preponderance with the centre and his distance from it also highlights the importance of centrality and peripherality in the views of many of the individuals studied. As a Buddhist, Keinen would have been

51 Han Myōng-gi 韓明基, "Tong Asia kugjye kwan'gye-eso bon Imjin waeran" 東아시아 國際關係에서 본 壬辰倭亂 [The Imjin Waeran Seen from EastAsian International Relations], in *Imjin waeran kwa Tong Asia segye ūi pyōndong* 임진왜란과 동아시아 세계의 변동, ed. Han-Il munhwa kyoryu kigūm 한일 문화교류 기금 and Tongbuk yōksa chaedan 동북아 역사 재단 (Sōul: Kyōng'in munhwasa 景仁文化社, 2010), 179.

aware of a tradition which had placed greatest emphasis on India and China as the respective origin and conduit of transmission for Buddhism in Japan. Yet, in his Pure Land School, the centre of true learning had been relocated in Japan. In this, Keinen stands apart from the rest of the authors studied, for whom there seems little disagreement that the continent is more 'central' than the islands: Yoshino laments not only Japan's size but also how it is 'far in the eastern seas;' Zhao Shizhen equally belittles Japan for its remoteness. Given Hideyoshi's plans to move the Japanese emperor to the Chinese capital, we are tempted to conclude that his entire *Kara iri* 唐入り (entry into China) campaign was in fact an attempt to take control of the perceived *axis mundi*. What we can be certain of is that centrality was a concept that influenced how people in all three countries characterized those countries. It was also not simply a case of each man claiming centrality for his homeland.

People in all three countries did all find ways to argue for the special status of their country, however, and there is a degree of consistency by country despite the personal biases. The monk Keinen joins Japanese warriors in citing Japan as Land of the Gods; Chosŏn literati all subscribe to a view of Chosŏn as a land of civility; Chinese writers unanimously agree on China's position as unchal-

lenged ruler of the world. The fact of these consistencies within each country – despite the differences in genre and of text and social background of the authors – points to national narratives being well-established and widespread. At the same time, this thesis' approach of treating each author as an individual in his own historical context has brought deeper insights than past generalized observations made at the country level: the personal differences in each individual's portrayals of China, Korea, and Japan illuminate not only that person's world-view but also the circumstantial factors that helped shape people's views.

HOW IDEAS EVOLVED

Reflecting on how environment, experience, and sources of information influenced individuals' writings has again and again pointed to the East Asian War as an important moment in the history of popular ideas about China, Korea, and Japan.

THE EAST ASIAN WAR AS A MOMENT OF LEARNING

Analysis of the sources and legacy of texts revealed webs of mutual influence criss-crossing across all three countries, but, even at the same time, the intensive re-use of certain texts pointed to a great

paucity of information on foreign peoples. With the exception of people in Chosŏn being well-informed about China, an overwhelming ignorance characterized how people of the region envisioned foreign countries. Potted histories of Chosŏn and Japan in Chinese histories of the war, and the repeated re-appearance of the relatively short descriptions of Japan by Xu Yihou and Hwang Shin all point to this general lack of knowledge. A lack of knowledge, of course, was not new; what had changed was that the war suddenly created a market for more accurate and detailed information.

The East Asian War occurred at a time when commercial printing was rapidly expanding in China, and texts such as *Dong zheng ji*, *Liang chao ping rang lu*, and *Wanli san da zheng kao* were providing for a growing market of readers seeking both informative and entertaining texts. The content and printing of Zhao Shizhen's *Dong shi sheng yan* point to interest and debate on foreign policy extending far beyond the Ming court. The circulation within Chosŏn of a huge variety of foreign and domestically-produced documents evidenced in Oh Huimun's diary, as well as the wide circulation of Hwang Shin's poem, reveal a wide audience on the peninsula also. The market for vernacular texts would have been still wider. In Oh's diary we see his daughters reading about Chinese history in vernacu-

lar Korean, but we can imagine it would not be long before war-related stories and tales of Japan were also circulating; *Imjin nok* is just one example of what became a booming industry in vernacular fiction in the subsequent centuries. In Japan, which also benefited from having more accessible scripts, tales of the Chinese and Koreans were re-told in text and in plays. The East Asian War created a sudden and powerful impulse for people in all three countries to seek information about the surrounding countries and the war that took place between them, and textual production was able to meet that need.

BEYOND THE WRITTEN WORD

The diaries give us glimpses into the profound effect of the East Asian War on the wider, illiterate population, whose own voices are lost to us. As the war affected millions of people – on the islands, the peninsula, and the mainland – the issue of what China, Korea, and Japan meant as identities could no longer be the preserve of the political classes, if it ever had been: it was inseparable from how the population at large experienced this dramatic upheaval. It goes without saying that the population of Chosŏn was left with a deep impression of the ferocious invading force that swept through their

lands, killing and abducting their kinsfolk. Yet, through the writings of Oh and Keinen, Hwang and Pak, we can appreciate how the significance of the East Asian War in identity formation among the general population of the region was more wide-reaching than this. When Chinese soldiers in Chosŏn were able to beat and loot with impunity, the slaves and commoners watching Chosŏn officials cower before them, or running into the hills at news of Chinese soldiers' coming, can hardly have failed to develop opinions about the 'Tang.' The conscripts whom Keinen observes with pity must have – like him – been scarred by the extreme cold of the 'Kōrai' winter, and by finding themselves among the forces of Japan besieged by 'Kara people.' Another example is the peasant woman about whom Oh learned, who cried out her name and the name of her village as she was being carried off by the Japanese, proclaiming to whoever could hear that she was being taken forever to 'another country': could this experience have failed to give pause for thought about ideas of country and belonging to not only the woman in question, but those who heard her and those who heard her story re-told?

Oh's recording of stories such as these which he heard itself points to an aspect of the war that went unrecorded, even though it was potentially the war's most powerful aspect in terms of identities:

the role of the orally transmitted tale. Through Oh's diary we see how he and his friends react with fury and terror to stories of the Japanese and Chinese, before any of them had actually encountered these other peoples. Rumours and emotive tales have never been the preserve of the lettered elite. Historians are inevitably biased towards the written word, leading some to imagine that wide collective identities could only have emerged with print capitalism. This is to grievously underestimate the power of the oral story, be it told by a professional story-teller, or recounted by a neighbour. The real story of the East Asian War will have been the tales told by returning soldiers and escapees, survivors, and those who heard the story of a survivor third-hand. As to the way these lost stories would have been told, the rumours and tales Oh records, and the dramatized narrations of *Imjin nok*, Yoshino's memoir, and *Dong zheng ji* give us clues. Fearsome and wily Japanese next to traitorous but impressive Chinese; innumerable Kara enemies, valiantly resisted by divinely-blessed Japanese warriors; a righteous army crushing inferior barbarian hordes. Stories of heroics against foreign foes will have characterized the illiterate narration of the East Asian War just as much as it did the Classical Chinese texts; it should not be forgotten that *Dong zheng ji* and *Imjin nok* incorporate the imagery of folk culture, and the

latter had vernacular versions. The historical divide between the lettered and unlettered worlds is too often exaggerated, as is demonstrated in Oh's diary, where historical tales and current information constantly cross literacy, gender, and class lines. The monuments in the form of Chinese shrines to Guan Yu in Chosŏn stand as reminders that symbols attached to national images were not confined to literati texts.

We must appreciate how the East Asian War caused the wider population to consider issues of national identity, but at the same time the texts studied here remind us how class violence acted as a balancing force to the cohesion promoted by war against a foreign foe. Keinen's descriptions focus our attention on the army of conscripts brought from Japan to Korea, faced with a choice of working in terrible conditions or death. All throughout the war their experiences were defined by their identity as men of Japan rather than Chosŏn, yet the brutal treatment they received would have deterred them from identifying with the war effort. The Chosŏn slaves being tortured and humiliated by their *yangban* masters, and the commoners driven to the brink of death by official demands for tax and corvée service, can have held little affection for the Chosŏn state.

Yet, as Keinen's experience demonstrated, even for those least invested in the war effort, the fires of battle left no room for a category other than 'us' and 'them.' The case of Oh Hŭimun shows how it was possible to identify with one's country while simultaneously despairing at those in power. Despite being of a privileged class and quite literally owing his life to the Chosŏn state structure that helped feed his family, Oh wrote of himself as one among a people suffering at the hands of Japanese invaders, unreliable Chinese support, and also a completely incompetent government. Despite his being on the side of privilege, Oh nonetheless demonstrates how the experience of the war created a sense of common identity that stretched across the otherwise seemingly impermeable barrier separating the classes, even while that barrier remained unmoved.

REINFORCEMENT OF ESTABLISHED IDENTITIES

Part of the potency of the East Asian War in strengthening identities lay in the fact that the three main actors in the war all had long-established histories. The contextualizing of each country's actions in established historical narratives is so universal in the sources that it could almost escape notice. Each of these acts of

historical contextualization of China, Korea, and Japan was in a sense the creation of new identities, because it assigned them new characteristics. Yet, in another sense, these texts were telling a story with pre-established actors against a ready-drawn backdrop. In all of the texts studied in this thesis, the East Asian War did not fundamentally complicate anyone's sense of identity. While the historian may see diffused power, diverse populations, and changing state structures, contemporary explanations of the war were able to portray the conflict as involving countries that had existed since the beginning of recorded time, and people who self-evidently belonged to those countries. Had the war involved rebellion within one country, for example, or the annexation of Chosŏn by the Ming (which Oh and others feared), then identities could have become more complex. Instead, people on all sides were able to call upon a wealth of established narratives about their own countries and their neighbours. The result was that the East Asian War brought about a powerful reinforcement, development, and popularization of ideas about China, Korea, and Japan, rather than a creation of altogether new identities.

Reinforcement happened not only in the sense of strengthening Chinese, Korean, and Japanese identities as categories, but also

when stereotypes of other groups seemed to be confirmed. It has been observed that inaccurate stereotypes can be maintained by selective perception, unless those stereotypes prove 'grossly inadequate.'⁵² Selective reception of new information from the frontier allowed those far from the battlefield not only to maintain their stereotypes, but to use parts of the new information to reaffirm them. The case of *Liang chao ping rang lu* 兩朝平攘錄 selectively citing Hwang Shin's report is just such an example.

NEW WINE IN OLD WINESKINS

Yet, as must always be the case, each new description of the self and the other was also a new formation of those identities; every invocation of past narratives also re-interpreted them according to the circumstances of the present. Old labels were assigned new connotations, and old facts given new meaning. This is evident in *Chaoxian ji* 朝鮮記 (copied by Oh Hŭimun), where Chosŏn's scholarly credentials are balanced with a new need to defend Chosŏn's martial capacity: the successful resistance of invaders (by previous dynasties, not all geographically equivalent to Chosŏn) is summoned

52 Fredrik Barth, ed., *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1969), 29.

as evidence. The assertions from 1592 that Chosŏn was militarily incapable encouraged Lü Yingzhong's 呂應鍾 Korean informant(s) to re-define the country's identity to emphasise its martial prowess – though Chinese texts produced in the interior failed to take up this new aspect of Chosŏn identity.

Another example of new meaning being assigned to an existing identity is Oh Hŭimun's responding to the invasion by projecting an identity of pitiful victimhood onto Chosŏn and its people. This may have reflected Oh's own character, as someone inclined to self-pity, rather than any wider trend. From the perspective of our current time, his assignment of victimhood to the whole population immediately recalls the development in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries of a Korean national identity that would take 'Arirang,' a song of victimhood, as its anthem. Yet, in the absence of evidence of a narrative built over the intervening centuries, this must be dismissed as coincidence.

Yoshino's writing points to the shock experienced by Japanese warriors on seeing first-hand the size and strength of the mainland and its armies. The widely familiar story of Japan as the Land of the Gods was a convenient and comforting explanatory device to deal with what was otherwise the difficult reality of defeat. Keinen's

record of his experience in the siege of Ulsan also demonstrates how the war brought the myth of the Land of the Gods to life for the Japanese participants in the Korean campaign, as an explanatory narrative upon which they could readily draw. Traditional knowledge formed the resources that these men used to understand what was happening, but their experience in the war equally shaped how they depicted China, Korea, and Japan.

The forceful assertion of China's position in the world by Zhao Shizhen and Xu Xizhen can be read as a reflection of Chinese anxiety during the war. Japanese invasion of Chosŏn was a direct affront to the Ming's claims to overlordship, at once putting its rhetoric to the test. Officials such as Song Yingchang spoke in bold terms to the Koreans of the 'Celestial Dynasty's' effortless distribution of justice in the world. Yet, should the Ming have failed to protect its vassal and punish the perpetrator, it risked losing face – both in diplomatic terms and in the eyes of Chinese observers at home. That China was on the verge of appearing weak and humiliated stands out as the underlying anxiety that drove Zhao Shizhen's memorials calling for aggressive action. The eventual Japanese retreat brought long-awaited relief to these anxieties, and the self-gratifying portrayal of imagined glory that is *Dong zheng ji* was Xu Xizhen's

response. The fact that, as Zhao Shizhen put it, the Ming had been put in the humiliating position of fighting on essentially equal terms with the Japanese, drove Xu Xizhen to seek compensation by re-asserting in the most dramatic terms China's unassailable position of ultimate superiority.

POST-WAR

If the East Asian War gave new meanings to established identities rather than complicating or challenging them, it was because it was a relatively rare instance of a conflict involving Chinese, Korean, and Japanese state-level actors. The decades that followed the war saw conflict in the region but between different actors, throwing up different challenges to existing identities. The rise of the Jürchen in what later became known as Manchuria led to the conquest of the Ming dynasty by the Qing (1644-1911). As part of this great upheaval in the region, Chosŏn suffered two further devastating invasions (1627-1637), this time by the Jürchen (later known as the Manchus). In Japan, further civil war ended with the establishment of the Tokugawa regime (1603-1868). Xu Yihou's claim of Chinese characters as the property of 'our great Ming' epitomized the unproblematic congruence of all cultural, ethnic, and geographic

elements of Chinese identity that – with hindsight – was a temporary phenomenon of the Ming period. With the Qing conquest, people in both China and Chosŏn had to deal with the severe complication of the simplistic model which they had adopted. Whereas Zhao Shizhen had been able to write disparagingly of the Mongols and the Jürchen as inferior races, now the Jürchen Qing claimed to occupy the position of divinely-bestowed moral superiority claimed for the Chinese emperor by Xu Xizhen. In China, Korea, and even Japan, this was to have implications for how the countries of the region were envisioned.

While geopolitical events precipitated important changes, in many ways the identities forged and hardened in the East Asian War have continued to be influential until the present day. If some dubious details are overlooked, Ming aid to Chosŏn represented the successful fulfilment of the Chinese claim to universal suzerainty, as celebrated in the Wanli emperor's edicts. It is in terms of this 'Chinese World Order' that China's historical position in East Asia is still popularly understood today, and it is to that position atop the regional hierarchy that Chinese nationalists remain determined to restore their country. Popular understanding of Korean history is also characterized by the Chosŏn dynasty's policy of *saedae* 事大

(serving the great), which Ming aid in the East Asian War seemed to both embody and justify. Following the war, Ming intervention certainly became the focus of a great Ming 'loyalism,' of which the already-cited history *Chaejo ponbang chi* 再造藩邦志 (The Salvation of a Vassal State) was a part. In Japan, Yoshino and other writers' citing of Japan's supposed conquest of Korea to justify Japanese dignity on the international stage was to remain an influential way of thinking. Yoshino and others' use of Jingū's historical conquest to compensate for perceived humiliation resonates unmistakably with nineteenth-century nationalists' call for the 're-'conquest of Korea after suffering defeat at the hands of the Europeans (*sei Kan ron* 征韓論).

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

In reviewing the most salient points arising from the foregoing analyses, it is necessary to assess the inherent limitations of this investigation. The first and foremost of these must be the limited number of sources studied. A goal of this project was to give better representation to the diversity of sources that have survived since the East Asian War, and studying a greater number would go farther towards that end. To focus on a relatively low number of sources was a deliberate choice, however. Covering less sources has allowed

a more in-depth investigation into the person behind each piece of writing. With regards to how many countries' sources were included, the choice made was of the opposite kind: breadth over depth. Including sources from all three countries was an integral part of the project from the outset, in an attempt to appreciate the East Asian War as the region-wide event that it was. There is a strong case to be made, however, that a far wider selection of sources from each country must be assessed before we can claim to have done justice to the wide source base available to us. This thesis can only be one step in that direction.

In tackling the key problem of how representative a small source sample can be, investigating circumstantial factors and exchanges of information which influenced personal viewpoints have proved valuable tools in identifying wider trends beyond only the individuals studied. For example, the diaries of Keinen and Yoshino highlight the powerful effect mass military service would have had, and some of the narratives employed by those in the invading army to make sense of their experience. Similarly, Oh Hūimun's experience at the Guan Yu shrine informs us not only about his personal experience, but points to the effect of that symbol on both the people of Chosŏn and those in the Ming military in

Chosŏn. Given that even a study of all available sources could not claim to have secured a representative sample of contemporary opinions, analysis of factors influencing world-views remains the best tool available to historians of the period.

Moving forward, there are several possible directions for advancing and deepening this thesis' investigation. That the views of observers from outside East Asia, such as European missionaries, was beyond the scope of this thesis was unfortunate. If sources could be found, understanding how people from the kingdom of Ryūkyū saw the East Asian War would be a fascinating complementary perspective. Further consideration of how the Jürchens saw and were seen in the war would also be a valuable addition. Another way of advancing this thesis' line of enquiry would be to pay further attention to regional identities within countries. This thesis diversified from orthodox sources by looking to the point of contact with the foreign; a future investigation could follow up the evidence that people living in spaces such as Tsushima not only were closer to the foreign, but were themselves looked upon differently within their own country. In Chosŏn, the people of the northern provinces rebelled at the first opportunity and captured the Chosŏn princes to present to the invading Japanese. Investigating whether those living

in northern Chosŏn identified differently could be a rewarding line of enquiry; it might prove significant that Oh Hŭimun and the entirety of his wide social network, without exception, lived in the southern half of the peninsula. In China, the difference between northerners and southerners deserves further consideration: the northern and southern Chinese armies had very different images among people in Chosŏn, for example. Investigating such regional differences could produce a more nuanced picture of identity in the East Asian War, just as this thesis has gained new insights by shifting our focus from the centre to the periphery.

Ultimately, a nuanced history of the East Asian War period remains to be written into an explanation of identification with states in the longer history of East Asia. In discussing international relations, writers in all three countries made reference to the Mongol conquests. Understanding how the identities observed at the time of the East Asian War developed must at the very least extend back to the time of the Mongolian empire. Looking forward from the East Asian War, there remains a failure to incorporate it into the history of national identity in subsequent centuries. Historians of Japanese identity take the beginning of the Tokugawa era (c. 1600) as a neat starting point, while those of Chinese and Korean national identity

focus on the tumultuous changes of the nineteenth century. Particularly in the cases of China and Korea, the separation off of this later period reflects the continued influence of modernist theories of nationalism, as discussed in the introduction to this thesis. Yet it remains to be convincingly argued that the construction of national identities in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was fundamentally more novel or artificial than the creative re-use of traditional narratives by people in the sixteenth century, who constructed myths of divine origin and happily blurred borders and dynasties to create a single, essentialist identity persisting through time. Our understanding of the question of identity can only be advanced if we take a balanced view of continuity and change, seek to identify the factors such as institutions and conflicts that help shape identity, and let the primary sources inform theories, rather than the other way around.

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