Socio-Political Identity in Chosŏn Korea during the Japanese and Manchu Invasions 1567-1637: Barbarians at the Gates

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Abstract

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Doctor of Philosophy (DPhil.) in Oriental Studies

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This thesis explores social and political identities in Chosŏn Korea between the years 1567 and 1637, particularly during the Imjin War (1592-1598) and the Manchu Invasions (1627 and 1636-1637). During the Imjin War, the Japanese caused widespread destruction over the entire Korean peninsula and the Ming army entered the country. The Later Jin briefly invaded in 1627 and launched a large scale invasion in 1636. The Manchus overran Chosŏn's feeble defenses and forced Chosŏn to become a vassal state of the Qing Empire.

Scholars are at odds over the form of socio-political identity during this period of foreign invasion. Some claim these wars created the 'Korean nation' for the first time, while others contend that no such socio-political concepts could have existed before the twentieth century. However, researchers often use the same philosophical approaches and merely select aspects of certain theorists' frameworks that best support their arguments. Both the theories and historian's methodologies are limited in their explanation of socio-political identity of the premodern Korean past and even more so for the time of the Imjin and Manchu Invasions.

My research attempts to solve these theoretical problems by creating a 'fusion of horizons' between past and modern concepts of socio-political identity in order to explore the political and cultural environments of the Chosŏn people before and during the wars (*bildung*). This is achieved firstly by relying on official government histories and individually written diaries that, together, create a more complete picture of former socio-political identity. Secondly, I propose understanding Chosŏn by looking at the definitions of the king, state, people, culture, history, and foreign world using their own definitions from their own times. My analysis concludes by arguing that there was both a division between *immortal* and *mortal* concepts of the state that fluctuated over the course of the wars, and that each concept was also connected to its own timespan: *lineage time* and *immortal continuity*.

Keywords: Chosŏn, Socio-Political Identity, Imjin War, Manchu Invasions, Nationalism

Declaration of Authorship

I hereby declare that the contents of this thesis are original and have not been submitted in whole or in part for consideration for any other degree or qualification in this, or any other University. This thesis is the result of my own work, except where specific reference is made to the work of others in the text. The dissertation contains less than the maximum 100,000 words including appendices, bibliography, and footnotes. The maps included are also of my own work and design.

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Thomas NDE Quartermain 22/06/2016

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The development of my initial ideas on identity were made at the University of Oxford. I am thankful to all the departments of the university that helped me, including the staff and faculty of Wolfson College, the Oriental Studies Department, and the Bodleian Library Staff (particularly Minh Chung and Hanni Lee). But it is the faculty of Korean Studies to which I owe the most thanks. Not only were they my guides to completing the degrees, but my mentors, intellectual counterparts and family while at Oxford. Dr. Jieun Kiaer gave me a greater appreciation of Korean Linguistics and made Korean Studies accessible to a number of new students from across the university. Dr. Young-hae Chi translated many of the passages in this thesis with me, and provided me with great insights into the history and culture of Korea and East Asia. Lastly, my thesis advisor Dr. James B Lewis developed my knowledge and approaches to history in general, pressed me to develop my own thoughts and philosophies, and helped me to present my work and develop additional skills that will help me in the future.

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CITATION CONVENTIONS

1. Sources and names from modern Korean and Chosŏn era texts are Romanized using McCune-Reischauer. Exceptions include words that have common spellings in the English language.

2. The *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* is cited by title, volume (*kwŏn*), and folio (*chŏng*, a or b) followed by the CE year and lunar calendar date. The *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* is generally referred to as the *sillok*, but when talking about a specific book it is cited with the particular reigning king's name. Example: *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 19:4b (1585.04.16).

3. The diaries are cited by author, book title, and the CE year and lunar calendar date. Example: Ŏ Hanmyŏng, *Kangdo ilgi* 江都日記 (1636.12.15).

4. Sources and names from Chinese texts are Romanized using Pinyin. Exceptions include words that have common spellings in the English language.

5. Sources and names from Japanese texts are Romanized using Hepburn. Exceptions include words that have common spellings in the English language.

CHOSŎN REIGN DATES (1392 – 1910)

King T'aejo	太祖	1392 – 1398
King Chŏngjong	定宗	1398 – 1400
King T'aejong	太宗	1400 – 1418
King Sejong	世宗	1418 – 1450
King Munjong	文宗	1450 – 1452
King Tanjong	端宗	1452 – 1455
King Sejo	世祖	1455 – 1468
King Yejong	睿宗	1468 – 1469
King Sŏngjong	成宗	1469 – 1494
King Yŏnsan'gun	燕山君	1494 – 1506
King Chungjong	中宗	1506 – 1544
King Injong	仁宗	1544 – 1545
(Queen Dowager Munjong)	文定王后	(1545 – 1565)
King Myŏngjong	明宗	1545 – 1567
King Sŏnjo	宣祖	1567 – 1608
King Kwanghae'gun	光海君	1608 – 1623
King Injo	仁祖	1623 – 1649
King Hyojong	孝宗	1649 – 1659
King Hyŏnjong	顯宗	1659 – 1674
King Sukjong	肅宗	1674 – 1720
King Kyŏngjong	景宗	1720 – 1724
King Yongjo	英祖	1724 – 1776
King Chŏngjo	正祖	1776 – 1800
King Sunjo	純祖	1800 – 1834
King Hŏnjong	憲宗	1834 – 1849
King Ch'ŏljong	哲宗	1849 – 1863
(Hŭngsŏn Taewŏn'gun)	興宣大院君	(1864 – 1898)
King (Emperor) Kojong	高宗	1863 – 1907
King (Emperor) Sunjong	純宗	1907 – 1910

DYNASTIES AND KINGDOMS ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA

Kingdom Name		***Dates***
Mythical/Founding Kingdom		
(Ko)-chosŏn (Old Chosŏn)	(古)朝鮮	?-108 BCE
The Three Han (Samhan) Proto-states		
Chinhan	辰韓	First Century BCE? – Fourth Century CE
Mahan	馬韓	First Century BCE? – Fourth Century CE
Pyŏnhan	弁韓	First Century BCE? – Fourth Century CE
The Three Kingdoms (Samhan or Samguk)		
Koguryŏ	高句麗	First Century CE? – 668 CE
Paekche	百濟	First Century CE? – 600 CE
Silla	新羅	First Century CE? – 668 CE
Kaya	加倻	First Century CE? – 532? CE
The Divided Peninsula		
(Unified, Later) Silla	(統一, 後) 新羅	668 CE – 935 CE
The Kingdom of Palhae	渤海	698 CE – 926 CE
The Unified Peninsula		
The Kingdom of Koryŏ	高麗	918 – 1392
The Kingdom of Chosŏn	朝鮮	1392 – 1897
The Great Empire of the Han	大韓帝國	1897 – 1910

GLOSSARY

More precise definitions of the following terms can be found in the brackets (...) indicating the page on which they are discussed in greater detail.

Primary Sources

Chosŏn wangjo sillok	朝鮮王朝實錄: *T'aebaeksan* 太白山
Sŏnjo wangjo sillok	宣祖王朝實錄
Sŏnjo wangjo sujŏng sillok	宣祖修正王朝實錄
Kwanghae'gun ilgi	光海君日記
Injo wangjo sillok	仁祖王朝實錄

Diaries Written Prior to the Imjin War

Yi I Yulgok's 李珥 栗谷 (1536-1584)	*Soktam ilgi* 石潭日記 (1565-1581)
Yu Hŭich'un's 柳希春 (1513-1577)	*Miam ilgi* 眉巖日記 (1567-1577)
Kwŏn Munhae's 權文海 (1534-1591)	*Ch'ogan ilgi* 草澗日記 (1580-1591)
Yi Chŏnghoe's 李庭檜 (1543-1612)	*Songgan ilgi* 松澗日記 (1577-1612)

Diaries Written During the Imjin War

O Hŭimun 吳希文 (1539-1613)	*Swaemirok* 瑣尾錄 (1591-1601)
Chŏng Kyŏng'un 鄭慶雲 (1556-1610)	*Kodae illok* 孤臺日錄 (1592-1609)
Yi Sunsin 李舜臣 (1545-1598)	*Nanjung ilgi* 亂中日記 (1591-1597)
Yu Sŏngnyong 柳成龍 (1542-1607)	*Chingbirok* 懲毖錄 (1592-1598)
Cho Ŭngnok 趙應祿 (1538-1623)	*Chukkye ilgi* 竹溪日記 (1592-1615)

Diaries Written before the First Manchu Invasion

Kim Sanghŏn's 金尙憲 (1570-1652)	*Namsarok* 南槎錄 (1601)

Diaries Written during the Second Manchu Invasion

Nam Kŭp's 南磔 (1592-1671)	*Namhan ilgi* 南漢日記 (1636-1637)
Ŏ Hanmŏng's 魚漢明 (1592-1648)	*Kangdo ilgi* 江都日記 (1636-1637)
Kim Sanghŏn's 金尙憲 (1570-1652)	*Namhan kiryak* 南漢紀略 (1636-1637)
Na Man'gap's 羅萬甲 (1592-1642)	*Pyŏngjarok* 丙子錄 (1636-1637)
Anonymous	*Sansŏng ilgi* 山城日記 (1636-1637)

Theoretical Concepts

Bildung	Gadamer's idea of cultural background. (40-41)
Ethnies	Smith's idea of ethnic-identity before nationalism. (27)
Fusion of horizons	Gadamer's joining of historical and modern viewpoints. (41)
History of Effect	A writer's and reader's particular terms and concepts. (41)
Immortal Continuity	The historical or legendary timeline of the country. (47)
Immortal Core	Historical figure or state used for socio-political identity. (45)
Lineage Time	Age of the state connected to the ruling family. (46)
Mortal Core	Living individual who represents socio-political identity. (44-45)
Print Capitalism	Anderson's theory of print culture and nationalism. (26)
Proto-Nationalism	Gellner's theory of pre-national identity. (22)
Socio-political identity	Notions of social and political identification with a group. (4)
Weltanschauung	Gadamer's definition of world view. (40)

Chosŏn Historical Terminology

A'guk	我國	Our country or home state.
A'min	我民	Our country's people or subjects.
Chongmyo	宗廟	Royal Ancestral Shrines (to the ruling house ancestors).
Chongsa	宗社	Royal Shrines and Altars.
Chŏngjŏn	正殿	Hall of Correctness.
Chŏngmyo horan	丁卯胡亂	First Manchu Invasion (1627).
Chŏng'yu chaeran	丁酉再亂	Second Japanese Invasion (1597-1598).
Chosŏn'in	朝鮮人	A person from Chosŏn.
Chungmin	中民	Middle Class (population).
Chunghwa	中華	China or Chinese universal civilization.
Dàxué (*taehak)*	大學	Great Learning.
Haedong	海東	A name for Korea's historical region.
Ho	胡	A northern people or group.
Hop'ae	號牌	Identification tag for men in Chosŏn.
Hungu (-p'a)	勳舊 (派)	Meritorious Elite (faction).
Hyang'gyo	鄕校	Government sanctioned provincial schools.
Hyanghwa'in	向化人	Submitting foreigners residing in Chosŏn.
Hyang'yak	鄕約	Lü Family Community Compact.
Hyo	孝	Filial Duty.
I'jo	吏曹	Ministry of Personal.
Imjin waeran	壬辰倭亂	Imjin War (1592-1598).
Injo panjŏng	仁祖反正	Restoration of Injo (coup d'état) in 1623.
Kamsa	監司	Provincial Governor.
Kija	箕子	Mythical ruler of Korea from China.
Kŏguk	擧國	The entire country or state.
Kuk	國	The state or country.
Kug'in	國人	A person of the state or subject of the king.
Kukka	國家	King and court (state or country).
Kuksa	國事	The apparatus and workings of a state.

Kuksok	國俗	State(-wide) customs or practices.
Kŭnwang	勤王	An army sent to defend the king.
Kwagŏ	科擧	Civil Service Examinations.
Mugwa	武科	Military Service Examination.
Mungwa	文科	Literary Examination.
Munmul	文物	Cultural items or achievements.
Munmyŏng	文明	Culture or literature.
Naehun	內訓	*Lessons for the Home* (book).
Nobi	奴婢	Nobi - bonded servant class.
Ŏnmun	諺文	Vernacular Korean script (*han'gŭl*).
Oryun	五倫	Five Human Relationships.
Pŏnho	藩胡	A people north of the Korean peninsula.
Pipyŏnsa	備邊司	Border Defense Council.
Pug'in	北人	Northern(-er) political faction.
Pukpang	北方	Idea to return to the north after the Manchu Invasions.
P'ungsok	風俗	Style, customs or rituals (of region/country).
Pyŏngja horan	丙子胡亂	Second Manchu Invasion (1636-1637).
Pyŏngsa	兵使	Military Commander.
Sadae	事大	Concept of serving the Great (Ming).
Sahwa	士禍	Literati purges in 1498, 1504, 1519, and 1545.
Sajik	社稷	Altars to the Gods of the Earth and the Five Grains.
Samgang	三綱	The Three Human Bonds.
Samgang haengsildo	三綱行實圖	*The Illustrated Conduct of the Three Bonds* (book).
Samgong	三公	Three Ministries.
Samhan	三韓	The Three Ancient Kingdoms of Korea.
Sarim (*-p'a)*	士林 (派)	Sarim (faction) (the local scholars and literati).
Sohak chega chipju	小學諸家集註	*Collected Commentaries on the Schools of the Elementary Learning* (book).
Sohwa	小華	Small China or Lesser China.
Soksamgang haengsildo	續三綱行實圖	*Continuation of the Illustrated Conduct of the Three Bonds* (book).
Sŏ'in	西人	Western(-er) political faction.
Sŏnggyun'gwan	成均館	Royal Confucian Academy.
Sŭngbyŏng	僧軍	Buddhist Army.
Sŭngjŏnwŏn	承傳院	Royal Secretariat.
Sūnzǐ bīngfǎ	孫子兵法	*Art of War* (book).
T'aesa	大祀	State Rituals.
Tangjaeng	黨爭	Factional Conflict after 1575 (*Ŭlhae tangron* 乙亥黨論).
Tan'gun	檀君	Mythical God-King of Korea before Kija.
Tongbang	東方	Eastern Realm: name for Korea's historical region.
Tongguk	東國	Eastern Country: name for Korea's historical region.
Tong'guk t'onggam	東國通鑑	*Comprehensive Mirror of the Eastern Country* (book).

Tong'in	東人	Eastern(-er) political faction.
Ŭibyŏng	義兵	Righteous Army.
Ŭlmyo waebyŏn	乙卯倭變	Japanese uprising in 1555.
Wae	倭	The Japanese or Japanese-based pirates or traders.
Waegwan	倭館	Japanese Trading House in Pusan.
Wang'ŏp	王業	King's royal enterprise.
Wang Kŏn	王建	Founding king of Koryŏ dynasty (r. 918-943).
Xiăoxué (*Sohak*)	小學	*Elementary Learning* (book).
Yangban	兩班	Korean Aristocrat (Military/Literati) Class.
Yejo	禮曹	Ministry of Rites.
Yerak	禮樂	Rituals and Music, akin to culture in general.
Yŏng'nyŏng'jŏn	永寧殿	Hall of Eternal Peace.
Yŏng'ŭijŏng	領議政	Chief State Councilor's Office.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Defining Era of Mid-Chosŏn Korean History

> Magistrates, all! Scholars and commoners (*samin*), all on the roads and byways! Can your loyal hearts forget your sovereign? Rightful duty calls us to die for our country.[1]
>
> Ko Kyŏngmyŏng's 'Open Letter of Exhortation Sent to All Provinces of Korea,' 1592.05.04

> Are you alone not the people of our country? The country faces a great disaster, and since the royal convoy shall arrive here soon what are you saying that you do not think of crossing to Kanghwa Island? Is this not your duty?[2]
>
> Ŏ Hanmyŏng addressing baggage handlers, 1635.12.15

The enthronement of King Sŏnjo 宣祖 (r. 1567-1608) inaugurated an exceptional era for both Chosŏn Korea and East Asia in general. During Sŏnjo's reign, internal debate transformed political culture before both state and social identification came under direct attack from external aggression. The *sarim* faction (*sarimp'a* 士林派) came to prominence, and the most famous neo-Confucian scholars of the dynasty lived and influenced domestic political debate and philosophy during the first part of Sŏnjo's reign.[3] Chosŏn was also part of a vast international order centered on the Ming Empire, and had trading and political

[1] JaHyun Kim Haboush, "Open Letters: Patriotic Exhortations from the Imjin War," in *Epistolary Korea: Letters in Communicative Space of the Chosŏn, 1392-1910*, ed. JaHyun Kim Haboush (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 131.
[2] Ŏ Hanmyŏng, *Kangdo ilgi* 江都日記 (1636.12.15).
[3] The Neo-Confucian philosophers Yi Hwang T'oegye 李滉 退溪 and Yi I Yulgok 李珥 栗谷.

contacts with states and regions across the Asian continent.[4] However, Chosŏn's borders became subject to increasingly dangerous foreign incursions and invasions over a seventy year period until the kingdom was forcibly torn away from the Ming world order in 1637.

Following Sŏnjo's ascent to the throne, Chosŏn suffered attacks from bandits in the north, the flight of Ming refugees into Chosŏn, raids by China-based robbers, and pillaging by Japanese (Wae 倭) pirates in the southern seas. These border incursions were followed by the massive Japanese invasion in 1592 that lasted until 1598. As the Japanese rampaged through large swathes of the country, the armies of the Ming Emperor arrived and remained in Chosŏn for the duration of the conflict. The divisions between the internal domain and external, foreign world dissolved.

Following the war, the court had to rebuild both the physical and ideological realms of the kingdom. Stories and records documenting the Japanese invasions were published and rhetorical loyalty to the Ming Empire dominated discussions.[5] During the reign of Sŏnjo's son, King Kwanghae'gun 光海君 (r. 1608-1623), Chosŏn re-established relations with Japan and fought to balance actual relations with the Ming and the rising Later Jin in the north.[6] In 1623 King Injo 仁祖 (r. 1623-1649) usurped King Kwanghae'gun by deploying several criticisms, including the claim that the former lord did not properly respect the Ming Empire.[7] Be that as it may, Injo's coup did not bring stability to Chosŏn and the kingdom was invaded by the Manchus in both 1627 and 1636. In the final invasion, Injo was forced to submit to the

[4] Full diplomatic relations existed with China, Japan, and the Ryūkyūs. Relations also existed with the groups north of Chosŏn to control the border areas.
[5] Representative books include the *Imjinnok* 壬辰錄 and updated versions of the *Samgang haengsildo* 三綱行實圖. Reverence towards the Ming for support during the Japanese invasions was called *chaejojiŭn* 再造之恩. See Han Myŏnggi, "The inestimable benevolence of saving a country on the brink of ruin: Chosŏn – Ming and Chosŏn Later Jin relations in the seventeenth century" in *The East Asian War, 1592-1598: International Relations, violence and memory*, ed. James B. Lewis (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), 277-293.
[6] See Seung B. Kye, "In the Shadow of the Father: Court Opposition and the Reign of King Kwanghae in early Seventeenth-Century Chosŏn Korea" (PhD diss., University of Washington, 2006), 152-218.
[7] See Kye, "In the Shadow of the Father", and Han Myŏnggi, *Pyŏngja horan 1* (Seoul: P'urŭn yŏksa, 2015).

Qing Emperor Hong Taiji on his hands and knees. As a tributary state of the Qing Empire, Chosŏn first watched, and then participated in the ultimate destruction of the Ming.

These invasions were turning points in Chosŏn history, and their importance in recasting culture, politics, literature, and society until the present day cannot be understated.[8] However, there is a dearth of information in both Korean and foreign scholarship regarding Chosŏn political thought and common socio-political identity during the invasions. For example, there are very few studies on common and uniting socio-political identity existing in Chosŏn before and during these wars. Nor are there many studies into whether the Chosŏn peoples' perspectives on Chosŏn society altered due to foreigners invading and residing in the country. The extraction, isolation, and reinvestigation of socio-political identity are crucial for researchers attempting to analyse Chosŏn society. A few Korean and foreign-based scholars have attempted to address this paucity of knowledge, but often previous scholarship has relied too heavily on modern theories of nationality and group consciousness in addressing Chosŏn's particular circumstances. Without considering and defining common socio-political identities in the Chosŏn kingdom, researchers continue to transfer modern values and interpretations into the past and thereby corrupt the intended meaning.

The Imjin War has received considerably more scholarly interest than the Manchu Invasions. The majority of studies on the Japanese invasions regarding socio-political identity have been dominated by arguments over the presence of a nation or proto-nation in Chosŏn resulting from the creation of a nationwide national consciousness or ethnic identification formed by an adverse experience.[9] The majority of research accorded to the Manchu

[8] For examples of the changes in culture, see Mark A. Peterson, *Korean Adoption and Inheritance: Case Studies in the Creation of a Classic Neo-Confucian Society* (Ithaca: Cornell University East Asia Program, 1996), and Michael Pettid, "Fashioning womanly Confucian virtue: the woman in post-war literary discourse," in *The East Asian War, 1592-1598* (2015), 357-377. Peterson documents the decline of female inheritance following the Imjin War, and Pettid writes on the notion of *yŏllyŏ* 烈女 used to construct an image of the virtuous woman that worked to subordinate women to men in postwar society, 372.

[9] This is either called 'Negative ethnic identification' or 'Negative ethnicity'. These studies will be addressed

Invasions has focused on politics and international relations. There is little research on domestic identity during the short conflicts and even fewer studies that analyse socio-political identity in Chosŏn from before the Imjin War through the Manchu Invasions.

The purpose of this thesis is to understand how the Chosŏn literati and government comprehended and constructed 'common socio-political identity' between the years 1567 and 1637, specifically during the three foreign invasions in 1592 to 1598, 1627, and 1636 to 1637. The thesis uses government records and the diaries of the literati to understand how recognized subjects and residents of the Chosŏn kingdom were conceived and portrayed. 'Subjects and residents' includes individuals in the central government, leading political theorists, the nobility, free classes, bound classes, and documented foreigners residing in Chosŏn. 'Common' refers to the encompassing nature of an identity that transcends apparent cultural divisions (such as class or profession). 'Socio-political identity' is itself a combination of two different concepts: social and political. It refers to a social identity that arises from the knowledge of a person's membership in a social group.[10] This can include positive social in-group identity and negative out-group identity. The definition also includes aspects of political identity, which concerns affiliation to a political group or state.[11] Socio-political identity can contain elements of collective identity, social identity, or even elements of a Chosŏn-period political theorist's versions of nationalism, in regard to mutual political identification. But instead of proving or disproving select criteria, I am searching for the documented forms of social and political knowledge that created common socio-political identifications, and how these identifications existed and changed during the wars. I will

later in this chapter.

[10] Ronald L. Jackson and Michael A. Hogg, *Encyclopedia of Identity 1* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2010). This definition is based on the works of Henri Tajfel and John Turner in their papers on social identity theory. See Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C., "An integrative theory of intergroup conflict," in *The social psychology of intergroup relations*, ed. W. G. Austin & S. Worchel (Monterey: Brooks, 1979).

[11] Edited by Ronald L. Jackson II, *Encyclopedia of Identity 2* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications inc., 2010), 587-590.

examine the language and terms used to describe identities in an effort to help us understand the cultural context[12] of the mid-Chosŏn which will assist us in overcoming our awkward modern understandings of complicated, contextualised terms.

The study begins by examining socio-political identity from 1567: the start of Sŏnjo's reign that preceded many of the minor and major invasions later in the century. In order to understand socio-political identity during the wars, it is vital to understand socio-political identity before the conflicts began. In short, the entire thesis is a diachronic examination of particular terms as signs of concepts that are examined in synchronic contexts over a period of time which encompasses the Imjin War and the Manchu Invasions: before the Imjin War; during the Imjin War; after the Imjin War; the First Manchu Invasion; after the First Manchu Invasion; and the Second Manchu Invasion. The study is structured chronologically, rather than by typology or record, in order to analyse and understand the structure and change of socio-political identity and the effect of one inherited meaning upon later experiences and expressions.

The Chosŏn literati's knowledge of their society is related to their knowledge of culture. In this thesis, culture is defined as non-genetically transmitted information, shared within a population of individuals, and maintained across some generations over a period of time.[13] In order to locate an encompassing identity during the Chosŏn dynasty, I focus on examples of Chosŏn's state functions, the role of the king and government, the concept of the 'people', uses of culture, language, history, and understanding of the outside world to form the bases of common socio-political identity,[14] which were consistently used in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Ethnic or civic identities can be included as well, but discussion on

[12] The idea of the cultural context in this thesis is modeled on Gadamer's concept of *bildung*, which will be discussed later in this chapter.
[13] Jackson II, ed., *Encyclopedia of Identity 1* (2010), 180-185.
[14] Similar Studies exist in Korean, but mainly focus their research on the *Chosŏn wangjo sillok*. Son Aeri, "Sipch'il segi Chosŏn kwallyo chisikch'ung ŭi 'kuk' kwannyŏm yŏn'gu" (PhD diss., Korea University, 2010).

these concepts will be elaborated in further chapters as I contextualize key, signifying terms in a synchronic environment.

The vast majority of the surviving texts from this period were written by the government and the aristocracy (*yangban* 兩班). Yet in spite of this limitation, I argue that notions of common socio-political identity can be understood through balancing official government records and *yangban*-authored diaries. The official version and interpretation of socio-political identity recorded in the *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* 朝鮮王朝實錄 (hereafter the *sillok*) is not a uniform, linear argument, but rather a set of competing identities from political theorists and factions. Contemporary considerations also changed the government's views of socio-political identity, and government views were promulgated to the people. At least one Korea-based scholar has already looked at *sillok* records during wartime to identify competing identities in order to come to a more balanced perspective on Chosŏn society.[15]

Interpretation of the government-sanctioned socio-political identity and individual socio-political identity is largely limited, not by choice but by necessity, to *yangban* diaries written before and during the conflicts. Although the *yangban* were the Chosŏn society's elite with special privileges bestowed upon them, there were social and political divisions among members of the *yangban*, and because of these divisions there are a variety of divergent opinions and experiences. The era before the Japanese invasion witnessed an efflorescence of diary writing, and diary writing continued after 1598, when the Japanese left. There are several famous diaries from the interwar period and during the short, albeit important Manchu Invasions. However, this thesis will not investigate the diaries written by Korean

[15] Min Tŏkki, "Imjin Waerangi Chŏng Kyŏng'un ŭi Kodae illok esŏ ponŭn arae put'ŏ mun'gyŏn chŏngbo: *Sillok* ŭi kwallyŏn chŏngbo wa ŭi pigyo rŭl chungsim ŭro", *Han-il kwangyesa yŏn'gu* 45 (2013): 141-171.

captives taken to Japan, as those journals require an entirely different analysis from the diaries written in Korea.[16]

Yangban diaries also mention their interactions with a number of people of different social status, and therefore can be used to suggest both *yangban's* and non-*yangban's* perspectives on Chosŏn society and socio-political identity. The *yangban* view is the dominant perspective in extant documents, but they commented on the commoners they met and on the reactions of the people around them—commoners, *nobi* 奴婢 (indentured class), and others. In other words, we can glimpse the broader society beyond the *yangban* status group.

At any one time there were a multitude of competing ideas concerning the constituent elements of socio-political identity, even within the government, during these periods of crisis brought about by foreign invaders. This was particularly true of political identification. There were also overlapping terms used by the participants in each conflict, and it is clear that historical, temporal, and political symbols that carried some ideas of continuity were used to create common socio-political identity. However, in pre-modern Korea, there was no single concept that referred to a particular socio-political identity, but rather a set of overlapping signifiers that, taken as a whole, indicated a strong and widely recognized socio-political identity. There also appears to have been a spectrum of identities ranging between the *mortal* core of the country, such as the king, and the *immortal* core of society, such as peninsular history. The main argument of this thesis is that socio-political interpretation in Chosŏn fluctuated between the philosophical boundaries of certain core mortal and immortal components.

[16] Studies of diaries written by Korean captives during the Imjin War include 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), and J. Marshall Craig, "Visions of China, Korea, and Japan in the East Asian War, 1592-1598" (PhD diss., University of Oxford, 2015).

In addition, there were both official and individual interpretations of socio-political identity in Chosŏn. Official interpretations were embodied in laws, rights, rituals, and other texts. Official interpretations could also change over time depending on the appropriate socio-political identity favoured by the court. Each person could also rely on basic principles and common understandings propagated by the government, literature, and custom, but at the same time have their own unique perspective on certain aspects of socio-political identification.

In general, we might say that socio-political identities existed in an easily permeable cloud of meanings and definitions deriving from a great variety of sources. Individuals and government selected among a wide range of common definitions or devised specific meanings for their own purposes. Cultural inheritance and current society determined the diversity of socio-political expression, yet there had to have been some agreement, and boundaries, to each individual's interpretation. This thesis will look for these multiple dimensions and meanings of common socio-political identity that transformed to fit the circumstances of Chosŏn between 1567 and 1637.

The thesis contributes to multiple fields in Korean history and identity theory. It develops the overlooked history of socio-political identity in Chosŏn; it searches for divergent views on mutual identification; it is a history of the most turbulent period in Chosŏn history, when the survival of the kingdom was at stake; and it looks at the development and use of the individual diary in Chosŏn. In regard to theory, the thesis shows the limitations of using modern theories to explain historical socio-political identity in a strong bureaucratic state with a commonly recognized literary, political, and historical inheritance. Socio-political identity is a contentious issue due to its close resemblance to nationalism and nationalistic characteristics. Both describe a form of political identity, but nationalism is often presented as an exclusively modern phenomenon. Although I will refer to

nationalist theories and their development, instead of using popular and over-cited nationalist criteria, I will look at socio-political identity both in its nebulous cultural context and in a mortal – immortal spectrum, which is the theoretical framework I aim to develop throughout the thesis.

Finally, the years of the invasions are of particular importance for several reasons. First, new political theories and faction identity were developing early in Sŏnjo's reign that changed how people viewed politics and the country. Second, the variety and quantity of individually recorded diaries from this era see a massive increase, and as a result we are able to examine those times from a multitude of perspectives. Third, and most important, Chosŏn was attacked multiple times by large groups of bandits from the north, raided by pirates in the south, and invaded by Japan's united forces and the Qing armies. These extraneous incursions, coupled with internal political dynamics, significantly modified the structure of socio-political identity. The purpose of this thesis is to discover the forms of socio-political identity that existed prior to and during the conflicts and thereby explain the political landscape of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

1.2 Naming the Conflicts

My thesis rangers over Korean history from 1567 to 1637, but it will primarily focus on the Chosŏn socio-political identity during the Imjin waeran 壬辰倭亂 (1592-1598), the Chŏngmyo horan 丁卯胡亂 (1627), and the Pyŏngja horan 丙子胡亂 (1636). As with all wars, the names for the conflicts differ depending on the participants, language, and author. The Imjin waeran denotes the year of the first Japanese invasion. Modern Korean scholars often use this title to refer to the first invasion in 1592 and the entire conflict until 1598. Yet some scholars will refer to the Second Japanese Invasion, the Chŏng'yu chaeran 丁酉再亂 (the reinvasion of the *Chŏng'yu* year in 1597), as a specific invasion distinct from the first

invasion in 1592. In Japanese, the Imjin waeran is called the *Bunroku Keichō no Eki* 文祿慶長の役 (The Campaigns of the Bunroku and Keichō' - reign years of Emperor Go Yōzei), and in Chinese *Wànlì Cháoxiǎn zhī Yì* 萬曆朝鮮之役 (The 'Wanli Emperor's Chosŏn Campaign) among many other titles. In the English language, the conflict has either been referred to as the 'Imjin waeran', the 'Imjin War', the 'Japanese Invasions (of Korea)', or the 'East Asian War of 1592-1598'. Whatever the preferred name, all of these titles refer to the same conflict, or part of it. This is similar to the Chŏngmyo horan and Pyŏngja horan, which have simply been called the 'chŏngmyo horan', the 'First Manchu Invasion', the 'pyŏngja horan', the 'Second Manchu Invasion' or both invasions simply as the 'Manchu Invasions' in English. Except for a few select cases, I will uniformly refer to the conflict from 1592 to 1598 as the Imjin War. I will refer to the 1627 conflict as the First Manchu Invasion, and the 1636-1637 conflict as the Second Manchu Invasion, and both conflicts in 1627 and 1636 as the Manchu Invasions.

1.3 The Era of Foreign Invasion and Conquest

In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the Chosŏn state endured multiple hostile incursions and foreign invasions by its two principal regional adversaries: the Wae 倭, who sailed from the Japanese archipelago and whose government had recently been united after more than a century of civil war, and the peoples of the northern frontier in present Manchuria and Manchurian Russia (including the Ho 胡), who, after consolidating into a single political state, invaded their southern neighbor. Chosŏn had experience with both raids originating from the northern borders and piracy from the Japanese archipelago for hundreds of years. However, the incursions by the Wae 倭 and northern peoples during

Sŏnjo's reign continually increased until the Japanese invaded in 1592. Even after the Wae 倭 invaded, the Chosŏn government still feared an invasion from the north.[17]

In 1592, following a decade of incursions, threats, and misunderstood diplomatic missions, Japanese forces numbering two hundred thousand landed in Pusan.[18] The stated objective of the forces commanded by the *taikō* Toyotomi Hideyoshi, Japan's supreme leader, was to conquer the Ming and use Chosŏn as the road to the Chinese empire,[19] but whether or not this was Hideyoshi's true objective for the war is still a matter of considerable debate.[20] Nevertheless, after the initial invasions, the main Chosŏn army disintegrated, and independent armies of civilians called 'righteous armies' (*ŭibyŏng* 義兵) and 'monk armies' (*sŭngbyŏng* 僧軍) rose up to counter the foreign threat.[21] In spite of these attempts to stop the Japanese, the enemy swept through the peninsula at such a rapid speed that the Ming Court thought the Chosŏn government was aiding the Japanese and became suspicious of their ally in the East.[22] The only success came at sea, where elements of the Chosŏn navy held the line and prevented the Japanese from entering the waters around Chŏlla province.[23]

King Sŏnjo fled north to Ŭiju on the Yalu River (K. *Amnok*), where he sent envoys to the Ming court requesting military aid.[24] The king's departure from the capital led to a popular negative perception of the king, and this perception weakened the government's

[17] Min Dŏkki, "Imjin waerangi Chosŏn ŭi pukbang yŏjinjon e taehan wigiŭisik gwa taeŭng ch'eak," *Han-il kwangyesa yŏngu* 34 (2009.12): 179-218.
[18] See Saeki Kōji, "Japanese-Korean and Korean-Japanese Relations in the Sixteenth Century," in *The East Asian War, 1592-1598* (2015), 11-21.
[19] The report on the communication delivered by the Japanese envoy to the Chosŏn court recorded on 1591.10.24 reads, 'It is (Japan's) intention to attack the great Ming, and have requested that our country (*a'guk* 我國) guide them along our roads (to the Ming)' – *Sŏnjo sillok* 25:13b-14a.
[20] See Kitajima Manji, "The Imjin Waeran: Contrasting the first and second invasions of Korea," in *The East Asian War, 1592-1598* (2015), 73-92.
[21] Nukii Masayuki, "Righteous army activity in the Imjin War," in *The East Asian War, 1592-1598* (2015), 141-162.
[22] Nam-lin Hur, "The celestial warriors: Ming military aid and abuse during the Korean War, 1592-8," in *The East Asian War, 1592-1598* (2015), 236-255.
[23] More specifically, the Left Chŏlla Fleet commanded by Yi Sunsin. See Yi, Min'ung. "The role of the Chosŏn navy and major naval battles during the Imjin Waeran," in *The East Asian War, 1592-1598* (2015), 120-140.
[24] See James Lewis, "International relations and the Imjin War," in *The East Asian War, 1592-1598* (2015), 256-273.

control over the people. Government *nobi* 奴婢 took the opportunity to burn the palace and *nobi* registries before the Japanese even entered the city. A Ming relief force arrived in late 1592 and attacked the Japanese in P'yŏngyang, but met with fierce resistance, and was never able to take the city by force.[25] In spite of these transient victories, the Japanese army was compelled to retreat to the southern coast of the Korean peninsula due to the threat of increased Ming military reinforcements,[26] military defeat in the southern seas, and supply lines constantly harassed by regular and irregular forces. After the Japanese retreat from P'yŏngyang and the Ming defeat outside the town of Pyŏchegwan, the Japanese and Chinese decided to wage a political battle instead of a military one, and envoys from the Wanli Emperor and Hideyoshi worked for 'peace' through duplicitous negotiators for over four years.[27]

The Chosŏn government and people were furious at the prospect of a negotiated peace and the continued occupation of the southern coastline. During the intervening years, the population of South Kyŏngsang province were subjugated, enslaved, and deported to Japan, and the Chosŏn people and government knew of these developments.[28] The Chinese army stationed throughout the peninsula demanded untenable provisions (food and supplies) from the Chosŏn government. The Ming army's lack of proper provisions and unchecked activity often resulted in bands of Chinese soldiers pillaging the Chosŏn people they were meant to protect.[29]

In 1597, the Japanese called off negotiations and launched the Second Japanese Invasion (*Chŏng'yu chaeran* 丁酉再亂) focusing on the southern half of the Korean

[25] Hur, "The celestial warriors" (2015), 239.
[26] Harriet T. Zurndorfer, "Wanli China versus Hideyoshi's Japan: Rethinking China's involvement in the Imjin Waeran," in *The East Asian War, 1592-1598* (2015), 197-235.
[27] See Kenneth R. Robinson, "Violence, trade and Impostors in Korean-Japanese Relations, 1510-1609," in *The East Asian War, 1592-1598* (2015), 42-69.
[28] See Jinju Museum, *Imjin Waeran Chosŏnin p'oro ŭi kiŏk* (Jinju: The National Museum of Jinju, 2010).
[29] Hur, "The celestial warriors" (2015), 246-247.

peninsula. In spite of the reinforcements from Japan and time to prepare, the invasion was a failure, and the Japanese were unable to decisively defeat the combined Chosŏn-Ming army and navy. However, the Chosŏn people in the south of the peninsula suffered more extensively than at any other time during the war due to the severity of the Japanese armies' excessive violence.[30] After the death of Hideyoshi in 1597, the Japanese generals lost their motivation to fight a seemingly unending war, and desired to return to Japan to stake their claims on their former lord's domain. After only one year of fighting, the armies from Japan returned to their home islands, never to return.

In the decades prior to, and following, the retreat of the Japanese and Ming forces, the northern peoples were beginning to consolidate into a single state. This led to increased attacks on the Ming Empire and threats directed against Chosŏn in the early seventeenth century. Following Sŏnjo's death in 1607, King Kwanghae'gun of Chosŏn is generally thought to have recognized the immediacy of the threat presented by the northern populations and he began to take measures to placate the 'barbarian chiefs'.[31] In 1609, Kwanghae'gun reestablished direct relations with Japan and began to accept Chosŏn war refugees from Japan back to Chosŏn, perhaps in an effort to gain information about their regional nemesis.[32] Yet King Kwanghae'gun came under increasing pressure from both domestic politics, concerning his own legitimacy, and in international relations, when the communities consolidated further and declared the creation of the Later Jin Dynasty.[33]

In spite of his seemingly careful balancing of international relations, King Kwanghae'gun was overthrown by the 'Restoration of Injo' (*Injo panjŏng* 仁祖反正), a coup d'état that put King Injo on the throne in 1623. Arguing that Kwanghae'gun was an illegitimate heir and that he had abandoned the Ming Empire for the 'barbarians', King Injo

[30] See Kitajima, "The Imjin Waeran" (2015), 83-84.
[31] Carter J. Eckert et al., *Korea New and Old: A History* (Seoul: Ilchokak Publishers, 2002), 149.
[32] Robinson, "Violence, trade, and imposters" (2015), 60-61.
[33] Kye, "In the Shadow of the Father" (2006), 153-157.

and the Western faction favored increasing rhetorical support for the Ming Empire.[34] In the midst of the turbulent international environment and doubts over King Injo's legitimacy, Injo used the rationale that Chosŏn 'felt indebted to the Ming for the military assistance that they had received during the Japanese invasion',[35] to add legitimacy to his claim as sovereign.[36] Be that as it may, the new king retained many of the policies adopted by his predecessor and did not seek outright conflict with the Later Jin.[37]

Injo was immediately beset by political strife that resulted in an attempted coup d'état. The coup's leader Yi Kwal 李适 was able to take the Chosŏn capital Hansŏng but was eventually defeated by the regular army.[38] Yet some of the instigators of the failed coup were reported to have escaped and fled to the Later Jin court in 1624 where they told the Later Jin Khan, Hong Taiji, that Chosŏn posed a serious threat to his kingdom.[39] Whether or not this event, combined with the fact that Chosŏn continued to support the Ming Empire by harboring Ming troops in Chosŏn territory for use against the Later Jin, contributed to the First Manchu Invasion of 1627 is still debatable.[40] Nonetheless, a short conflict occurred and the Later Jin army nearly entered Hansŏng. The month-long conflict was concluded by a peace treaty. Both sides agreed to not interfere in each other's domains, for Chosŏn to abandon the Ming reign title, and for Chosŏn's to be designated as a 'brotherly country' (*hyŏngje chi guk* 兄弟之國)[41] to the Later Jin.[42] Relations continued to be tense between Chosŏn and the Later Jin as a faction hostile to the 'barbarians' still retained power at the Chosŏn court.

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[34] Eckert, *Korea* (2002), 149.
[35] 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* 62:2 (2003): 417.
[36] Han, "The inestimable benevolence" (2015), 277-293.
[37] See Han Myŏnggi, *Chŏngmyo horan pyŏngja horan gwa tongasia* (Seoul: Purŭnyŏksa, 2009), 25-48.
[38] Eckert, *Korea* (2002), 149.
[39] Eckert, *Korea* (2002), 149-150.
[40] See Han, *Chŏngmyo* (2009), 19-23.
[41] The Later Jin taking the role of 'older brother, with Chosŏn taking the role of the 'younger sibling'.
[42] Eckert, *Korea* (2002), 150.

Relations again broke down at the end of 1636 when Chosŏn was alleged to have insulted Hong Taiji by not sending a congratulatory envoy to celebrate his elevation to Emperorship and the renaming of the Later Jin to the Qing Empire.[43] In the twelfth month of 1636, the Qing Emperor personally invaded Korea with around one hundred and forty thousand troops and quickly made his way to Hansŏng.[44] This was the beginning of the Second Manchu Invasion, yet the reasons for Hong Taiji's invasion and personal oversight of the conflict are still being debated.[45] In two months, Qing forces had completely overrun Chosŏn's defenses, and King Injo was forced to retreat to a fortress on Namhan Mountain when his refuge on Kanghwa Island was cut off. After two months of resistance, Injo exited the castle and humiliatingly bowed nine times as he approached the Qing Emperor. No longer was Chosŏn a brother country to the Qing, but was now a mere vassal state.[46]

The war concluded with King Injo and his new faction utterly defeated, the Crown Prince returning with the Qing army as a hostage to their capital,[47] and Chosŏn becoming an official vassal of the Qing Empire. Chosŏn was later requested to send military aid and promptly dispatched troops to invade and attack the Ming army alongside Qing forces.[48] The Ming dynasty came to an end in the north when Beijing fell to the Qing in 1644, and the socio-political order of the Ming world-order became a venerated memory for the Chosŏn elite. At the end of forty years of violence, the barbarians controlled nearly all the known world.

[43] Eckert, *Korea* (2002), 150.
[44] Han, *Pyŏngja* (2013), 99.
[45] Han, *Pyŏngja* (2013), 87-106.
[46] See the peace terms given by the Qing Empire in the *Injo sillok* 34:20a–21a (1637.01.28).
[47] Crown Prince Sohyŏ recorded his journey and life in the Qing Empire in the *Simyang ilgi* 瀋陽日記.
[48] Han, *Pyŏngja* (2013), 335.

1.4 Socio-Political Identity in Chosŏn Korea

1.4.1 Western Scholarship

The Imjin War was one of the most significant events in Northeast Asian history, both in terms of scale and scope, and it was not until the end of the nineteenth century that these three states were all again involved in military conflict. But for Korea it represented one of the greatest threats to the inhabitants and the government since the Mongol invasions, and the entire society, from king to commoner, was affected by the crisis. Thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, were forced to become refugees and to flee the oncoming Japanese army. The middle classes, commoners, monks, and even *nobi* 奴婢 were conscripted into the army, navy, and corvée labor units to assist the Chosŏn and Ming forces, and *yangban* joined the Righteous Armies who often led forces against the Japanese.[49] Thousands more people were taken to Japan as captives and slaves for technology-transfer and labor (e.g., production of pottery and consultation on Confucian governance).[50]

There is a great quantity of books available on the Imjin War and Manchu Invasions, primarily in Korean, Japanese, and Chinese. Even the Confucian scholar Chŏng Yakyŏng Tasan 丁若鏞 茶山 wrote on both conflicts in 1789,[51] and there were eulogies written to the fallen of the conflicts for decades following the wars.[52] In chapters that follow, I will primarily focus on personal diaries and government documents, but here, I would like to offer comments on secondary studies in English and English translations of primary sources. The

[49] The most famous general being the leader Kwak Chaeu 郭再祐.
[50] See the recently translated *A Korean War Captive in Japan, 1597-1600: The Writings of Kang Hang* (2013), and Yonetani Hitoshi (米谷均), "Sarojaphin chosŏnin tŭl: Chŏnhu chosŏn'in p'oro songhwan e taehayŏ," in *Imjinwaeran gwa tongasia samgukjŏnjeang*, ed. Chŏng Tuhŭi and Yi Kyŏngsun (Seoul: Hyumŏnisŭt'ŭ, 2007; 2010), 87-111.
[51] Chŏng Yakyong Tasan 丁若鏞 茶山, *Imjin waeran pyŏngja horan*, trans. Chŏng Haeryŏm (Seoul: Hyŏndae silhaksa, 2001).
[52] See JaHyun Kim Haboush, "Constructing the Center: The Ritual Controversy and the Search for a New Identity in Seventeenth Century Korea," in *Culture and State in Late Chosŏn Korea*, ed. JaHyun Kim Haboush and Martina Deuchler (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 46-90.

comments that follow immediately below will only address current secondary source materials written in the past few decades.[53]

There has been a sharp increase in the number of books covering the Imjin War in the English language over the past fifteen years. As of this writing, four books specifically examining the Imjin War have been published in English.[54] Additional texts written during the war were translated into English from the 1970s on, but an increasingly large number of compiled and partial translations, theses, and articles have also been published in English over the last decade.[55] Recent theses and articles will be discussed in more depth in the relevant subsequent chapters.

Yet, in spite of this increase in the quantity of works, many have primarily focused on the development of the war, international relations, peace talks, and weaponry. Much less attention has been paid to the surviving written records concerning the socio-political identity of Chosŏn *yangban* and the Chosŏn state during these wars. Kenneth Swope, Samuel Hawley, and Stephen Turnbull focus on the war from the perspectives of the Chinese, Koreans, and Japanese respectively. Among the authors, Swope and Hawley do mention and translate some passages from a few select Chosŏn diaries in which they look at daily life and thoughts from Chosŏn perspectives. Nevertheless, the books were written as a purpose to understand a general history of the conflict from the Ming or Chosŏn government's perspective. Divergent

[53] See Haboush "Dead Bodies" (2003), 415-442

[54] Stephen Turnbull, *The Samurai Invasions of Korea: 1592-1598* (Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing, 2002: 2008); Samuel Hawley's *The Imjin War* (The Royal Asiatic Society and The Institute of East Asian Studies: Seoul and Berkeley, 2005); Kenneth M. Swope's *A Dragon's Head and a Serpent's Tail: Ming China and the First Great East Asian War 1592-1598* (University of Oklahoma Press: Norman, 2009); and James B. Lewis' (editor) *The East Asian War, 1592-1598: International relations, violence, and memory* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015).

[55] The only full-length book translation in English until the 2000s was Yi Sunsin, *Nanjung Ilgi: War Diary of Admiral Yi Sun-sin*, trans. Ha Taehung (Ha T'aehŭng) and ed. by Sohn Powkey (Son Pogi) (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1977). Other studies will appear in the text and the footnotes.

national outlooks on the Imjin War were combined in Lewis's edited volume *The East Asian War*, but there is no chapter devoted to socio-political identity in Chosŏn.[56]

Be that as it may, the motivations of Chosŏn people taking up arms and fighting the Japanese have been seen as exhibiting patriotic sympathies. Hawley states that examples of local resistance in the Imjin War 'were all driven by a deep sense of patriotism, a desire to protect their families, their land, and their king, and an all-consuming hatred of the Japanese'.[57] Swope mentions that monk soldiers were also 'motivated by patriotism and – perhaps more importantly – by the desire to improve their social position'.[58] Byonghyon Choi also claims in his translation of the *Chingbirok* 懲毖錄 [*Book of Corrections*] that Yu Sŏngnyong, Prime Minister of Chosŏn during the Imjin War, saw General Yi Sunsin as, 'not only a true patriot but also a great suffering hero who accepted his destiny without complaint despite how unjust it may have been',[59] and that Yi's, 'loyalty and patriotism seem to be closely related to the special concerns he showed to the common people as well as to their armies, the Righteous Volunteer Armies'.[60] Apart from these few quotes and references, the content and form of socio-political identity during this invasion typically remain unaddressed. The identity of the Chosŏn people is assumed rather than debated.

There are currently no books specifically devoted to the Manchu Invasions in the English language, and very few theses and articles on the subject. The Manchu attacks are said to have 'left profound scars on the national psyche [of Chosŏn]'.[61] Amidst the spectre and reality of a foreign 'barbarian' conquest, and the collapse of the international 'civilized'

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[56] Yi Min'ung does mention the common suffering of the people. See Yi Min'ung, "The role of the Chosŏn navy" (2015), 120-140. Nukii Masayuki also mentions that the Righteous Armies were created to 'defend king and country' (143) but he does not look at socio-political identity beyond the Righteous Armies. See Nukii Masayuki, "Righteous army activity" (2015), 141-162.
[57] Hawley, *The Imjin War* (2005), 270.
[58] Swope, *A Dragon's Head* (2009), 108.
[59] Yu Sŏngnyong, *The Book of Corrections: Reflections on the National Crisis during the Japanese Invasion of Korea 1592-1598*, trans. Byonghyon Choi (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, 2002), 13.
[60] Yu, *Book* (2002), 8.
[61] Haboush, "Constructing the Center" (1999), 87.

order, Chosŏn political identity is often said to have acquired a new sense of purpose as the last bastion of (Confucian) civilization as Lesser China (*sohwa* 小華).[62] Although the physical damage was by no means comparable to the Japanese invasions,

> …the northwest region of Korea through which the Manchus had passed was ravaged by plunder and killing, and the smoldering enmity this aroused was fanned by Korea's feelings of cultural superiority to give rise to an intense hostility towards the [Qing].[63]

Although Eckert and Haboush make it clear that a form of negative identification occurred, they provide no exposition of the form and breadth of common socio-political identity in Chosŏn at the time. The authors mention that the Chosŏn kingdom was united by a common hatred of the enemy, but they do not explain whether different social classes and political groups understood national identity as containing differing values.

This is not to say that there has not been any research attempted on the socio-political identity of the Chosŏn people in English language scholarship. Martina Deuchler argues that although there were debates in Chosŏn concerning the full adoption of Ming-styled Confucian principles and culture, many political elites in Chosŏn recognized Chosŏn's own national consciousness, separate history, and its own version of social organization.[64] Deuchler also writes that Chosŏn asserted 'a distinct regional identity [that] came to be expressed in the concept of *kuksok* [國俗], "national practice", which meant in essence that Korea had developed its own version of social organization'[65] that was independent of, and different from, that of Ming China. But Deuchler is referring to a broader sense of nation, rather than the more developed and limited theoretical meaning. In addition, James Lewis has researched the transfer of knowledge, trade, and the interactions of two different socio-

[62] Haboush, "Constructing the Center" (1999), 87.
[63] Eckert, *Korea* (1990), 153.
[64] Martina Deuchler, *The Confucian Transformation of Korea: A Study of Society and Ideology* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 123-125.
[65] Deuchler, *Confucian* (1992), 124-125.

political identities in the Pusan Waegwan 倭館,[66] while Adam Bohnet has looked at the boundaries of identity between Chosŏn subjects and the submitting foreigners from the north (*hyanghwa'in* 向化人).[67] But in regard to common socio-political identity, three scholars in particular have written extensively on such identities on the Korean peninsula.

Remco Breuker makes the argument that the even older peninsular polity of Koryŏ 高麗 (918-1392) 'satisfies most if not all criteria that could be demanded from a pre-modern nation'[68] by possessing a named human population, historical territory, a strong sense of common time, a unified economy, administrative and social structures, and a shared public culture based upon religion, common traditions, a vernacular language, and a common focus of worship of the ruler.[69] Breuker's argument is similar to John Goulde's that 'a peninsula-wide Korean self-identification linked to a peninsula-wide national self-identification only appears for the first time in the Koryŏ period' and that Koryŏ created and actively promoted the notion of an ethnic identity.[70] Breuker claims a 'charter state' or 'charter-polity'[71] existed in Koryŏ by analyzing Koryŏ's political structure and government. He argues that an independent Koryŏ identity and community 'developed around the historical notion of the Three Han (*samhan*, 三韓)'[72] and that the Three Han 'fulfilled their role as a charter polity in Koryŏ'.[73] Breuker looks at ideas used to construct state identity in Koryŏ, which include analysing names for the region (*Haedong* 海東, *Tongguk* 東國, and *Tongbang* 東方/東邦),

[66] James B Lewis, *Frontier Contact between Chosŏn Korea and Tokugawa Japan* (London: Routledge, 2003).
[67] Adam Bohnet, "Migrant and Border Subjects in Late Chosŏn Korea" (PhD diss. U of Toronto, 2008).
[68] Remco E. Breuker, *Establishing a Pluralist Society in Medieval Korea, 918-1170: History, Ideology, and Identity in the Koryŏ Dynasty* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 1. Breuker even goes on to claim that 'Koryŏ saw itself as the successor to and the embodiment of the *samhan* …', 131.
[69] Breuker, *Establishing* (2010), 19. This is the criteria used by Anthony Smith for his definition of *ethnie*. See, Anthony Smith, "The Resurgence of Nationalism? Myth and Memory in the Renewal of Nations," *The British Journal of Sociology* 47:4 (1996): 575-598.
[70] John Goulde, "Tracing the Historical and Cultural Roots of Korean Ethnonationalism" *Acta Koreana* 2 (1999): 38-39.
[71] Victor Lieberman, *Strange Parallels: South Asia in Global Context, c 800 – 1800: Volume one, Integration on the Mainland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 23.
[72] Breuker, *Establishing* (2010), 19.
[73] Breuker, *Establishing* (2010), 17.

mythical founding figures (Kija 箕子 and Tan'gun 檀君), the king (*wang* 王 or *t'aeja* 太子) and his state rituals (*t'aesa* 大祀),[74] and Koryŏ's connections to and contact with the non-Koryŏ world.

Breuker focuses on the official socio-political identity in order to understand the Koryŏ state's desired identity. To do this, Breuker utilizes ideas developed by the theorist Anthony Smith and the historian Victor Lieberman. Lieberman uses his own theoretical scheme to interpret historic Japanese and Burmese polities and claims that there was an 'embryonic sense… of "national" community'[75] existing within the individual countries of East Asia during the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries. With the active promotion of Buddhism in Japan by the authorities, there was a 'vertical diffusion of attitudes and practices from aristocrats to warriors to clerks, merchants, and other commoners'.[76] Proliferation of common values and views was possible, he claims, with the rise of literacy and core centres of education in Japan.

Scholarship closer to the Imjin War also discusses similar socio-political traits. John Duncan writes that an enduring proto-national identity existed in Korea during the Chosŏn dynasty, even as early as the time of the Japanese and Manchu invasions. Duncan points out that national or cultural influence had a powerful effect on the people, particularly during the Chosŏn dynasty from the systemisation and regulation set by the state.[77] Using the idea of the *proto-nation*, Duncan concludes that a 'cultural basis for unity' could have 'created a homogeneous collectivity with a sense of shared identity much earlier than happened in the

[74] Breuker, *Establishing* (2010), 132.
[75] Victor Lieberman, "Transcending East-West Dichotomies: State and Culture Formation in Six Ostensibly Disparate Areas," *Modern Asian Studies* 31 (1997): 483.
[76] Lieberman, "Transcending" (1997), 483.
[77] John B. Duncan, "Imjin waeran ŭi kiŏk gwa minjok ŭisik hyŏngsŏng: <Imjinnok> tŭng mingan chŏnsŭng e nat'anan minjung ŭi minjok ŭisik," in *Imjinwaeran gwa tongasia samgukjŏnjeang*, ed. Chŏng Tuhŭi and Yi Kyŏngsun (Seoul: Hyumŏnisŭt'ŭ, 2007; 2010), 152.

countries of Western Europe that provide the model for "Modernist" scholarship'.[78] Duncan argues that a common language (*idu* 吏讀),[79] negative-ethnicity resulting from the Khitan Invasions (in the Koryŏ dynasty) and the Imjin War (Chosŏn) produced 'some sense of shared identity and patriotic sentiment among the common people of Korea by the seventeenth century, if not earlier'.[80] Although Duncan argues that the idea of ethnicity or 'shared blood' was not important to the Chosŏn state, he states that 'Confucian rituals and the inculcation of Confucian moral values did contribute to the creation of a broad cultural community that transcended status distinctions in late Chosŏn dynasty Korea'.[81] Duncan even asserts that the 'common people of the Korean peninsula had some sense of belonging to a larger political entity, [which was] the Chosŏn dynasty'.[82] Although the commoners' consciousness is hard to assess, the elite mentioned connections to Tan'gun, who could provide a temporal connection to the Korean nation. In addition, some of the *yangban* may have seen the people as the basis of the country, because they wrote that authority in the country 'resides in the hands of our people'.[83]

Duncan bases his criteria for finding a broad socio-political identity in pre-modern Korea by using both Anthony Smith's and Ernest Gellner's theories, but primarily he uses Eric Hobsbawm's concept of the proto-nation. Hobsbawm's bases the idea of *proto-nationalism* on commonalities in economy, culture, symbols, ethnicity, and (most importantly) language. More specifically, a proto-nation is a state that almost meets all the criteria for nationalism except that proto-nationalism has no relation to a territorial political

[78] John Duncan, "Proto-Nationalism in Premodern Korea," in *Perspectives on Korea*, ed. Sang-Oak Lee and Duk-Soo Park (Sydney: Wild Peony, 1998), 198.
[79] Duncan, "Proto-Nationalism" (1998), 203.
[80] Duncan, "Proto-Nationalism" (1998), 206.
[81] Duncan, "Proto-Nationalism" (1998), 213-214.
[82] Duncan, "Proto-Nationalism" (1998), 214.
[83] Duncan, "Proto-Nationalism" (1998), 216.

organization.[84] Hobsbawm concludes that the nation is a 'modern' construct since older definitions lay emphasis upon ethnic identification, and more modern definitions stress 'political unity and independence'.[85] Hobsbawm argues that before the advent of the modern nation, which was both larger and more complex than its antecedent states, there existed the proto-nation, which lacked a colloquial language that was understood by more than the political elite.[86] Without a common identity to bind the people together, mainly due to their illiteracy, pre-modern identity was segmented, diversified, and lacked a coherent centre to which all people in the nation could relate. Negative ethnicity and identification in response to foreign invasions appeared, but this was 'social and religious, not national'.[87]

Ernest Gellner focuses on the economic strength of the state that gives rise to the nation. For Gellner, a state validates a nation's independence and existence, since the nation-state needs to see itself as a 'universal, perennial and inherently – self-evidently – valid principle'.[88] However, this national society, he argues, was only possible after the appearance of an egalitarian and freely moving society, because a modern nation-state cannot operate a 'system of castes or estates'.[89] A 'pre-modern' agrarian society is 'inegalitarian in its values' and 'reinforces a hierarchical status system'.[90] Historical (pre-modern) national identities were economically stationary and had more internal cultural diversity than present nation-states. Economic transformation into an industrial society created the need for a common cultural and political identity that reflected changes in the economy. Industrialization needed a homogenously educated population that could be used for a number of different purposes.

[84] Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Program, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 47.
[85] Hobsbawm, *Nations* (1992), 18.
[86] Hobsbawm, *Nations* (1992), 60.
[87] Hobsbawm, *Nations* (1992), 75.
[88] Gellner, *Nationalism* (1997), 7.
[89] Gellner, *Nationalism* (1997), 26.
[90] Gellner, *Nationalism* (1997), 20.

This type of general education relied on a strong, centralized nation-state, and created a platform for national identity.

While Gellner argues in support of the modernity of the nation, he briefly mentions that 'ancient navels' of political identification existed in China and Rome. These bureaucratic super-states, he claims, could have 'led to the kind of cultural homogenization required by nationalism',[91] as they were centralized, independent states with a congruent culture. This lack of theoretical certainty regarding the age of national identity is challenged by Duncan in his articles, and he even implies that Chosŏn reached or even surpassed the qualities of a proto-nation. Duncan has even claimed that Chosŏn 'meets the criteria of the modern nation state'.[92]

Nevertheless, using Hobsbawm's and Gellner's own theoretical definitions to understand past and present socio-political identity is extremely problematic. Hobsbawm does not consider the complexity of pre-modern states using socio-political identity to create a separate unified polity. In regard to Gellner, there are still many intra-ethnic and intra-national divisions in the modern world (as was the case in agrarian societies). Examples include India's own caste system, the *burakumin* of Japan, institutionalized racism and sexism in many countries, and ethnic identification utilized in the People's Republic of China. Economics and education could be an aspect of nation building and a strong socio-political identification, but cultural commonalities and shared memories, overlooked by Gellner, could play a more important role in socio-political identification.

Last for consideration is the research made by JaHyun Kim Haboush on both the Imjin War and Manchu Invasions. Haboush argues that a socio-political concept, just like modern nationalism, was created from the nation-wide epistolary space created in the Chosŏn

[91] Gellner, *Nationalism* (1997), 23.
[92] Duncan, "Imjin waeran ŭi kiŏk" (2010), 149.

dynasty. Although different in character from that of the modern nation-state, the epistolary space 'mapped out an imagined communicative space spanning the entire polity'.[93] Royal edicts sent out in vernacular Korean (*han'gŭl*) during the Imjin War are also described as '[evoking] the shared past and shared hopes for the future of Koreans. In this sense, the Korean script symbolizes as well as constructs the ethnolinguistic community'.[94] However, this statement may well be an exaggeration on Haboush's part, as the government only used limited numbers of edicts in *han'gŭl* for a short period of time. After the war ended, the supremacy of the *yangban* and Chinese characters continued.

Haboush also uses the word 'nation' to describe political identity in the Chosŏn state during and following the Second Manchu Invasion. Haboush translates words, such as the 'Entire state' (*kŏguk* 擧國), as 'nation',[95] and this usage is underpinned by her opinion that Confucian practices in Chosŏn contained 'uniquely Korean elements distinct from contemporary Chinese practice'.[96] Haboush operationalises her hypothesis by demonstrating that Chosŏn did indeed have a mechanism whereby the kings could send out messages to the entire population, while the subjects of the king could send memorials directly to the throne. Yet the communication between commoner and king is exaggerated by Haboush in order to make Chosŏn appear more pluralistic and 'national'. The channels of communication, along with other forms of literary transmission, created an 'imagined communicative space' for the entire country, and Haboush claims that before the First Manchu Invasion, literature and state-wide communication filled that space to create a national identity.[97] Although various forms of literature and letter writing in various scripts did exist, the nature and strength of

[93] Haboush, *Epistolary* (2009), 3.
[94] Haboush, *Epistolary* (2009), 19.
[95] Haboush "Constructing" (1999), 59.
[96] Haboush, "Constructing" (1999), 65. The argument echoes Martina Deuchler's point about *kuksok*. See Martina Deuchler, *The Confucian Transformation* (1992), 124-125.
[97] Haboush, *Epistolary* (2009), 3.

political identity fluctuated considerably prior to the Manchu Invasions and this is not addressed by Haboush.

After the fall of the Ming in 1644, Haboush views Chosŏn socio-political identification as contained within the broader international concept of civilization itself. Haboush argues that the fall of the Ming created an environment that challenged 'the very basis of the Korean episteme of world and self', and 'shattered the premise concerning the world order of which the Koreans felt they were a part'.[98] It was during and following the Second Manchu Invasion that Haboush argues '[…] Koreans had to confront many of the elements of what Anthony Smith calls "*ethnies*," such as the sense of ethnicity, territoriality, and language, and an intense discourse of identity emerged'.[99] This discourse on identity was initiated by unwanted developments and created a 'negative ethnicity'.[100] Due to these influences affecting political identity, Haboush consistently uses the term 'nation' and 'national' to describe Chosŏn during the Second Manchu Invasion. Haboush argues for an independent Chosŏn identity, but she concedes that some Koreans 'could not conceive of Korea independently of the larger civilization',[101] which needed to include the Ming.[102] Be that as it may, Haboush continues to exaggerate the meaning and breadth of 'nation' in Chosŏn in order to make it appear as if Chosŏn developed national identity during and following the Japanese and Manchu invasions.

As Breuker and Duncan use various theorists' criteria to understand Korea's historical socio-political identification, Haboush compares her findings to theories and criteria developed by Benedict Anderson and, once again, Anthony Smith. Benedict Anderson argues that nationalism is the concept of 'an imagined political community', which emerged in the

[98] Haboush, "Constructing" (1999), 51.
[99] Haboush, "Dead Bodies" (2003), 417.
[100] Haboush, "Dead Bodies" (2003), 418.
[101] Haboush, "Constructing" (1999), 74.
[102] Haboush, "Constructing" (1999), 74-75.

Americas from the late eighteenth century and was subsequently exported across the globe. The main catalyst of national identity was print capitalism (i.e., newspapers and textbooks) through which the central government was able to control and define political identity throughout the entire polity. Without print capitalism, and a colloquial form of communication, political identity was unable to move beyond intra-state identification (which could include either class, regional, or linguistic selfdom). Print capitalism and print languages were able to spur on this trend because 'they created unified fields of exchange',[103] through which people of the same linguistic and spatial connection could communicate, and thereby imagine their community. However, despite Anderson's attempts to restrict the appearance of the modern nation to the decades before and after 1800, he does not define prior, more ancient, examples of aggregate political identities. This lack of historical analysis is exploited by Haboush, and she sets out to argue that Chosŏn had its own 'imagined community' and form of print capitalism (epistolary space) created and developed during and after the Imjin War and Manchu Invasions.

However, it is useful to the discussion here to review Anthony Smith's works and theories that underpin many of the aforementioned arguments on Korea's socio-political history. In particular, Breuker, Duncan, and Haboush all cite, or allude to, Smith's concept of the *ethnie*: the shared 'myths, memories, values, and symbols' that embody social or political identity that shape an individual's experience. Smith calls this mutual experience the 'myth-symbol complex'.[104] He created the concept ethnie to explain common socio-political identity prior to the perceived rise of modern nationalism in the nineteenth century. Smith does not regard nationalism as either a 'primordial' concept or a contemporary phenomenon. Rather, he argues that cultural attributes '[…] leave their imprint on the perceptions of subsequent

[103] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 2006), 44.
[104] Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), 15.

generations and shape the structures and atmosphere of the community through the distinctive traditions they deposit'.[105] The ethnie and the 'modern' nation only differ in that the ethnie is a loose political amalgamation, while present nations have a definite identity, with common legal rights and duties for their members.

Haboush appears to be in agreement with Smith (as are Breuker and Duncan), and uses his arguments against other scholars who place the creation of the nation concept in the nineteenth century. However, the main problem lies in using Smith's employment of abstractions without critically addressing them or providing contextualised cases. The creation of the ethnie by Smith attempts to partition 'ancient' and 'modern' national identities into two distinct periods, yet it does little to describe 'nationalistic' tendencies in the pre-modern world and explain the existence of the ethnie in the contemporary world. Although Smith states that the nation is modern, this does not, on balance, appear to be his underlying conviction, and the idea of ethnie does more to obscure the distinction between historical and contemporary nationalisms then it does to clarify the issue. The defining differences between ethnie and nation are too vague to merit the creation of a new and confusing vocabulary.

All the same, there are scholars who see very few connections between our modern notions of socio-political identity and the political identification of the people in the Chosŏn dynasty. James Palais states that '[in Korea] national identity was also weak among the common peasant class [since] it was almost impossible for slaves and commoner sharecroppers to identify with *yangban* slave owners and landlords and think of themselves as citizens loyal to a nation state'.[106] In a similar vein, Henry Em argues that Chosŏn had 'horizontal lines of cultural cleavage in which each group had its own idioms, norms, and

[105] Smith, *Ethnic* (1996), 3-4.
[106] James Palais, "Views on Korean Social History," in *IMKS Special Lecture Series 2* (Seoul: Institute for Modern Korean Studies Yonsei University, 1998), 5.

social roles'.[107] In other words, political identity was maintained in social bands, creating a variety of sub-national cultures and loyalties. Indeed, he argues that the Chosŏn government was 'not interested in nationalizing their subjects', since the government wanted to maintain social hierarchies and regional differences based on kinship and clientship.[108] Em specifically looks at the use and meaning of the word 'a people or race' (*minjok* 民族), which, according to Em, had no historic equivalent, and that its inception lay in the late nineteenth century.[109] Em's theory is reinforced by Kyung Moon Hwang, who argues that the lower classes in Chosŏn were consigned to a 'permanent place below the aristocracy',[110] which would make a 'national' discourse difficult. For Hwang, hereditary privilege was the most important element of personal identification, and caste became more important than the concept of a larger national identity. However, Hwang's study focuses on the development of the changes in Chosŏn (and then Korean) society in the late nineteenth century and state structures that upheld divisions within society: *yangban* 兩班, *chungmin* 中民, *sŏŏl* 庶孼, *hyangni* 鄕吏 and *nobi* 奴婢. He does not go into a discussion of concepts used to create common socio-political identity, such as Haboush's translation of 'the nation' (*kŏguk* 擧國), nor look at the notions of the Three Han (*Samhan* 三韓) or linguistic and ritual bonds.

Nevertheless, in their attempts to identify the new Chosŏn and Korean identity of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Palais, Em and Hwang may have overlooked the importance of common socio-political identity in earlier eras. When considering the strength and character of the bureaucratic state in Chosŏn, the influence of the examination system, the ideas of *kuksok* 國俗 (state customs or practices), connections with former polities, and

[107] Henry H. Em, "Nationalism, Post-Nationalism, and Shin Ch'ae-ho," *Korea Journal* 39:2 (1999): 287.
[108] Em, "Nationalism, Post-Nationalism" (1999), 287-288.
[109] The word *minjok* had its origins in Japan when the Japanese translated the Western concept of 'race' (j. *minzoku*). See Andre Schmid, *Korea Between Empires: 1895-1919* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).
[110] Kyung Moon Hwang, *Beyond Birth: Social Status in the Emergence of Modern Korea* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 2.

the Chosŏn government's attempt to mobilize the people in earlier centuries for the defense of the country, one can clearly observe the characteristics of a strong common socio-political identity, at least among *yangban* and, as I will show in the chapters that follow, among other social classes as they appeared to *yangban*. Hwang, Em, and Palais have not addressed the vast reservoir of contextual evidence recorded by a variety of actors who lived in Chosŏn and recorded their thoughts and opinions in diaries. Although Chosŏn society was divided by class, commonalities and differences in socio-political identity can be found, the crucial technique is the synchronic and diachronic comparison of terms and meanings ascribed to words that relate to elements in socio-political identity. This is an effective means of evaluation, since we can observe and contextualise the multiplicity of values ascribed to any one concept or word relating to the state, common culture, language, and other political identifiers.

Some scholars, such as Lieberman, attempt to balance pre-modern and modern ideas of identity. Alexander Woodside also sees many aspects of our 'modern' nation-states existing in the past. In his opinion, the rise of bureaucracy, the concept of good governance, and equality through meritocratic examinations created an East Asian model of government and society that had many aspects of what we would consider 'modern'. Although he primarily focuses on the idea of 'modern' aspects of governance observed during the Tang and Qing dynasties, he mentions that Korea is one state with a particularly strong culture sworn to uphold the anonymity of exam participants, and to maintain the power of the meritocratic values of exams for government posts. In Woodside's opinion, China and Korea had little in common with any feudal society, with which they are often compared, but they rather strove to become, and were largely successful at becoming, pluralist societies 'long thought by nineteenth-century European thinkers… to be the monopoly of what they deemed

the world's only progressive civilization, that of Europe'.[111] Woodside sees China and Korea reaching a level of 'modernity' centuries before the West, and sees the European hold on the 'modern' world as a 'revolutionary fantasy that exaggerate(s) the differences between "traditional" worlds and "modern" ones'.[112] Quoting Wallerstein, Woodside argues that our ideas concerning modernity in the West stem from the misleading symbiotic pairing of technological prowess and libertarian ideas that define democratic and industrial transformation in the West.[113] Woodside draws attention to the predisposition of European theorists to separate historical periods without considering that many of the elements that constitute their theories have existed in various regions of the so-called 'pre-modern' world, and that the time-period division 'pre-modern' and 'modern' is problematic.

Lieberman and Woodside offer a contradictory approach and an antipodal argument to the nationalist theories of Anderson, Gellner, Smith, and Hobsbawm. According to Lieberman and Woodside, there were not only concepts of national communities in East Asia, but information and education were controlled by central bureaucracies. Governments took measures to educate the people, unify the identities of their subjects, and were largely striving to be egalitarian in their values. For Lieberman and Woodside, the 'modern' state existed in the 'pre-modern' world. But, there are still problems in this argument. Lieberman's claims that religion (Buddhism) could have created a basis for socio-political identity in Japan. For many states, religion[114] was but a pillar of socio-political identity, which together with the state, monarchy, and political culture, supported an encompassing socio-political identity. It does not seem likely that religious diffusion itself would not be strong enough to create socio-political identity alone. Regarding Woodside, although he mentions that the ideal of the

[111] Alexander Woodside, *Lost Modernities: China, Vietnam, Korea, and the Hazards of World History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 3.
[112] Woodside, *Lost Modernities* (2006), 3.
[113] Woodside, *Lost Modernities* (2006), 18.
[114] The concept of religion in East Asia differs from the Western conceptualization. Religion for Lieberman, in this case, may well include practices and philosophies that created similar social conditions.

Confucian state was the creation of a meritocratic government, Chosŏn was, for much of its history, guided by more 'feudal' principles than seemingly 'modern' ideals of governance. Exam placement was dependent on family lineage, and one, more or less, had to belong to *yangban* status to sit the state civil service examinations (*kwago* 科擧).[115]

To sum up, Anderson, Gellner, Smith, and Hobsbawm define the nation as a bureaucratic system that helps promote the monopolization of socio-political identity through symbols and histories. All people are argued to have an equal right to these symbols and are taught in a common language. Lieberman and Woodside focus on the characteristics of the state and appear to define modernity in functional terms or as government attempts to promote unity through literacy and egalitarian cultural elements (e.g., examinations). However, Lieberman and Woodside do not discuss the concept of nationality between power groups within those states, when the monarchy would certainly attempt to uphold the power of their own lineage and promote the components of the nation for their own benefit.

This brief survey of relevant literature in English has introduced the wide-ranging variety of theories and cases that construct much of the current debate in Korean history concerning socio-political identity. My purpose has been to map the terms of discussion in the English language and offer background for the following short review of Korean scholarship concerning socio-political identity and the invasions. After considering the limitations of current work, I will explain the methodology I applied, introduce the relevant sources I used, and finally outline the remainder of the thesis.

[115] Although commoners were not proscribed by law (in books such as the *Kyŏngguk taejŏn* 經國大典) from sitting the civil examinations, social prejudices, customs, and the lack of resources of the non-*yangban* classes limited any chances that they could have had in attaining position in the government. For a discussion of laws governing the examination system, see Yŏngho Ch'oe, *The civil examinations and the social structure in early Yi Dynasty Korea, 1392-1600* (Seoul, Korea: Korean Research Center, 1987).

1.4.2 Korean Scholarship

Western scholarship has been built upon prior work undertaken in Korea and Japan. But in South Korea, interest in the Imjin War and Manchu Invasions has risen in tandem with the promotion of national culture and imagery, current regional political concerns, and portrayals of the war in popular culture.[116] This has resulted in a massive increase of retranslations and research on histories and diaries. Recent histories and translations join a number of facsimiles and translations of classical Chinese and phonetic Korean (*ŏnmun* 諺文) into modern Korean.[117] Modern South Korean works on the Imjin War cover every aspect of the conflict. Nevertheless, the lion's share of current research is devoted to the naming of the conflict,[118] understanding Chosŏn's role in Japan's military defeat (particularly the character of Admiral Yi Sunsin),[119] the role of the Righteous Armies (*ŭibyŏng* 義兵),[120] international relations during the conflict,[121] and an attempt to add an international perspective to the historiography of the Imjin War.[122] However, more studies and translations of diaries have appeared over the last decade,[123] and this in turn has initiated research on individuals' reactions to the invasions.[124] However, there have been few studies that focus exclusively on common socio-political identity during the invasion. Except for a few articles and theses (which will be mentioned in detail in the relevant chapters), I would argue that

[116] Yu Chinhyŏn, "Yi sunsin gwa yŏngung ŭi swaesin," *Taejung Sŏsa Yŏn'gu* 11:2 (2005): 7-39.
[117] These also join the numerous works done by Japanese scholars during and following the occupation of Korea.
[118] Han Myŏnggi, "A Study of Recent Trends in Korea on the Japanese Invasion of Korea in 1592 (Imjin War)," *International Journal of Korean History* 18:2 (2013): 8-9.
[119] Examples could include Yang Chaesuk, *Imjin waeran ŭn chosŏn igin chŏnjaeng iŏtt'ta* (Paju: Karamgihoek, 2012), and To Hyŏnsin, *Yi Sunsin ŭi Cho-Il Chŏnjaeng* (Paju: Haengbokhan mirae, 2012).
[120] Such as Ch'oe Hosik, *Imjin waerangi yŏngnam ŭibyŏng yŏngu* (Seoul: Pukk'yubŭnet'ŭwŏksŭ, 2003), and Song Chŏnghyŏn et al., *Imjin waeran gwa chŏlla chwa ŭibyŏng* (Seoul: Pogosa, 2011).
[121] Such as Han-Il kwan'gyesa yŏn'gu nonjip p'yŏnch'an wiwŏnhoe's *Imjin waeran gwa han-il kwangye* (Seoul: Kyŏngin Munhwasa, 2005), and Han Myŏnggi, *Imjin waeran gwa han-jung kwangye* (Seoul: Yŏksa Pip'yŏngsa, 1999).
[122] Chŏng Tuhŭi and Yi Kyŏngsun, ed., *Imjin waeran gwa tongasia samgukjŏnjeang* (Seoul: Hyumŏnisŭt'ŭ, 2007; 2010).
[123] For example Chŏng Kyŏng'un, *Kodae illok,* trans. Nammyŏnghak yŏn'guwŏn (Paju: Taehaksa, 2009), and Nam Kŭp, *Namhan ilgi*, trans. Sin Haejin (Seoul: Pogosa, 2012).
[124] Pang Kichŏl, "Imjin waerangi o hŭimun ŭi chŏnjaeng ch'aehŏm gwa ilbon insik," *Asia munhwa yŏn'gu* 24 (2011): 106-129.

most general and even the specialized histories that have appeared in Korea have not adequately addressed the basic signifiers of common socio-political identification during the Imjin War. The lack of research devoted to social and socio-political issues in the Imjin War has been highlighted by researchers,[125] and there remains a deficiency in works addressing these topics. The same deficit in the examination of socio-political identity can be seen when looking at the Manchu Invasions, which have received considerably less academic and popular attention in Korea.

Part of the problem is conceptual, and debates rage over whether there was a division between the pre-modern and modern world. There are theorists who continue to argue that not only is there no division between the modern and pre-modern world, but that there has always existed a sense of national consciousness. Some historians argue that 'the people' or the public (*minjung* 民衆) and 'the people' or the Korean race (*minjok* 民族), modern words and concepts espoused by nationalist historians Sin Ch'aeho and Ch'oe Namsŏn more than a century ago, were the principle elements of socio-political identity during the Imjin War, or arose because of the war.[126] The same problem applies, but to a lesser extent, to modern research on the Manchu Invasions. *Minjung* literally means 'the people' and *minjok* is an interpretation of 'race' from nineteenth-century Europe, though both are used to imply a sense of communal identity felt by all the people living in Chosŏn. These concepts are said to have existed for many thousands of years on the peninsula, and these socio-political identities bound all the people on the peninsula together (regardless of their actual state identity).[127]

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[125] James B. Lewis, "Introduction" (2015), 2.

[126] See Han Kyŏng-yang, *Imjin waeransa vol. 1* (*sang*) (Seoul: Sin hyŏnsil sa, 1976), 126; Ch'oe Yŏnghŭi, *Imjin waeran* (Seoul: Sejongdaewang kinyŏm saŏphoe, 1999); and Cho Wŏllae, "Pukhan yŏksahak i pon uri yŏksa sok chŏnjaeng 3 imjin waeran," *Aeguk inmin dŭl ŭi choguk pangwi chŏnjaeng: naeil ŭl yŏnŭn yŏksa* 13 (2003): 44-57.

[127] See *Toksa sillon* 讀史新論 and *Tan'gullon* 檀君論 as examples of nationalist historiography in the early twentieth century. Both scholars 'laboured to purge Japanese colonial, indeed all foreign, influence and to achieve a purity of Korean identity, in part, by denouncing the *Samguk sagi* for its Sino-centrism.' See Remco Breuker, Grace Koh, and James B. Lewis, "The Tradition of Historical Writing in Korea," in *The Oxford History*

Scholars such as Ch'oe Namsŏn were able to use and augment inherent meanings in the Confucian vocabulary to support and contain elements of a new nationalism.[128] Similar language and vocabulary was promoted by the South Korean government in past decades to give strength to national projects and national consciousness following the Korean War (1950-1953). The problem seems to be that some number of modern Korean historians are continuing to employ terms invented to instill national consciousness. These explanations and definitions have changed as regards the exact terminology, but the purpose behind the words remains the same. The inherited meanings seep into modern language and discourse and impress modern meanings on the past.

Notwithstanding, there has been considerable change in South Korea regarding socio-political identity over the past fifty years. Influences from the West, such as Émile Durkheim's ideas on the nature of collective consciousness (*chipdan ŭisik* 集團意識),[129] and modern nationalist (*minjokchuŭi* 民族主義) theorists, such as Benedict Anderson, Eric Hobsbawm, and Ernst Gellner, are discussed alongside nationalist ideas from the turn of the century. This has led some Korean scholars to argue that modern nationalism and collective consciousness have only existed for around a century, with more ancient polities and states having a very different socio-political identity.[130] Their views would imply that socio-political identity during the Imjin Wars and the Manchu Invasions was very different from modern nationalism and other modern forms of socio-political identity.

At the same time, some Korean scholars are very critical of Benedict Anderson and modern nationalist theories and argue that a 'new' nationalism only reinforced a national

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of Historical Writing, Volume 2: 400 – 1400, ed. Sarah Foot and Chase F. Robinson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012): 124.

[128] Kyung Moon Hwang, "Country or State? Reconceptualizing *kukka* in the Korean Enlightenment Period, 1896 – 1910" *Korean Studies* 24 (2000): 1-24.

[129] Kim Yuna, "Koryŏ chŏngi pukkyemin ŭi hyŏngsŏng gwa kŭ chipdan ŭisik," *Yŏksa wa hyŏnsil* 96 (2015): 187-217.

[130] For an example of history on modern Korean nationalism, see Pak Ch'ansŭng, *Minjok minjokjuŭi* (Seoul: Sohwa, 2010).

identity already present.[131] Song Kuejin argues that a 'primal concept of "nation" that is distinct from that in China or Japan' existed in Chosŏn, and that the modern notion of the 'nation' was adapted to its contemporary considerations.[132] Kim Youngha, in agreement with Remco Breuker, also argues that the beginning of ethnic identity in Korea began as far back as Koryŏ 高麗, which actively created the notion of the Three Han (*samhan* 三韓) ethnic identity.[133] Both Song Kuejin and Kim Youngha appear to support elements of Anthony Smith's idea of the ethnie.

Han Myŏnggi has written extensively on the Manchu Invasions and points out that during the Imjin War the Chosŏn government used the military memory of Koguryŏ 高句麗 (37BC?-668) to muster troops and to create an ideological centre to the country.[134] Although I agree with Han Myŏnggi that the image of Koguryŏ was used to unite people, it was not the only historical polity used by Chosŏn to serve contemporary interests. Hŏ T'aeyŏng argues that politicians in the seventeenth and twentieth centuries both used the historic polity of Koguryŏ to promote socio-political unity.[135] However, Hŏ T'aeyŏng does not see any 'direct connection' between the arguments made to invade the Qing in an effort to re-establish the Ming (*zhonghua* 中華) and the nationalism of the early twentieth century, even though they used the same historic polity of Koguryŏ to exemplify their positions.[136] Following this line of thought, Cho Sŏngsan sees an awareness of an international common cultural identity based on 'Character Consciousness' (*tongmun ŭisik* 同文意識), that is, using Chinese

[131] Sin Yongha, "'Minjok' ŭi sahoehak-jŏk sŏlmyŏng gwa sangsang ŭi kongdong ch'aeron' pip'an," *Hanguk sahoehak* 40:1 (2006): 32-58. Particularly the notion of *kwihwa'in* 歸化人 (naturalized people).
[132] Song Kuejin, "The Introduction of the Concept of Nation into Korean Society and the Adaptation of its Usage," *International Journal of Korean History* 16:1 (2011): 142.
[133] Kim Yŏngha, "Iltong samhan ŭi silsang gwa ŭisik," *Hanguk kodaesa yŏn'gu* 59 (2010): 293-327.
[134] Han Myŏnggi, "Chosŏn sidae Han-Chung chisikin ŭi Koguryŏ insik – Koguryŏ ŭi 'kangsŏng' gwa Chosŏn ŭi Koguryŏ Kyesŭng insik ŭl chungsim ŭro," *Hanguk munhwa* 38 (2008): 337-366.
[135] Hŏ T'aeyŏng (Huh Tae-yong), "A Critical Review of the Issue of Proto-Nationalism during late Chosŏn," *International Journal of Korean History* 12 (2008): 89-111.
[136] Hŏ T'aeyŏng, "A Critical Review" (2008), 105.

characters, writing Chinese-style literature, and espousing Chinese philosophy.[137] Though the authors differ on the actual meanings and understandings of a common culture (either located in a single or many countries), I would argue that all these understandings existed simultaneously during the Imjin War and the Manchu Invasions.

However, the most comprehensive publications in the Korean language on both the socio-political aspects of the Imjin War and Manchu Invasions are the *Imjin waeran gwa tong-asia samguk chŏnjaeng* edited by Chŏng Tuhŭi and Yi Kyŏngsun,[138] and the *Pyŏngja horan* volumes 1-2,[139] with the *Chŏngmyo horan pyŏngja horan gwa tong-asia*,[140] both written by Han Myŏnggi. The *Imjin waeran gwa tong-asia samguk chŏnjaeng*, like Lewis's edited *East Asian War*, is a collection of international scholars' papers covering various aspects and viewpoints on the Imjin War. The only comprehensive survey of socio-political identity for all the invasions was undertaken by two western scholars who contributed to the *Imjin waeran gwa tong-asia samguk chŏnjaeng*: JaHyun Kim Haboush and John Duncan. The ideas presented in their contributions generally accord with what I have said above.

Han Myŏnggi's books encapsulate the political situation before and during the First and Second Manchu Invasions, and he does include some analysis on socio-political identity. Han Myŏnggi's *Pyŏngja horan volumes 1-2* and *Chŏngmyo horan pyŏngja horan gwa tong-asia* volumes argue that a form of negative experience and a sense of humiliation grew out of the suffering of the Chosŏn people. A 'rush of anti-Qing sentiment'[141] arose from the humiliation of their king, the sons of the elite being taken hostage, and a conviction that Chosŏn must 'return to the north' (*pukpang* 北方). Although Han Myŏnggi makes it clear

[137] Cho Sŏngsan (Cho Sung-San), "The formation and Transformation of the awareness of a common cultural Identity in 19th Century Chosŏn," *International Journal of Korean History* 13 (2009): 100.
[138] Edited by Chŏng Tuhŭi and Yi Kyŏngsun, *Imjin waeran* (2010).
[139] Han, *Pyŏngja* (2015).
[140] Han Myŏnggi, *Chŏngmyo* (2009).
[141] Han Myŏnggi, "Pyŏngja horan P'aejŏn ŭi chŏng'ch'ijŏk p'ajang – ch'ŏng ŭi Chosŏn appak gwa Injo ŭi taeŭng ŭl chungsimŭro," *Tongbang Hakchi* 119 (2003): 54.

that a form of negative identification occurred among part of the elite, he does not explain the form and breadth of common political identity throughout Korea. Han Myŏnggi implies that all the people in the kingdom were united by a common hatred of the Qing, but he does not focus on a complete understanding of the socio-political identity during the Manchu Invasions. Instead of addressing socio-political identities, many scholars have researched court political identity and Injo's irrational politics, which are argued to have created the opportunity or circumstances favourable to the Manchu Invasions.[142] There are books published on Chosŏn socio-political identity,[143] but not one that specifically covers common socio-political identity during these conflicts.

This brief survey of relevant literature in the Korean language serves as a background to the following section on methodology. Although there has been a great amount of work done on the Imjin War and Manchu Invasions, there have been very few hermeneutical studies on socio-political identity in both the Korean and English languages. The next section will show how I intend to research socio-political identity during both invasions using a hermeneutical approach.

1.5 Methodology

Research by Korea-based academics has, for the most part, not focused on describing the basis of a common and encompassing socio-political identity in Chosŏn beyond the ideas of common social identity linked to the ideas of 'the [Korean] race' (*minjok* 民族). This is due to the assumption of an ever-pervasive social character in Korea, and a few proper hermeneutical analyses of concepts that could have created socio-political identity. Although works by Song Kuejin and Kim Youngha attempt to place the concept of nation further into

[142] Pak Hyŏnmo, "Chongmyo horangi ŭi Kuknaeoe chŏngch'i," *Kukje chongch'i nonch'ong* 42:4 (2002): 217-235; and, Hŏ T'aegu, "Ch'oe myŏnggil ŭi chuhwaron gwa taemyŏng ŭiri," *Hanguksa yŏngu* 162 (2013): 87-122.
[143] See Kim Yŏnghŭm, *Chosŏn hugi chŏngchisa yŏn'gu 1* (Seoul: Hyean, 2006).

the past, specific books on the wars by Han Myŏnggi skirt around any in-depth discussion of common socio-political identity. At the same time, the criteria used by Western-based historians such as James Palais, Henry Em, and Kyung Moon Hwang are too restricted to fully comprehend the strength of common socio-political identity in mid-Chosŏn.

I agree with some of the opinions offered by John Duncan and JaHyun Haboush, but their theoretical approaches place limits on their own findings, and they often exaggerate the breadth of certain 'nationalistic' elements. Duncan focuses on the use of words and concepts to construct proto-national identity, such as the Eastern Country (*tong'guk* 東國), state customs (*kuksok* 國俗), and the people (*min* 民), but he does not offer the same level of analysis as Remco Breuker does for the Koryŏ 高麗 period. Duncan looks at state structure using Hobsbawm's theories and criteria instead of approaching the problem using hermeneutical analysis. The lack of analysis of signifiers weakens his argument, as the changing meanings of identity are overlooked and not given enough consideration. Haboush sees the Korean nation (*kŏguk* 擧國) originating first from the Imjin War, the use of vernacular Korean by the central government for communication, widespread correspondence in the country, and later the idea of Chosŏn as the last inheritor of civilization (*sohwa* 小華) contributing to a broader idea of Chosŏn national identity. Although I agree that Chosŏn had many facets of identity that border on our modern concepts, Haboush appears eager to prove a definitive starting point for Chosŏn national consciousness in a common epistolary space, and she overlooks the possibilities that a common socio-political identity may have appeared much earlier than she believes, that the Chosŏn government did not regularly use (or want to use) documents in the vernacular, and that socio-political identity in the Imjin War and Manchu Invasions was varied and depended on the particular individual.

It is only in the methodology employed by Remco Breuker that I find the depth of analysis necessary for an understanding of socio-political identity. Although Breuker looks at Korean history from 918-1170, the same methodology can be applied to the history from 1567-1637. Like Breuker, I will look at how words construct identity within the state, but in a much narrower time-frame, using a greater diversity of viewpoints and opinions as we have more resources from the Chosŏn dynasty than from the early Koryŏ 高麗. Nevertheless, I will not use the theoretical criteria employed by Breuker, Duncan, and Haboush. Using theories of nationalism suits their arguments, as they attempt to determine that the theoretical criteria and definitions used by theorists working on recent centuries can be used to describe Chosŏn and even earlier dynasties. Although Victor Lieberman's concept of a 'charter state polity' does not define itself in direct reference to modern constructs, 'proto-nationalism', 'nationalism', and 'ethnie', all work from the present backwards.

Rather than trying to match earlier centuries to a template devised in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a diachronic examination of particular terms used by the government and a variety of individuals examined in their particular synchronic contexts could, in my estimate, provide a better roadmap to the parameters of socio-political identity in Chosŏn during the Imjin War and Manchu Invasions. Let us take these earlier writers in their own terms, rather than trying to see how their writings are similar or dissimilar to our own notions. In particular, I will make reference to Hans-Georg Gadamer's intertextual and hermeneutical methods of analysis and Jacques Derrida's deconstructionism to identify the components of common socio-political identity in Chosŏn. I will focus on words pertaining to state functions, the king, the royal family, roles of the king and government, the 'people', uses of culture, language, history, and understanding of the outside world.

To understand socio-political identity, I am primarily looking at the official government royal history, the *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* 朝鮮王朝實錄, and a variety of

individual diaries. But, in order to distinguish between the use and changes in usage of certain concepts from 1567-1637 and our own modern usage of apparently similar words and concepts, I will articulate terms and concepts through a diachronic examination in their synchronic contexts. In each of the following chapters, I will debate and analyse the specific person, events, places, and reasons behind the uses and definitions of socio-political concepts. This process is used in order to place the written material within its contemporary context. As Gadamer stated, 'in a sentence… meaning often exceeds what is said in it'.[144] This is similar to Derrida's idea that 'there is nothing outside of the context', meaning that the environment of the writer is as much a part of the text as the writer.[145] In order to understand this 'fluid multiplicity of possibilities',[146] the process and structure of *bildung* (cultural environment) of the text's author must be ascertained.[147] At the same time, the author and the reader must integrate their own cultural backgrounds (*Bildung*) and view of the world (*Weltanschauung*) to form a common understanding for the present study. To do this, Gadamer created the concepts of the 'History of Effect' and the 'Fusion of Horizons'. The 'History of Effect' consists in recognizing the historically-grounded construction of the writer and the reader's particular terms and concepts. For the reader to grasp the meaning of the writer is to not insert oneself into a subjectivity, but to examine a particular context of construction. Understanding the construction of past and contemporary definitions is the process by which an individual creates a present meaning by the continuing of past and present definitions. It is the outcome of an array of actions and interpretations. Any individual's definitions and concepts are effected through a particular web of interconnected affects and histories.[148] A 'Fusion of Horizons' is when the present and past are combined so that a 'sharing of a present meaning'

[144] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (London: Continuum, 2004), 363.
[145] Jacques Derrida, "Afterword: Toward an Ethic of Discussion," trans. Samuel Weber in *Limited Inc.* (Illinois, 1988), 136.
[146] Gadamer, *Truth* (2004), 271.
[147] Gadamer, *Truth* (2004), 13.
[148] Gadamer, *Truth* (2004), 300.

is possible.[149] The conversation with the text involves a reciprocal exchange of views to form a 'common diction and dictum', while the translator preserves his or her own language norms.[150] Gadamer's and Derrida's views help us to elaborate E.H. Carr's ideas concerning history, when he stated that 'we can view the past, and achieve our understanding of the past, only through the eyes of the present'[151] and R.G. Collingwood's assertion that 'history is nothing but the re-enactment of past thought on the historian's mind'.[152]

For the first step in fusing past and present horizons, I have already introduced the current literature regarding Chosŏn's common socio-political identity. The second part involves introducing Chosŏn's literary and philosophical inheritance (*Bildung*) before and during these conflicts, and finally I will attempt to establish concordance between past definitions and expressions with present interpretations and meanings. By the time King Sŏnjo came to the throne, Chosŏn had a literary inheritance with nearly two millennia of development and continued use in China, with states on the Korean peninsula having used Chinese texts for well over a thousand years. Countries on the Korean peninsula, as well as the Chosŏn state itself, also had a variety of texts specifically on the histories, philosophies, and cultures found on the peninsula. Individuals in Chosŏn could choose from a great variety of texts and traditions. It is from this literary heritage that socio-political identity was created during the Imjin War and Manchu Invasions.

Nevertheless, in order to understand the inherent meanings and uses of words in Chosŏn, one has to grasp the diversity of culture, literature, and politics in Chosŏn. This is quite difficult given the number and range of works available. So, in order to understand common identity, specifically as regards socio-political identification, I will first use the canonical texts (also referred to as Classics or Classicism), which formed the basis of

[149] Gadamer, *Truth* (2004), 394.
[150] Gadamer, *Truth* (2004), 388.
[151] Edward Hallett Carr, *What is History?* (Cambridge: Penguin,1961), 22.
[152] Robin George Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford: University of Oxford Press, 1961), 228.

philosophy, laws, and even language in Chosŏn. Confucian culture permeated into each social level of Chosŏn, and knowledge of ritual and custom was the basis of social order. This was especially true for the *yangban*. Not only did the texts form the foundation of the society upon which the *yangban*'s position relied, but any advancement into government positions required extensive knowledge of particular texts. The civil service examinations (*kwagŏ* 科擧) were the gateways to position and power in Chosŏn. These were divided into the literary examinations (*mungwa* 文科) and the military examinations (*mugwa* 武科). Both necessitated knowledge of the Four Books and the Five Classics (*sasŏ ogŏyng* 四書五經), and political knowledge on recent events.

An appreciation of the general field of concepts that were common or a more in-depth analysis of cultural background (*Bildung*) and politics in chapters two and four will pave the way for analyses of the wartime socio-political culture. In order to understand the experiences and cultural background (*Bildung*) that created the constituent elements of a common socio-political identity, I present a chronological analysis in order to pinpoint any changes during, or caused by, the invasions. In each period, I will look at the uses of certain words and concepts that were constituent elements of socio-political identity such as, but not limited to, king (*wang* 王), country (*kuk* 國), and culture (*munmyŏng* 文明). Each era had its own particular and popular literature and experiences that affected socio-political interpretation, although some texts remained the foundation of language and philosophy throughout the entire dynasty. Each synchronic slice has a field of terms and the focus of the searchlight of attention sweeps from one term to another. While this method can reveal the cultural background and how terms are used in relation to that cultural background, the method cannot explain the drivers of change between synchronic moments.

In order to define words in the *sillok* and diaries that could pertain to socio-political identity in their original context, the words and concepts must be decoupled from later meanings inherited from the later Chosŏn dynasty, the influence of the West in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and the modern meanings of these words and concepts. To do that, a balance of the *bildung* between then and now means a 'Fusion of Horizons' of the literature of the period, experiences in their time, and our own current understanding of the words and their received interpretation. Korean and Western-based scholars have already undertaken similar research, but they usually only focus on a single concept and its evolution over a particular period of time and define it in context with other concepts.[153]

Although I utilize a method created by Gadamer and Derrida for analysing the texts, my analysis has also led me to view common socio-political identity in Chosŏn as located on a spectrum that can fluctuate between two antipodes: mortal and immortal. Both the government's and individuals' socio-political ideas during the Chosŏn dynasty ranged between these extremes, and where any individual stood depended on current political considerations, the form of culture, and the choices of the individual writer.

1.6 Mortal and Immortal Spectrum of Socio-Political Identity

Through a 'Fusion of Horizons' and contextualization of terms, I have concluded that socio-political identity appears to have fluctuated between two polarities. One was the living ruler of Chosŏn: the king. The other was the eternal sense of continuity: Confucian ethics, peninsular history, and the world of the spirits. In between these two extremes came entities that embodied the living ruler as well as eternal ethics, history, and spirits, such as the Royal Ancestral Shrines (*chongmyo* 宗廟) dedicated to the king's ancestors. Nevertheless, the state inherited a socio-political culture that could be used to justify the supremacy of either identity

[153] Son Aeri, "Bureaucratic Knowledge" (2010), and Kyung Moon Hwang, "Country or State?" (2000).

for any particular individual's purpose. This was an ideational oscillation, not an institutional oscillation. Although living people had to exist in order to receive and transmit the content, the embodiment of the socio-political identity could be understood as being somewhere on a *mortal – immortal spectrum*.

To explain this division, I have used a spectrum of socio-political identity with the mortal and the immortal components at either end.[154] Mortal concepts relate to specific people or offices with living people, such as the king, governmental institutions, or religious leaders. Immortal concepts relate to eternal ethical, historical, and spiritual institutions, cultures, or ideas that do not necessarily require the mortal elements. Although I initially attempted to characterise the apparent divergence in identity as a 'royal lineage – non-royal lineage', or 'legal – cultural' divisions, 'mortal' and 'immortal' proved better, because the lineages of present and past kings were venerated, and legal – cultural divisions could not explain the importance of the living king and the continuing power of past polities, individuals, and histories.

During the Japanese invasions, the king was, in many messages and diaries, seen as the centre of the country, and the survival of his royal line (enterprise) determined socio-political identity. Government texts, such as the *sillok*, often portray the state of Chosŏn as a manifestation of the king and his royal house. If he and his line perished, so did the socio-political basis of the country. What we now consider patriotism to the country was loyalty to a mortal monarch and protection of the kingly way.[155] Yet, at certain points during the

[154] Richard Koenigsburg has written on the state as an immortal entity to describe the connection of the German people to the state under Hitler. The German people used the idea of the nation to escape from the confines of the mortal body and connect to the larger ideal of an immortal German Reich, a political leviathan of sorts. See: Richard Koenigsburg, *Nationalism, Nazism, Genocide and Other Papers in the Psychology of Ideology and Culture* (New York: Library of Social Sciences, 1990); and, *Hitler's Ideology: Embodied Metaphor, Fantasy, and History* (Boston: Information Age Publishing, 2007).

[155] Defined by JaHyun Kim Haboush as 'When (the aspects of studying of the Way (道)), are contained within one person, (they) become the virtue of heaven and when (they are) carried out in government (they) become the Kingly Way,' from JaHyun Kim Haboush, *A Heritage of Kings* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 9-10.

conflict, immortal components, such as the Altars to the Gods of the Earth and the Five Grains (*sajik* 社稷) and peninsular history became the apparent preeminent basis of socio-political identity. These elements could be separated from the king to show a separate identity for the cultural region (*tongbang* 東方, i.e. Korea), which had historical continuity with the past (e.g., the *Samhan* 三韓 and Koryŏ 高麗).

During the Imjin War there was a constant fluctuation between these two antipodal yet intrinsically linked mortal and immortal identities. In times of increased existential crises, the government used language focusing on immortal components to include as many people as possible in the struggle against the Japanese. But after the Japanese retreated to the south of the peninsula, the government used the immortal components to specifically uphold the rule of the mortal monarchy, and then began to promote the mortal components for political and actual defense. Individual diarists also used words and meanings located on this spectrum, but often inserted their own interpretations, either for their own benefit (to appear to be in accord with the government), or to express their own understandings. Members of the Righteous Armies (*ŭibyŏng*) were more interested in supporting mortal elements (the king), because they expected a reward for their services. Nevertheless, others could use all elements of the mortal – immortal spectrum depending on the circumstance or individual interpretation.

In the Manchu Invasions, the mortal – immortal spectrum was divided along factional lines. The immortal components of Chosŏn became much more important for the peace faction. For the war faction, the immortal components of the nation still depended on the mortal individuals of the royal family remaining in Chosŏn to conduct state rituals, which included those displaying loyalty to the Ming Empire. The differences between the two factional identities arose from realistic political concerns and fractured any common socio-political outlook as the parties attempted to divide the mortal and immortal components of the

state. While court elites deployed both mortal and immortal arguments, further away from the centre of power, lower commanders and non-officials appear to have associated the nation with the mortal king's authority and rulership, but could still recognize that the state could oscillate between both identities.

In later chapters, the components of Confucian ethics and spirits will receive further comment, but peninsular history also needs highlighting, because historical visions are closely connected to both mortal and immortal conceptions. Benedict Anderson argues that pre-modern states lacked a 'national time,' a fundamental component of the nation, in which 'a solid community [moves] steadily down (or up) history'.[156] This national time is a form of *immortal continuity* where the nation can (fictitiously) attach itself to the past, with the current nation as the final piece in a long chain of hereditary states. Chosŏn and other so-called 'pre-modern' polities made such a timeframe for their own socio-political purposes. But unlike some modern nations, the Chosŏn ruler had his own *lineage time* that moved both independently of, and complementary to, the 'national time'. These were the two temporal links that allowed rulers to, theoretically, secure their places in many societies. This was also the case for the Chosŏn kings during the Imjin War and Manchu Invasions, where there were instances of a strained balance over the primogeniture of the specific timeframe for the state: the mortal and the immortal.

1.7 Primary Resources

To assay the values and definitions placed upon the vocabulary used during these periods, state records and diaries written before, during, and after the invasions were textually analyzed in order to elucidate the meanings of words used by those who witnessed the conflict. This thesis examines at common socio-political identity from the viewpoint of a

[156] Anderson, *Imagined* (2006), 26.

variety of different individuals coming from multiple strata of Chosŏn society. Both these forms of records have been chosen for the specific reason that they contain daily recorded information. Many of them span the time for the entire conflicts. Therefore, the flow and vicissitudes of identification over the conflicts can more precisely be recognized by observing the development of changes in words and concepts pertaining to socio-political identity. I have used the *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* 朝鮮王朝實錄 (*T'aebaeksan* 太白山) [*Chosŏn Veritable Records*] (referred to as the *sillok*) as the government's official view on events and official socio-political identity. For diaries before the Imjin War, I have used Yi I Yulgok's 李珥 栗谷 (1536-1584) *Soktam ilgi* 石潭日記 (1565-1581),[157] Yu Hŭich'un's 柳希春 (1513-1577) *Miam ilgi* 眉巖日記 (1567-1577),[158] Kwŏn Munhae's 權文海 (1534-1591) *Ch'ogan ilgi* 草澗日記 (1580-1591),[159] and Yi Chŏnghoe's 李庭檜 (1543-1612) *Songgan ilgi* 松澗日記 (1577-1612).[160] Diaries prior to the Imjin War are limited in number, and these were the most well-known diaries from the pre-war era. They were chosen because they document culture and society in great detail in the decades before the Imjin War. All of the diaries were written by influential *yangban* who had close connections to the court.

For the period of the Imjin War, I have used *Songgan ilgi*, O Hŭimun's 吳希文 (1539-1613) *Swaemirok* 瑣尾錄 (1591-1601),[161] Chŏng Kyŏng'un's 鄭慶雲 (1556-1610) *Kodae illok* 孤臺日錄 (1592-1609),[162] Yi Sunsin's 李舜臣 (1545-1598) *Nanjung ilgi* 亂中日記 (1591-1597),[163] Yu Sŏngnyong's 柳成龍 (1542-1607) *Chingbirok* 懲毖錄 (1592-

[157] Yi I Yulgok 李珥 栗谷, *Soktam ilgi* 石潭日記: Kyu (奎) 15681 (Kyŏngyŏn ilgi, 經筵日記).
[158] Yu Hŭich'un 柳希春, *Miam ilgi* 眉巖日記: Kyu (奎) 4454.
[159] Kwŏn Munhae 權文海, *Ch'ogan ilgi* 草澗日記, facsimile of the original and translated into Korean by Chang Chesok. Andong: Hanguk kukhak chinhŭngwŏn, 2012.
[160] Yi Chŏnghoe 李庭檜, *Songgan ilgi* 松澗日記, facsimile of the original 1612 text with *hanmun* transcription (Seoul: Hangukhak chŏngsin munhwa yŏn'guwŏn, 1996).
[161] O Hŭimun 吳希文, trans. Lee Minsu (Seoul: Haejŏnosi ch'utangong sochongch'ung, 1990).
[162] Chŏng Kyŏng'un 鄭慶雲, *Kodae illok* 孤臺日錄, trans. Nammyŏnghak yŏn'guwŏn (Paju: Taehaksa, 2009).
[163] Yi Sunsin 李舜臣, *Nanjung ilgi* 亂中日記 trans. Yi Yong-ho (Taejon: Tonggwang munhwa'sa, 2005).

1598),[164] and Cho Ŭngnok's 趙應祿 (1538-1623) *Chukkye ilgi* 竹溪日記 (1592-1615).[165] There is a greater number and diversity of records from the Imjin War than from any time prior to it. The majority of diaries selected were chosen because they cover the entirety of the war (or many years), and the writers come from different strata within the *yangban*. For example, O Hŭimun never reached official position and never directly encountered the enemy. Chŏng Kyŏng'un worked with the government and Righteous Armies, and he was on or near the front line of the war for the entire conflict. Yi Sunsin, the most famous diarist of the war, focused on documenting battles but consistently mentioned the plight of the people and general suffering in the country, thereby endearing himself to twentieth-century promoters of the *minjok* 民族. Yu Sŏngnyong was prime minister for select periods during the war and offers an official's view of the conflict in the *Chingbirok* 懲毖錄.

Due to the short duration, minor impact, and localized effects of the war, there are few diaries on the First Manchu Invasion. The same cannot be said of the Second Manchu Invasion, when the country was completely overrun by the Manchu armies and the Qing Emperor made camp in the Chosŏn capital Hansŏng. Relevant diaries include Nam Kŭp's 南磼 (1592-1671) *Namhan ilgi* 南漢日記 (1636-1637),[166] Ŏ Hanmŏng's 魚漢明 (1592-1648) *Kangdo ilgi* 江都日記 (1636-1637),[167] and Kim Sanghŏn's 金尙憲 (1570-1652) *Namhan kiryak* 南漢紀略 (1636-1637).[168] In addition, Na Man'gap's 羅萬甲 (1592-1642) *Pyŏngjarok* 丙子錄 (1636-1637)[169] and the unascribed *Sansŏng ilgi* 山城日記 (1636-1637),[170] will be evaluated as a single document, since *Sansŏng ilgi* appears to be a revised and translated

[164] Yu Sŏngnyong 柳成龍, *Chingbirok* 懲毖錄, stored at the Kyujanggak: Kyu (奎) 3902.
[165] Cho Ŭngnok 趙應祿, *Chukkye ilgi* 竹溪日記, trans. Cho Namkwŏn (Seoul: *Taehaksa*, 1999).
[166] Nam Kŭp 南磼, *Namhan ilgi* 南漢日記, trans. Sin Haejin (Seoul: Pogosa, 2012).
[167] Ŏ Hanmŏng 魚漢明, *Kangdo ilgi* 江都日記, trans. Sin Haejin (Seoul: Yŏngnak Publishers, 2012).
[168] Kim Sanghŏn 金尙憲, *Namhan kiryak* 南漢紀略, trans. Sin Haejin (Seoul: Pak'ijŏng tosŏch'ulp'an, 2012).
[169] Na Man'gap 羅萬甲, *Pyŏngjarok* 丙子錄, trans. Yun Chaeyŏng (Seoul: Myŏng'mundang, 1987).
[170] Anonymous, *Sansŏng ilgi* 山城日記, trans. Chi Sŏngnyong (Seoul: Taunsaem, 2015).

vernacular Korean (*han'gŭl*) copy of *Pyŏngjarok*. All of the diaries surveyed in this thesis were written in literary Chinese, except for *Sansŏng ilgi*. As in the case of the Imjin War, there is a great diversity in opinion and outlook regarding socio-political identity expressed in these diaries. Nam Kŭp and Kim Sanghŏn were both with King Injo at Mount Namsan Fortress but had entirely divergent opinions concerning the rationale for fighting the Qing.

Each of these texts will be discussed in more detail as they are introduced in the chapters that follow.[171] Although these sources present a variety of different opinions concerning political identity and are useful in ascertaining the structure of Chosŏn national identity, they were all written by *yangban* or members of the official or elite class, with many of these authors working for the central government. Because the social status of the authors placed them within the political elite, there are limits in this study to direct access to information from an extensive variety of social classes in Chosŏn. Despite this limitation, the aforementioned diaries offer a glimpse of the divisions that plagued the government, and the diaries provide insights into how the authors constructed their own political identity. The diaries were written by a variety of *yangban* from different regions and with varying social concerns, but these authors also commented on how the non-*yangban* peoples of Chosŏn responded to the terms I have identified for analysis (e.g., king, country, and culture).

1.8 Analysing Court Records

The *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* 朝鮮王朝實錄 recorded from 1567-1636 form the official, recognized interpretation of state culture and the framework for the thesis. By 1567, official records had been in use in one form or another on the peninsula for at least a millennium (if not longer). The Chosŏn government had inherited texts and court documents not only from their antecedent state (Koryŏ 高麗), but also literature and philosophical documents from

[171] Including a comparison of available editions of the same text (such as the *Chingbirok*).

China, and partial histories of United Silla 新羅, and the three Korean kingdoms (*Samhan* 三韓). By Sŏnjo's reign, the Chosŏn court had used and redacted the *sillok* of the thirteen previous rulers and the official compilation of the Koryŏ dynasty history, the *Koryŏsa* 高麗史. Sŏnjo's own records were gathered and rewritten in two copies after his death. These were the *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 宣祖王朝實錄 and the less refined and more inaccurate *Sŏnjo wangjo sujŏng sillok* 宣祖修正王朝實錄. King Kwanghae'gun's state records were gathered and compiled in the reign of Injo, and were called the *Kwanghae'gun ilgi* 光海君日記. Neither Injo, nor any subsequent king, regarded Kwanghae'gun as a legitimate king and merely regarded him as a despotic 'lord'. King Injo's own records, the *Injo wangjo sillok* 仁祖王朝實錄, were collected and reworked under the reign of King Hyojong 孝宗 (r. 1649-1659).

The records served two purposes. First, the *sillok* was the official record of court proceedings and events discussed at court. Second, the king had to balance the base of his reign through the notion of direct inheritance from a just lineage of kings over multiple generations.[172] Sŏnjo's family's reign was one in the long history of just lineages on the Korean peninsula. The *sillok* was evidence of both his current mortal validation and immortal inheritance.[173]

Be that as it may, the importance of historical accuracy in the *sillok*, however jealously guarded by the court historians, was balanced with contemporary political considerations, and the compilation of historical texts has always been an extremely political

[172] Don Baker, "Writing History in Pre-Modern Korea," in *The Oxford History of Historical Writing Volume 3: 1400 – 1800*, ed. José Rabasa, Masayuki Sato, Edorardo Totarolo and Daniel Woolf (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 104.

[173] Even the 'choice of the name Chosŏn may have itself have been made partly to emphasize their legitimate succession to the rulers of old, and their sacrifices to past rulers, even those of Koryŏ, may have had the same purpose'. In Ch'oe Pu 崔溥, *Ch'oe Pu's Diary: A Record of Drifting Across the Sea*, trans. with intro. and notes by John Meskill (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1965), 4.

affair.[174] Given the existence of political pressures, knowledge of Chosŏn's history and society cannot be based solely on the official records, as they only contain a version or particular perspective used to serve the current monarch. Moreover, the *sillok* were not seen by the public and were regarded as state secrets. They were 'put aside for later generations to read and draw the appropriate moral lessons from.'[175] What the general population was able to read from the government were promulgations, legends about the Yi Family,[176] and the *Kukcho pogam* 國朝寶鑑 [*Treasure Mirror of Our Dynasty*], a very selective and revised dynastic history first published in 1459.

At the same time one cannot overlook the importance of creating moral justifications for the king, even though the *sillok*'s historical veracity may be in doubt. The only method of balancing and understanding both meanings is to compare the *sillok* with non-official sources documented during the same eras. Not only can the differences in the recording of historical events be compared, but the differences in opinion and conceptualization of the state can also be observed. This method has limitations, though. A more accurate comparison between official and non-official records only became possible after the sudden increase of particular journals and diaries in the sixteenth century.

1.9 Analysing the Personal Journal

As the elite feuded over politics at the beginning of Sŏnjo's reign, the written word - the way in which people recorded their thoughts and lives - began a marked change. The journal (*ilgi* 日記),[177] the mark of any truly literate Chosŏn individual, became more numerous in the sixteenth century. During the Chosŏn dynasty, individual and state records

[174] Remco Breuker, Grace Koh and James B. Lewis, "The Tradition of Historical Writing in Korea" (2012), 119-137.
[175] Baker, "Writing" (2012), 111.
[176] *The Songs of Flying Dragons* (*yongbiŏch'ŏnga* 龍飛御天歌).
[177] *Ilgi* literally 'daily record' finds its closest equivalent in the English word 'journal.' I will also refer to *ilgi* as diary and record.

had a multitude of titles ascribed to them. These include, but are not limited to, *ilgi* 日記, -*illok* 日錄, *kiryak* 機略, *ilsŏng* 日省, *sillok* 實歷, and many others.[178] Personal records (non-royal) typically had an individualised name attached followed by *ilgi*, *illok* (daily record), or *kiryak* (resource to correct the past).[179]

Writing daily, official records had great practical and sentimental value for bureaucratic Confucian states. A passage in *Lunheng* 論衡 records that, he who was able to present a petition and a daily record was a true Confucian,[180] while officials also used this wealth of recorded literature to run the state, construct state supported political identities, and promulgate certain interpretations of history. The king's (or emperor's) actions, daily activities, statements, and health were meticulously recorded by two official historians, who would maintain the official documents as state secrets. Although the public (*kong* 公) record enjoyed a long history of service in Korea, the individual (*sa* 私) diary went through substantial change and developed a variety of literary techniques to record individual experiences during the sixteenth century.

Travel records were being written long before the sixteenth century. Some are very famous: the *Namhaengwŏl ilgi* 南行月日記, which recorded Yi Kyubo's 李奎報 journey around Chŏnju in 1201 and the *Pyohaerok* 漂海錄 by Ch'oe Pu 崔溥, which recorded his accidental journey to China in 1488. A decade after his return, Ch'oe Pu was exiled during the 1498 Literati Purge (*muo sahwa* 戊午士禍) and executed during the 1504 Literati Purge (*kabja sahwa* 甲子士禍). Along with travel records up to the late fifteenth century, unofficial histories (*yasa* 野史), collections of notes (*p'ilgijab* 筆記雜), and collected writings

[178] These include *illok* 日曆, *ilsin* 日新, *ilsŭng* 日乘, *ilgwa* 日課, *ilsa* 日史, *ildŭk* 日得, *ilji* 日知, *ilch'o* 日抄, *ilsŏ* 日書, and *ilch'an* 日纂. However, all of the personal diaries and government records surveyed in this thesis between 1580 and 1650 were given a title name with *ilgi*, *illok*, *-rok,* or *kiyrak* attached.
[179] *Kiryak* was used in only one of the surveyed diaries.
[180] Wang Chong 王充*, Lunheng Xiaoli* 論衡 效力.

including poems (*sihwa ch'ongnim* 詩話叢林) comprised the majority of unofficial records, with poetry giving more freedom for individual expression. Be that as it may, there were few diaries in the style of the most celebrated diaries from the late sixteenth century, as they lacked references to distinct individual perspectives. The development of the individual diary in the sixteenth century appears to have arisen due to two primary reasons: 1) changes in recording personal information by *sarim* adherents, and; 2) greater production of paper from the mid-fifteenth century.

Although increased paper production contributed to the number of records available in the sixteenth century, the influences that contributed to the individualised diary style are not particularly well defined. Scholars of early Chosŏn diary development observe that following King Yŏnsan'gun's reign and the Literati Purges, followers of the *sarim* began to write their own unofficial histories from an increasingly individualised perspective.[181] Yi Yŏnsun mentions that King Yŏnsan'gun's reign, the *sahwa*, and the experience of exile contributed to the development of the new diary format, but Yi Yŏnsun does not mention how or why these experiences led to the development of the new journal format.[182]

It may be pertinent to venture the thought that exclusion from government, coupled with threats of execution, produced writers willing to express their own direct individual thought only within the narrow confines of their personal diaries for the benefit of posterity (or other *sarim*). They sought to write a 'correct' version of history. Many of these diarists, thrown into exile (*yubae* 流配) might have considered their banishment as a form of 'travel' and proceeded to write a diary that employed a travel diary format to record their daily lives. By imagining themselves on a form of journey (which exile undeniably was to a certain extent), while working against he perceived corruption of the government, the authors were

[181] Yi Ukyŏng, *Hankuk ŭi ilgi munhak* (Seoul: Chipmundang, 1995), 8; and Yi Yŏnsun, *Miam Yu hŭichun ŭi ilgimunhak* (Seoul: Hyeam Publishers, 2012), 33.
[182] Yi Yŏnsun, *Miam* (2012), 32-37.

able to break away from the *yasa*, which was only a response to official history, and thereby create their own individualised histories. These real and imagined journeys became the bases of journal formats for the next century. Not only did they copy the forms of individual expression found in the travel journal, but they also maintained the forms of writing as well.

Travel journal writers appear to have copied the forms of records sent to the court by individuals in the military and bureaucracy to the court. These records mentioned the particular date (year, month, and day), the weather, and the events of the day. As the travel journals were usually intended to be submitted to court, they imitated the writing forms of official reports by the government. The new journal layout also continued to reproduce the format adopted by the travel journal. In most journals from the sixteenth century, and even until the twentieth century, you can still find the weather report in every journal entry, even though there was no personal reason to record this information. It was merely an accompanying characteristic that was never discarded and indicates that the individual journal probably originated from a public journal or public-private travel record.

The most famous records during this early period were the *Ŭmae ilgi* 陰崖日記 by Yi Cha 李耔 recorded from 1509 to 1516, and the *Mukjae ilgi* 默齋日記 by Yi Mun'gŏn 李文楗 from 1535 to 1567. Yi Cha was elevated to Seventh State Councilor (*Uch'amch'an* 右參贊, Sr. 2) in the State Council (*Ŭijŏngbu* 議政府) before travelling to China. After his return he was removed from office during the 1519 Literati Purge (*Kimyo sahwa* 己卯士禍) and exiled to the countryside in Ŭmsŏng 陰城. Yi Mun'gŏn was forced into exile following the 1545 Literati Purge (*Ŭlsa sahwa* 乙巳士禍). The writing style developed by these men may have been preserved by other authors in Chosŏn by two methods: 1) personally knowing the diarists and adapting their literary style, and; 2) publicizing their writing methods to a larger audience.

One author used in this chapter, Yu Hŭichun, author of the *Miam ilgi*, personally experienced exile from 1547 until 1565. Yu Hŭichun was both a prominent member of government, and his collected diaries were donated to the court and published following his death. He was also the grandson of Ch'oe Pu, the author of the *Pyohaerok*. The *Pyohaerok* was a personal record written by order of the court upon Ch'oe's return to Chosŏn.[183] In this diary, Ch'oe portrays both himself and his country as Confucian stalwarts.[184] But in his analysis of the diary, John Meskill says that he, 'found no discussion of the idea behind the travel diary, but the fact that many men of the late traditional or neo-Confucian period wrote them makes it clear that the form was a respectable one, [and the diary was] valued as contributing to knowledge of the earth and human experience'.[185] But the travel diary is clearly a government report intended to help government intelligence and also to help the writer receive rewards from the court. For the individual diary however, Ch'oe and his *sarim* kin might themselves be the key in understanding the popularity of the diary style, as other diarists from the Imjin War surveyed in this thesis had direct or indirect connections to the first recognized individual diary authors.

Following the *sarim* faction's rise to power in 1565, a number of works composed by deceased *sarim* were also published. These books included diaries such as the *Pyohaerok*, which might have further broadened the appeal of the new diary writing style, and after the Japanese invasions, people traveling might have used the *Pyohaerok* format to record their own journeys. The diary even made its way to Japan and may have influenced the individual journal there.[186] Meskill mentions that 'Confucianists would broaden their knowledge by

[183] Lene Sønderby Bech, "The Accidental Travels of a Korean Official (from the P'yohae-rok, 1488)," in *Other Routes: 1500 Years of African and Asian Travel Writing*, ed. Tabish Khair et al. (Oxford: Signal Books, 2006), 155.
[184] Ch'oe Pu, *Ch'oe Pu's Diary* (1965), 5.
[185] Ch'oe Pu, *Ch'oe Pu's Diary* (1965), 22.
[186] Joshua A. Fogel, *The Literature of Travel in the Japanese Rediscovery of China, 1862–1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).

reading Ch'oe's book' and there appears to have been 'a lively demand for the book' judging by its numerous reprints.[187] The *Pyohaerok*'s printing was even mentioned in the *sillok*.[188] Therefore, the popularity of the *Pyohaerok* and other similar journals may have set off the personal journal trend.

The difficulty of obtaining paper and learning the new diary format might also explain why only diaries from certain *yangban* families are available before and during the Imjin War. Even though we have a number of writing styles from other social groups, such as poetry composed by *chung'in* 中人 writers and Buddhist monks, the diary format might have only been utilized by the *yangban* before and during the Imjin War. Therefore, the individualised diary format that we identify from the sixteenth century might have become popularized by the literati and became a symbol of a *yangban* gentleman, before it was disseminated among, and adapted by, women and the non-*yangban* public.

As regards this thesis, the diaries are the most important element in the understanding of common socio-political identity. Because of the number and diversity of records available in this period, different ideas of socio-political identity can be compared with one another and may also be compared with the government's official socio-political identity. As with the official *sillok*, the individual diaries cannot be taken as literal truth, but as a version of the truth designed for different audiences. Therefore, only comparison with the *sillok* and a number of other personal diaries can bring about some clearer understanding of a Chosŏn-period common socio-political identity. In the substantive chapters that follow, a brief description of the author's background and writing influences is presented before the content is analysed in order to understand the particular person's cultural influences (*Bildung*) and the possible extent of the journal's readership.

[187] Ch'oe Pu, *Ch'oe Pu's Diary* (1965), 24.
[188] From 1607, *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 211:11b-12a.

1.10 Chapter Review

Overall this thesis is a diachronic examination of a sequence of crises over a period of seventy years. The method is an examination of terms and concepts using intertextual analysis, looking at synchronic meanings at key moments. The study begins with the second chapter, entitled 'Prelude to War' and is a review of vocabulary and ideas pertaining to the state, government, culture (and cultural items and places), and their connections with history and historical time. By focusing on the decades before the war began (1567-1591), the ideas and values prior to the war can be elucidated. Only then can the terminology and conceptions extant during the Imjin War be properly understood. The third chapter, entitled 'The Imjin War', offers an analysis of various diaries documenting the conflict. It will review all the passages in selected diaries that pertain to politics, culture, and history in order to comprehend the nature of Chosŏn socio-political identity within that synchronic context. The fourth chapter, entitled 'The Interwar Period and the Manchu Invasions', looks at the changes in identity following the Imjin War and the changes in language leading up to the First Manchu invasion. It will also look at important socio-political identity as defined during the rules of both King Kwanghae'gun and King Injo and attempt to identify changes in socio-political culture by looking at the uses of words and concepts. The chapter also analyses of the final conflict between Manchu and Chosŏn forces. It looks at the effects of the invasion on identity and, more importantly, the struggle for control over Chosŏn's identity by the various political factions. The final chapter, 'Conclusion', will summarise the aforementioned chapters and argue for a greater intertextuality and hermeneutical analysis of the words and ideas deployed during these conflicts.

1.11 Introduction Summary

Rather than concluding that there are simple divisions in history and some kind of development from one division to the next, it is better to conclude that many of the constituent parts of each of these purported and constructed socio-political identities existed at one and the same time in Chosŏn. Such an approach is argued by Alexander Woodside, as he sees many aspects of our 'modern' nation-states as existing in the past.[189] Yet a researcher should not conclude that Chosŏn people understood their socio-political identity in the same way as we do today. Such an approach would have to overlook the alternate words and identifications in their lexical environment (*Bildung*). The problem is to identify which signifiers of identity were dominant or in contention for dominance. There were multiple layers of official and non-official interpretation, and there were dynamics of change: the government could change the focus of socio-political identity, and other authors in Chosŏn may not have adhered to the official interpretation but constructed their own instead. In attempting to impose order and interpretation to render the welter of debate more intelligible, I will present various views within a balance of mortal and immortal together made that composed identity.

In attempting to impose order and interpretation, the historian inherits meanings and structures (other histories and theories) that affect his or her analysis.[190] The historian is never free from the constraints of his or her own time or place.[191] Although language is only a reflection of current usage, to imagine that the past and the present were the same or can be imagined as the same assumes that one can place present values on the past (teleology).[192]

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[189] Alexander Woodside, *Lost Modernities* (2006), 3.
[190] Michel De Certeau, *The Writing of History*, trans. Tom Conley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 3-4.
[191] De Certeau, *The Writing* (1988), 62-63.
[192] Michael Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 222.

Yet to completely say that we cannot understand the past, merely because it was different in time and place, would not lead to any useful conclusions.

During the Imjin War and the Manchu Invasions, the royal family promoted the safety of the mortal king, while other people promoted the ideals of Confucian values, immortal state symbols, and histories. Suddenly, words such as *munmul* 文物 (cultural items or achievements) became more common following the Japanese invasion in order to persuade the people to fight for the king, culture, and history of the Eastern Realm (*Tongbang* 東方, i.e., Korea). This is also the case during the Manchu Invasions, but in a highly deeply fractured court that used political symbols for partisan ends. World outlook also changed significantly over the fifty years of foreign conflict. The Eastern Region (*Tongbang*) referred specifically to the Korean peninsula within the Chinese (Ming) cultural sphere during the Imjin War. At certain points, there was an efflorescence of seemingly strong socio-political elements, and at other times there was not. At times of national crisis, such as the Imjin War and the Manchu Invasions, the stresses were great and the questions considered below came to the fore.

2. THE STAGE FOR WAR: 1567 – 1592

When Sŏnjo was appointed king in 1567, he became the head of a country more centralized, learned, and diplomatically independent than any European state of his time. The Korean peninsula had been united for over six centuries and had continued to exist during Khitan (Liao) military aggression, the occupation of the Mongol (later Yuan) Empire, and the rise of the Ming Empire. In the decades before the Japanese invasions, pedagogy, philosophy, and politics supported the broadening and deepening of an early knowledge-economy based on printed materials and personally written manuscripts. Such a time for the expansion of knowledge and new learning had not been known since the reign of King Sejong 世宗 (r. 1418-1450). Yet the expansion of new ideologies, outlooks, and methods for learning in the late sixteenth century were more significant than earlier projects. Works were more widely distributed, implemented, and accepted by the government, by the literati, and by competing factions prior to the Imjin War. These new means for edification resulted in an enrichment and expansion of Chosŏn social identity that amplified the reach of political identity beyond the highest echelons of society. As foreign political contacts increased, raids by foreigners on the northern border and southern coasts gave rise to debates on the legal and cultural identities of the Chosŏn people.

Between the years 1567 and 1592, the *Sŏnjo sillok* and *Sŏnjo sujŏng sillok* frequently mention components of social, historical, and cultural identities. But on closer inspection, the acknowledgement of these concepts appears to be mostly rhetorical: cultural concepts used to create identification within the state were adopted by individuals in response to their own contemporary (political) considerations and arguments at court. As the *sarim* faction divided into more clearly defined political factions at court, the Easterners (*tong'in* 東人) and Westerners (*sŏ'in* 西人), began to adhere to certain principles that defined their agenda and philosophy. Expressions of common socio-political identity usually reflected a temporary conjuncture rather than a set group of ideological constructs irrespective of social position or political aspiration. Therefore, a record made by any one institution or individual must be analysed in its contemporary environment and compared with other records to reveal a more accurate picture of the situation.

Apparent philosophical divisions exist in any political environment, but by using common socio-political identifiers, individuals acknowledge the importance of certain prevalent norms and values. Leading up to the Imjin War there was a strong notion of common socio-political identity in the official records that became increasingly important to the government. Foreign invasion (that could lead to 'negative-ethnicity') did not create a social reaction that resulted in socio-political cohesion, but merely made elements of the already present socio-political identity more visible. Outside its own borders, Chosŏn fought for influence in a competitive hierarchy of nations attending at the Ming Court. True, Chosŏn was a junior partner in the eyes of the Chinese Empire, but Chosŏn had to constantly fluctuate in the realm of real politics: behaving both as a vassal and as an independent state. Subjects of the Chosŏn state were also legally bound to their country of origin, and this

enforced form of legally recognized citizenship[193] helped strengthen socio-political identity. Indeed, a form of extra-territoriality appeared to have existed during this period whereby subjects had to return to their country of origin and were subject to their own country's laws no matter where they were physically located.

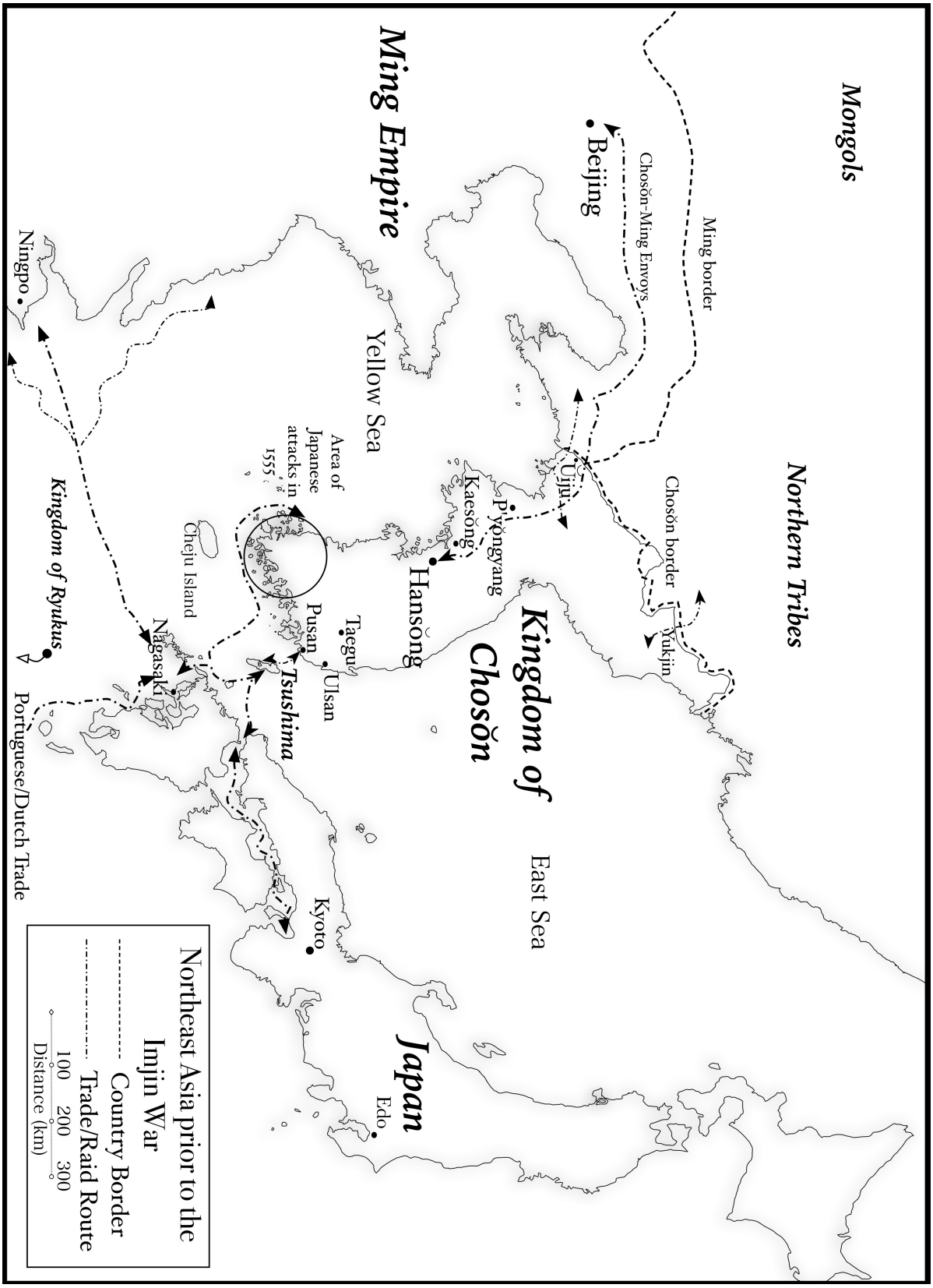
On the frontiers, foreign incursions and the arrival of foreign immigrants presented both a legal problem and an existential military threat to the kingdom of Chosŏn. New immigrants challenged Chosŏn's seemingly rigid social order as the immigrants (such as the *hyanghwa'in*) did not fit certain social categories and designated roles. At the same time, cultural characteristics that separated Chosŏn subjects from foreign peoples and foreign customs became both more visible and more important for the government. The increase of foreign migrants also coincided with more foreign incursions originating from China, Manchuria, and the Japanese archipelago. These invasions tested both the military preparedness of Chosŏn and raised questions concerning the loyalties of both Chosŏn and naturalised subjects.

For the government at least, the broader socio-political identity was a great concern and this reaction by the government is similar to other centralized, bureaucratic states before and after 1900. Yet for the individual diary authors addressed in this thesis, both inside and outside government office, socio-political identity had less to do with the foreign world and more to do with state, local, and family rituals and relations. Diaries from the period mention political identity, but the authors tended to express less concern about macro-level socio-political identity and focused more upon their own intimate social relations. This division in views is perhaps explained by the Chosŏn court's access to additional state-wide information and the fact that the invasions to the north and the influx of refugees into the peninsula

[193] Citizenship is used here to denote belonging to one's home state (*pon'guk* 本國) as a subject to the king and country, rather than modern citizenship, which can include participatory democracy.

presented not just military, but major socio-political problems for the Chosŏn court. Most individuals were, unlike the government, not directly affected by these issues and did not experience the small-scale attacks.

The purpose of this chapter is to understand what concepts formed part of the Chosŏn state's purported socio-political identity from the time of Sŏnjo's enthronement to the beginning of the Imjin War in 1592. Examining socio-political identity includes understanding the definitions of the king, state, government, territory, mutual history, and the notion of the *people*, and ascertaining how Chosŏn regarded its own place in the international order. These concepts were the most important socio-political questions for the dynasty and continued to be the most important until the end of the dynasty in 1910. The chapter will rely on two official records, the *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* and a few entries from the *Sŏnjo sujŏng sillok*. In addition, the chapter will interpret socio-political identity from four diaries prior to the Imjin War: Yi I Yulgok's 李珥 栗谷 *Soktam ilgi* 石潭日記, Kwŏn Munhae's 權文海 *Ch'ogan ilgi* 草澗日記, Yi Chŏngjŭng's 李庭增 *Songgan ilgi* 松間日記, and Yu Hŭichun's 柳希春 *Miam ilgi* 眉巖日記.



Map 1: East Asia before the Imjin War

2.1 Sŏnjo's Political Inheritance

King Myŏngjong 明宗 (r. 1545 – 1567), who had inherited the throne in 1545 after his half-brother King Injong 仁宗 (r. 1544 – 1545) died prematurely, passed away in 1567 without leaving an official heir. While he was nominally recognized as the king of Chosŏn, it was Myŏngjong's mother, Queen Munjŏng 文定王后,[194] who held the reins of power during both her sons' tenures as monarchs. Queen Munjŏng's own demise in 1565, followed by King Myŏngjong's death two years later decidedly altered the political landscape of Chosŏn. The potential for civic unrest and bureaucratic sedition were high. The kingdom of Chosŏn had just emerged from a century of tyrants (King Yŏnsan'gun 燕山君), coups d'états (1506), politically motivated murders, and the first through fourth Literati Purges (*sahwa* 士禍) in 1498, 1504, 1519, and 1545.[195]

In spite of the potential chaos that could have engulfed the state, the members of the royal court began a more amicable process by mutually selecting the next heir to the throne. It was settled that the sixteen-year-old Yi Yŏn 李昖, third son of Myŏngjong's brother Yi Cho 李峋,[196] would become the next head of state. Today, Yi Yŏn is referred to by his second posthumous title - King Sŏnjo 宣祖. Sŏnjo's elevation to the throne is regarded as the end of the Meritorious Elite (*hungup'a* 勳舊派) faction, who had controlled the Chief State Councillor Office (*yŏng'ŭijŏng* 領議政) for a century, and the rise of the *sarim* faction. However, it is unclear if this was a true political coup. Rather, it is more likely that mere titles and allegiances changed hands within a 'core group of Neo-Confucian literati who, in large

[194] Queen Consort (third wife) (*wangbi* 王妃) from 1517 to 1544, Dowager Queen (*wangdaebi* 王大妃) from 1544 to 1545, Great Dowager Queen (*taewang taebi* 大王大妃) from 1545 to 1565. She is also claimed to have orchestrated the *ŭlsa sahwa* literati purge 乙巳士禍 in 1545.
[195] See Edward W. Wagner, *The Literati Purges: Political Conflict in Early Yi Korea* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard East Asian Monographs (58): 1975).
[196] Later elevated to the status of *taewŏn'gun* 大院君 Tŏkhŭng 德興.

part, were members of the very same lineages the so-called meritorious elite had represented.'[197]

After the 'victory' of the *sarim*, the once apparently unified faction divided into two distinct parties between the years 1567 and 1575. Fights broke out over appointments at the Ministry of Personnel (*i'jo* 吏曹), and two main political factions emerged.[198] The factions took titles describing the location of the factional patriarch's residence in Hansŏng in relation to the other patriarch. Known as the Easterners (*tong'in* 東人) and Westerners (*sŏ'in* 西人), these two groups dominated philosophical and political matters until 1591 when Northerners (*pug'in* 北人) separated from the Easterners to form their own faction. The year 1575 marked the beginning of 'Factional Conflict' (*tangjaeng* 黨爭, or *ŭlhae tangnon* 乙亥黨論), though this was a mere official recognition of a division that had occured from long before.

The political rivalry from 1575 to 1592 has been blamed for creating an ineffectual government that fought a frivolous oratorical battle and led to the Chosŏn government's overlooking Japan's military capabilities. Yet, blaming the Imjin War on factional strife may have been a justifiable excuse for the court, rather than an explanation for the actual extent of animosity between both factions in creating an ineffectual government. In spite of the strife, large government projects proceeded. The two major philosophical leaders of the two main factions were in contact with one another and debated philosophical issues. Although factional identity existed, all factions supported major elements of the same expanding socio-political identity being created during this era.

At the same time, Chosŏn was besieged by raiders on its northern borders and faced increasing numbers of Ming refugees and plunderers from the Liaodong peninsula. Of most interest for later generations were the increasing numbers of orchestrated attacks on the

[197] Eckert, *Korea* (2002), 140.
[198] Eckert, *Korea* (2002), 142.

southern coast of Chosŏn by the Wae 倭 (*wakō*, Japanese-based) pirates. Rather than blaming the future conflict on factional strife, Chosŏn officials either neglected to see or did not understand how to react properly to the rise of a unifying Japanese and Manchurian state that was taking place to the southeast and to the north. Of the two, the Manchu raiders probably represented a greater perceived military threat than the Japanese, and the focus on the northern border attests to this. In addition, foreign relations with Japan were completely disorganized. Indirect and direct communications with duplicitous negotiators, who held fraudulent posts and seals (openly recognized by both sides), while working for the Chosŏn court, Tsushima lords, and Hideyoshi's government, created an ever more disoriented international environment whereby the Chosŏn envoys may not have had enough information to anticipate a full Japanese invasion.[199] Nor did Chosŏn communicate information concerning relations with Japan openly to the Ming Empire.

In the decades prior to the Imjin War, the Chosŏn international and national political order experienced a number of challenges that changed its socio-political identity. At the same time, the country had to confront a rapidly shifting international order that challenged both Chosŏn's conceptual framework and its actual security. Nevertheless, this was the era when a new socio-political identity was being written by the government, the factions, and various scholars throughout the country. Known or unknown to the government, certain immortal and mortal elements from history, laws, kingship, and governance were constructed during the pre-war era and would be used to solidify identity during wartime. The next section will look at the parts of the basis of identity that later provided important elements the socio-political identity prevailing during the Imjin War.

[199] See Kenneth R. Robinson, "Violence" (2015), 42-69.

2.2 Literary Inheritance and Socio-Political Knowledge

Sŏnjo's Chosŏn was a country rich in cultural inheritance from a multitude of countries and dynasties. Regional, Confucian, Buddhist, peninsular, Chosŏn, foreign, local and many other forms of customs and writings existed simultaneously. Chosŏn was not a monocultural hermit kingdom devoid of outside influence, nor was it a country that slavishly followed the standards of other, more powerful states. Kingdoms on the Korean peninsula 'wrote their histories to establish a separate and distinct political and cultural history for Korea'[200] and the '[…] violation of [Chinese] norms offered the peoples on the Korean peninsula the room to develop their own identity […].'[201] However, the distinct culture may have not been so much a 'violation' of Chinese norms than a natural cultural progression due to an independent state's social, geographical, and linguistic differences. Inherited histories specifically focusing on the Korean peninsula such as the *Samguk sagi* 三國史記 [The History of the Three Kingdoms], the *Samguk yusa* 三國遺事 [Memorabilia and mirabilia of the Three Kingdoms], the *Koryŏsa* 高麗史 [Official History of the Koryŏ Dynasty], the *Tongguk t'onggam* 東國通鑑 [Comprehensive Mirror of the Eastern Country], and the *Kukcho pogam* 國朝寶鑑 [Treasure Mirror of Our Dynasty][202] existed alongside a multitude of other texts that originated in China. Many of these texts were either published in limited quantities or were unavailable for the public to read directly, yet language, laws, and customs were based upon and affected by their teachings. In spite of not directly seeing the works, people could still be influenced by them.

As was the case in any (contemporary) bureaucratic state, knowledge of historic socio-political identities and contemporary socio-political identity depended on access to

[200] Don Baker, "Writing History in Pre-Modern Korea" (2012), 103
[201] Remco Breuker, Grace Koh and James B. Lewis, "The Tradition of Historical Writing in Korea" (2012), 119.
[202] These books existed alongside many texts which are no longer in extent due to the destruction of the Imjin War.

information. In Chosŏn, socio-political identity spread through the education of normative values and definitions, the government's enforcement of laws and values, and the people's own adherence to common laws and values. Although enforcement was the visible result of the state's power, people acquired knowledge on their own through education and experience, both written and oral, and this in turn affected the enforcement of laws and norms. This means that written documents were but one of many methods of spreading these ideals amongst the people. Textual culture was primarily the concern of the aristocratic literati and military class (*yangban* 兩班) and the middle artisan classes (*chungmin* 中民), as their social position was determined by the parameters of a text-based examination (enforced by government) that was one of the only paths to government office, wealth and maintenance of status.

Modern theorists, such as Benedict Anderson, argue that a form of modern socio-political identification (nationalism) could only have occurred through print capitalism: massive print-press editions of books in the vernacular that were available in a capitalist market.[203] This mass literary production and education of national identity, Anderson claims, was only initiated in nineteenth century Europe. Yet, both of Anderson's assertions are questionable, as he does not talk about the history of publications, or similarities and differences in the inculcating of socio-political identity before the eighteenth century. He confronts a problem that Gadamer tried to solve with the fusion of horizons: understand people in their own time after looking at the criteria they used to create their worldview. Anderson does not seem to be able to envisage any other methods than those used in the modern era. 'Pre-modern' states may not have been exactly the same as 'modern' states, but neither were they absolutely different from them.

[203] Anderson, *Imagined*, p. 18.

Pre-modern states such as sixteenth-century Chosŏn were interested in educating their populations. Access to written materials concerning socio-political identity in Chosŏn appears to have been on the rise due to new publications in both Chinese characters and the vernacular before 1592. Even a hundred years before Sŏnjo's reign, Sejong sent government produced copies of the *Four Books and Five Classics* (*sasŏ ogyŏng* 四書五經) to every government-sanctioned provincial school (*hyang'gyo* 鄕校), and the *Lessons for the Home* (*naehun* 內訓) was written and published, specifically for women, in the vernacular.[204] The printed word, as well as dissemination of those texts, were the basis of the government's legitimacy and authority, even if the word was unseen by the masses. Only the means of production and breadth of consumption differentiate Chosŏn and the modern world.

The *sarim* appear to have spurred on the new educational trend, and it was part of an effort to educate the public that had begun a century before. Prior kings had overseen and regulated printing and knowledge in Chosŏn, but in Sŏnjo's Chosŏn a greater number of books that could be used for the edification of a large number of people were produced. The number of officially printed books was not always important, as books and information therein could be transcribed, copied, and orally transmitted to the other members of the public at large. The publication of the canonical texts in Sŏnjo's reign with many other texts in both scripts is evidence of the government zeal to provide accessible information on preferred socio-political ideals and norms over the entirety of the country.

Sŏnjo's early reign marked the return and development of a powerful publishing and manuscript culture, coupled with a new pedagogical methodology: the translation of core Classical texts into vernacular Korean (*ŏnmun* 諺文). Korean paper (*hanji* 韓紙) was widely available with the government, local authorities, and temples producing massive quantities of

[204] Lee Jongmook, Kim Moonsik (Translated by Lee Kang Hahn), *Kyunjanggak and the Cultural History of Books* (Seoul: Acanet, 2010), 29.

paper for both writing purposes and other manufactures. There were various grades of paper products in Chosŏn with different paper materials that affected the price and use of the paper,[205] and paper was also given to civil servants as part of their income. Paper was also a prized export product during Sŏnjo's time, with Korean paper (known as either *Koryŏji* 高麗紙 or *Chosŏnji* 朝鮮紙) being the most sought-after drawing paper in China.[206] This is not to say that everyone in the country was a literate writer. As stated before, the written word was primarily the domain of the artisan and aristocratic classes. It simply means that the possibility of one method of information spreading, writing, had the potential to be much greater than some theorists have proposed. As this thesis primarily relies on diaries written by members of the *yangban*, the distribution of paper, books, and textual information is important for this study as written texts have hitherto provided the only means of understanding individual interpretation of socio-political symbols and identity.

Book culture in Sŏnjo's early reign appears to have been influenced by events in the previous century when the *sarim* were persecuted during the Literati Purges. In 1498, King Yŏnsan'gun ordered the burning of wood-block copies of Kim Chongjik's 金宗直 *Cho ŭi jemun* 弔義帝文 [Lamenting for the Righteous Emperor], a personally-collected history that satirized and alluded to Sejo's usurpation of the throne. Even possessing this book was a crime, and a scholar who followed Kim Chongjik, Ch'oe Pu 崔溥 (author of the *Pyohaerok*), was executed after he was (supposedly) found to have hidden the book in his home.[207] The Literati Purges ended with many of the *sarim*'s contemporary philosophical and literary works being destroyed. During the Literati Purges, the government made sure to both kill off

[205] See Lee Seung-chul, *Hanji: Everything You Need to Know* (Seoul: Hyeonamsa, 2012) for more information on the various types of Korean paper.
[206] 'Renowned painter of the Ming, Dong Qichang (1555-1636) was fond of Korean paper for its snow-white color and mirrorlike surface' in Kai-Wing Chow, *Publishing, Culture, and Power in Early Modern China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 32.
[207] Lee Chaejŏng, *Chosŏn ch'ulp'an chusik hoesa* (Antiquus: Paju, 2009), 93.

political rivals and eliminate texts that could injure their preferred socio-political identity. This may have led to *sarim* adherents producing additional individual writings to record their own versions of historical and philosophical debates.

The exact reasons for the developing changes in publication, edification, and literary style remain unknown. Nevertheless, following the removal of the dictatorial King Yŏnsan'gun, the *sarim*'s works took on a new importance, even as purges continued in 1519 and 1545. This was especially true for the personal histories written during the Literati Purges, and other books written by deceased *sarim* members. One personally collected history by Chŏng Hŭiryang's 鄭希良 even became the basic material for King Yŏnsan'gun's court history: *Yŏnsan'gun ilgi* 燕山君日記.[208] In addition, the *sarim* began to associate themselves with the vernacular, possibly due to King Yŏnsan'gun's forbidding the teaching and distribution of texts containing vernacular characters.[209] This was supposedly due to the distribution of posters and texts criticizing the King, and the dowager Queen Chŏnghŭi's 貞熹王后 letters that alluded to King Sejo's 世祖 (r. 1455-1468, Yŏnsan'gun's great-grandfather) illegal usurpation of the throne in 1455, both written in the vernacular.[210] The end of King Yŏnsan'gun's reign and the gradual rise of the *sarim* spurred on publications that promoted *sarim* political power and ideals, and the vernacular script appears to have been adopted for political purposes. Either the script was adopted by the *sarim* to attest to their victory over the former despot, or they (and others) intended to use the vernacular to create new learning methodologies and bring education to a wider audience.[211]

The *sarim* began to print books in the vernacular that included the basic textbook, *Elementary Learning* (*Sohak* 小學), and *The Illustrated Conduct of the Three Bonds*

[208] Lee Chaejŏng (2009), 94.
[209] Lee Chaejŏng (2009), 95.
[210] Lee Chaejŏng (2009), 95.
[211] Lee Chaejŏng (2009), 45.

(*Samgang haengsildo* 三綱行實圖). These Chinese books had been available in Korea for centuries, but they were now beginning to include the vernacular and Korean-based examples in their stories. In 1511, King Chungjong 中宗 (r. 1506-1544) commanded that 'since our customs are becoming murky, print copies of the *Illustrated Conduct of the Three Bonds* and send them to Seoul and the counties.' Thereupon, 2,490 copies were subsequently published.[212] Starting in 1514 the *Continuation of the Illustrated Conduct of the Three Bonds* (*Soksamgang haengsildo* 續三綱行實圖), a version of the *Illustrated Conduct of the Three Bonds* appeared that included Korean examples of loyalty and filial piety alongside the Chinese examples was produced.[213] *Elementary Learning*, an educational primer for children, became the symbol of the *sarim* educational focus. Cho Kwangjo and Kim Anguk stated in 1517 that they wanted the *Elementary Learning* to be read in every home, and they also wrote promulgations in the vernacular to further their educational (and political) agenda.[214] The famous philosopher Yi I Yulgok even wrote a version of the *Elementary Learning* entitled the *Collected Commentaries on the Schools of the Elementary Learning* (*Sohak chega chipju* 小學諸家集註) to support the reading of the *sohak* text. The drive for the new education continued over the century. For Sŏnjo's Chosŏn, the 'controlling of any histories and writings,'[215] and overseeing 'the distribution of books throughout the country [since they] connected the capital and regions'[216] were vital elements in regulating the new socio-political identity.

[212] Lee Chaejŏng (2009), 25.
[213] Lee Chaejŏng (2009), 26.
[214] Lee Chaejŏng (2009), 35.
[215] Lee Chungyŏn, *Cheak' ŭi unmyŏng: Chosŏn~iljegang jŏmgi kŭmsŏ ŭi sahwae sasangsa* (Hyean: Seoul, 2001), 87-88.
[216] Lee Chaejŏng (2009), 14.

Later in 1587, the government oversaw the metal-type printing of *Elementary Learning* in both Classical Chinese and the vernacular.[217] Metal-type printing was often reserved only for the most important publications. *Mencius* (*maengja ŏnhae* 孟子諺解) was published using both Chinese and the vernacular in 1590 and was part of a project to provide a new translation of the *Four Books* and *Elementary Learning* that began in 1581. Due to the Imjin War, the project was discontinued and was later finished by King Kwanghae'gun. In 1611, the vernacular version of the 'Great Learning' (*taehak ŏnhae* 大學諺解) was published alongside *Lessons for the Home* in both Chinese and the vernacular.[218] This new appreciation of *Elementary Learning* was further forwarded with both exact and liberal translations of the book made in 1518 and 1587 that included both Chinese and vernacular scripts.[219]

Redistribution of printed works was not the only way to spread the written word. In Chosŏn there were no 'professional authors, editors, publishers, printers, and booksellers' as those found in the present,[220] and the first official bookshop was opened in Hansŏng only in 1551.[221] It was also quite expensive to buy some versions of government-certified copies of texts, which limited a wider marketplace for their publications.[222] Be that as it may, Chosŏn's knowledge economy was not merely based on printed materials, but relied on the cheaper method of copying texts by hand. Laws, and the costs of making the necessary moveable type or woodblock panels for the publication of a single book might have also been contributing factors for limiting the costs of making printed works,[223] but during the dynasty printed

[217] Sohn Po-ki, *Hanguk ŭi kohwal'ja* [Early Korean Typography] (Seoul: 1982).
[218] Lee Chaejŏng (2009), 39.
[219] Lee Chaejŏng (2009), 56.
[220] Boudewijn Walraven, "Reader's Etiquette, and Other Aspects of Book Culture in Chosŏn Korea", 237 – 265, in ed. by Wilt L. Idema, *Books in Numbers: Sixty-fifth Anniversary of the Harvard-Yenching Library* (Cambridge: Harvard-Yenching Library, 2007), 238.
[221] Walraven, 252.
[222] The government edition of the Mencius cost 25 rolls and 3 sheets of paper or one roll of cotton and two *mal* of rice (36 litres) in Boudewijn Walraven's "Reader's Etiquette, and Other Aspects of Book Culture in Chosŏn Korea", 252.
[223] As compared to the production of printing presses in the West that primarily used the Roman alphabet.

materials never dominated the field of publications, and 'manuscripts, woodblock editions, and moveable type editions existed side-by-side until the end of the dynasty.'[224] In addition, the government in Hansŏng was not always the foremost printing centre in Chosŏn as the 'government divided up the publication process and printing techniques went to the provinces.'[225] Buddhists also continued to carve wood blocks and print books for the government and private customers in Chosŏn.[226] The most important printing centres in Chosŏn were located in Kyŏngsang province, the first province to be conquered and held by the Japanese during the Imjin War.

However, the critical form of documented knowledge was probably the written manuscript: hand copied notes taken from other copies for personal use, for profit, or for posterity. Manuscripts were cheaper to produce,[227] and also probably constituted a form of written exercise for the aristocracy and middle classes preparing for examinations. Moreover, manuscripts were often more appreciated for their aesthetic value.[228] For these reasons, the number of people who could access, read, and redistribute printed socio-political knowledge must have been much higher than the mere number of official publications would suggest.[229] After the government distributed numbers of limited copies to government offices and schools, a form of free manuscript market appears to have disseminated written knowledge much further afield. Letters, and a new epistolary culture have also been attributed to the rise and expansion of a new educational school and philosophy. The efflorescence of letter writing is said to have bound the growing community of *sarim* together, and also created

[224] Walraven, 238.
[225] Walraven, 244.
[226] Walraven, 247.
[227] '[…] at least for the Yangban if not in office,' in Walraven, 242.
[228] Walraven, 242.
[229] Such as lyrics: *muga* 舞歌 and *kasa* 歌詞.

competing interpretations of socio-political identity to rival the government's own preferred identities and philosophies.[230]

In the decades before the Imjin War a new education system was being actively created by the government. It was spread through promulgations, publications, and enforcement by the government itself. At the same time, there was a variety of personally published books and copied manuscripts that sent the promoted knowledge further afield. Social norms and government examinations then gave parameters to socio-political expression. As identity is a web of intermeshing ideas that constantly change, any exact definition of certain concepts over a long period of time (decades or hundreds of years) becomes an ever more elusive affair. For example, if we were to define Chosŏn social conventions according to 'Great Learning' 大學, the apex of Confucian society was the ruler. He existed as both the leader and as model for the kingdom, and he was the mortal bond for the state, kingdom, and people. Heaven (*ch'ŏn* 天) and the world (*ch'ŏnha* 天下) remained the immortal philosophical ultimate, and the state (*kuk* 國) was the device which created social order. Although the structure of Chosŏn society basically reflected this hierarchical model, such a structured view of Confucian identity and beliefs does little to explain Chosŏn's identity in the late sixteenth century. Korean societies never followed such basic and vague principles without attaching additional components deriving from the current state of affairs.

Whatever the form of dissemination of information adopted, the various meanings and reinterpretations of identity were able to flourish and grow during this period. Socio-political identity in Chosŏn was in some sense ephemeral and existed in a nebula of various histories and meanings. Often identities were mere temporary expedients for the benefit of a single group or individual. Yet a common-core identity existed and only by intertextual analysis of

[230] Hwisang Cho, "Community of Letters" (PhD. Thesis: Columbia University, 2010), 4.

the period's texts can a modern reader come to understand their meanings. Only by defining the identity of the king, the definition and legal understanding of the people, the definitions of the state, the importance of customs and histories, and by the understanding of foreign countries from sources in the *sillok* and diaries can a true definition be approached and a 'fusion of horizons' be properly created.

2.3 The Pre-Imjin War Chosŏn State

> The state (*kukka* 國家) is but a great vessel! Rebellious schemes are (*great*) evil! By using the great evil, they try to peer into the great vessel but cannot do this for even a day.[231]

The physical and mentally-created boundaries of the state provide tangible parameters for an encompassing socio-political identity. As is the case today, identification with a state or government was an intrinsic component of pre-modern states attempting to maintain some form of order in the country. Laws, codes, and norms written in the aforementioned texts were made to enhance a desired order in society. Therefore, part of socio-political identity relied on the conceptualization of the state, even if different peoples within Chosŏn society had different levels of understanding about the state, its works, and its histories. Although the state is a mere concept used to bring some stability to identity, people who worked to define the parameters of socio-political identity within the state, such as politicians and philosophers, created commonly accepted understandings of the state for internal consumption. The state was the battleground for certain ideas and groups in the promotion of their factional agenda, but there were some elements of state identity that remained more constant.

There was no single name for the Chosŏn state, and people in Chosŏn did not usually refer to their country as Chosŏn 朝鮮, but rather as *kuk* 國, *a'guk* 我國, *kuksa* 國事, or *kukka* 國家. This is still common in modern Korea. In the *Chosŏn wangjo sillok*, the word

[231] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 23:25 a (1589.12.14).

Chosŏn(*kuk*) 朝鮮(國) was primarily reserved for the diplomatic or formal title used by Ming and Japanese officials.[232] Chosŏn, the dynastic name, was primarily reserved for the international audience, not the people residing in Chosŏn itself. The most prevalent character used in the *sillok* and in all the diaries examined here to describe the state is *kuk* 國 and its variants. *Kuk*, generally translated as 'the state' or 'country', represented both the physical country (boundaries) and the polity (the state and government). *Kuk* typically appeared with other characters depending on the context. *Kuk* is used to both describe China, sometimes as *sangguk* 上國, and Japan, as Ilbon(*kuk*) 日本(國) or Wae'*guk* 倭國. Chosŏn is signified by *kuk* 國 or *a'guk* 我國.[233]

Leading up to the Imjin War, border incursions by the northern Ho 胡, attacks by the Japanese (Wae 倭), and the increased communications with the Ming led Chosŏn to see itself as part of a larger political world. This view originates from the increased attacks by (and trade with) the Ho 胡 to the north of Chosŏn, and the consolidation of the new political state in Japan that required more political contact. More particularly, the new outlook for Chosŏn can be seen in the use of the characters *a'guk*. *A'guk,* literally 'my or our country,' which became more commonly used in the international context rather than the national context.[234] It was still used to describe the country outside of the international context, but other words usually accompanied it, such as *kuksa* 國事, when they commented on the internal workings of the state. The word *kuk* is used in an international environment when describing 'our' Chosŏn polity (or territory), and other polities. But interestingly enough, *kuk* is not used to describe non-state actors in the regions, such as the Ho 胡, which did not constitute a state in

[232] *Chosŏnkuk* in *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 21:13 b (1587.08.10); and *Chosŏn* in *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 22:27 b (1588.11.17).
[233] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok*: 25:13 b-14 a (1591.10.24).
[234] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok*: 25:3 a (1591.01.10), and; *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok*: 25:5 a (1591.02.01).

the minds of Chosŏn officials. However, Japan, although referred to as the Wae 倭 and considered similar in its behavior and barbarity to the Ho 胡, was recognized as a country (and perhaps with a legitimate government for diplomatic communication). Therefore, the concept of the state *kuk* 國 in Chosŏn socio-political identity grew stronger as other state and non-state actor's presence became stronger, and as they exerted more political and military pressure on Korea. Such things had occurred in Korean history before - such as the wars with the Khitan, the Mongolian invasion and occupation, and Sejong's military ventures to the northern borders and to Tsushima Island. But in Sŏnjo's early reign, there were only low-level military threats and yet inter-state relations increased and state consciousness also grew. Although a consciousness about the state grew, the borders of the state and the non-Chosŏn world did not play a significant role inside the country unless one was a government official with military or ambassadorial duties or until a large foreign incursion occurred.

Internally, two other words connected with the state became more prevalent and were used: *kuksa* 國事 and *kukka* 國家. When officials mentioned the state of Chosŏn within the court or the boundaries of the country, they would typically refer to *kuksa* 國事*,* which could be define 'the state' or the 'apparatus and workings of the state', or officials would refer to *kukka* 國家, which could also define 'the state,' 'the king' and to an extent, the government. Each word has its own particular context, with *kuksa* 國事 relating to the broader concept of the state (*kuk* 國) (the immortal element), and *kukka* 國家 both with the inner workings of the king, royal family (the mortal element), court, and country.

There are two different interpretations of the word *kuksa* 國事. In the following texts we can see both of the meanings used by politicians during Sŏnjo's reign to advance different causes.

In the mornings and evenings, (he) focuses his energies on the workings of the

state (*kuksa* 國事) […] [235]

Now focus all the workings of the state (*kuksa* 國事) onto this one job.[236]

If he dies for the affairs of the state (*kuksa* 國事), rather than receive an immoral name, how can this be considered bad? [237]

Kuksa 國事 is a malleable concept that can change to fit the desired situation. It has two meanings with one simply referring to the workings of the state (i.e., bureaucracy), but the other containing a socio-political and even a moral component. The fluidity of the word is significant, because it can be used in a multitude of different situations concerning the country. In other words, people can both give and take away meanings inherent in *kuksa* 國事. It could concern the king, the government, history, culture, or other socio-political elements. It could also lessen the importance of some of these elements, which would be a concern to those in power. Be that as it may, before the Imjin War the government used the concept to support both the bureaucratic and cultural elements that inevitably linked the two and reinforced the government's power. Yet this nominal control of concepts and ideas inherent in *kuksa* 國事 broke down when the government lost control of large areas of the country.

A similar duality in meaning can be seen in the word *kukka* 國家. At one point it is used as the state (*kuk* 國*, a'guk* 我國*,* or *kuksa* 國事). One such example would be, 'The *kukka*'s 國家 security relies on the safety and worries of the people'.[238] Before the Imjin war, *kukka* 國家 was, for the most part, used to describe the state in a non-international environment. It is both the state and the king's household, and is best thought of as referring to the court. Both elements were combined, and focused on the mortal king and his family.

[235] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok*: 23:3 a (1589.05.01).
[236] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok*: 22:22 a-b (1588.intercalary06.27)
[237] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok*: 22:15 b (1588.05.21).
[238] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 25:14 b (1591.12.01).

Unlike *kuksa* 國事, elements of the royal household could not be easily removed from *kukka* 國家, and it was therefore a more narrowly defined and less flexible concept.

The ideas of the state, state workings, and state functions were important elements of socio-political identity. There were different words with their own particular uses and inherent meanings vis-a-vis the state. Yet, during the invasions in the decades that followed this pre-war period, the strict usages of these words to describe Chosŏn in different realms and situations began to transform, until people used a variety of names for the country. The ebb and flow of foreign armies across the peninsula, with the breakdown of a central government having direct control over these concepts, must have contributed to the diversification of the concept of the state, and the mortal and immortal elements contained therein.

2.4 The Monarch: Mortal and Immortal Bonds of State

> His majesty summons Yi Hwang 李滉, and Yi said: Whether or not the state (*kukka* 國家) remains in good governance or in chaos, depends of the virtue of the king. The fulfilling of the lord's virtue depends on honoring the wise men and taking lectures.[239]

At the apex of the Chosŏn corporeal (mortal) social order sat the king. Just as was the case with the state, the king had a multitude of different titles for various occasions and social roles. Sŏnjo could be referred to as *wang* 王, *kukwang* 國王, *kun* 君, *chŏnha* 殿下, or *pyeha* 陛下. Each title, though similar, was used to express a slight difference in his connection to the state in the international arena (i.e., *kukwang* 國王), to Confucian customs and conventions (*kun* 君), or in direct petition or speech (*chŏnha* 殿下). Be that as it may, the king had a primary ceremonial role to fulfill: the cultivation of virtue (*tŏk* 德) for the stability of the state. Sŏnjo's sole philosophical function was to provide a moral and mortal core for

[239] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 1:1 a (1567.10.01).

all the people in Chosŏn. Whether or not the king had enhanced personal authority did not lessen the supposed importance of his cultivation of virtue. Although the king's paramount position in society did not change over the course of the dynasty, his relation to, and power over certain cultural symbols was modified in each era, and this change led to changes in the king's metaphysical and real power.

Yet the king's legitimacy relied on the bases of two concepts: his own personal (mortal) virtue, and his connection to immortal elements that enhanced, or validated, his right to kingly virtue. The preservation of the king's dual sources of virtue and social position was directly connected to the governing of the country, and, more theoretically, to important ceremonies at various locations throughout the kingdom. The ceremonies were used to show that the king worshipped the ancestors and preserved the social order, and that by so doing his virtue would maintain the state. The people of the state also followed similar rituals at home for the preservation of local social order. Both the royal household and households across Chosŏn mirrored each other in the veneration of the past and cultural norms. The people did so to secure the peace of their families, as the king did to secure the peace of the state and king (*kukka* 國家). Whether or not the people actually believed in forces beyond mortal politics is a moot point, as the majority accepted the concepts and ceremony as part of the state's stability and normative values (and the majority were also expected and legally required to participate in such rituals). Above all others though, the king was the most important being in the conversation between the spiritual and mortal world. His virtue alone preserved national and agricultural (economic) security, and ceremonies at two particular shrines sanctified relations with the supernatural.

The most important shrines in Chosŏn were located in the capital close to the king's residences. These were the Royal Ancestral Shrines (*chongmyo* 宗廟) and the Altars to the

Gods of the Earth and the Five Grains (*sajik*(*tan*) 社稷(壇). Modeled on Chinese state ritual, the Shrines and Altars were widely recognized as the pillars of state in Chosŏn.

> …his Majesty received the Emperor's command and respectfully informed the Shrines and Altars… the human way is upheld, the Three Han (*samhan* 三韓) are unified, wouldn't this be the restoration of the ages of the sages?[240]

They were not the ultimate shrines for the Confucian world cultural order, with that privilege supposedly reserved for the Temple of Heaven in Beijing. Ritualistically speaking then, the King of Chosŏn was not a totally independent actor in the preservation of virtue. Such a formal diplomatic relationship with China has been used to describe Chosŏn as nationally dependent on the Chinese court for legitimacy and international relations. In turn, such an argument leads to the conclusion that socio-political identity in Chosŏn also relied upon Sino-Korean relations. But Chosŏn relations with states in China went through various stages of dependence, independence, and interdependence over the five hundred years of the dynasty. The threat of disobeying the emperor could theoretically be used to admonish the king and check his power, but that does not appear to have happened before the Imjin War began. Even the vast majority of the Chosŏn court's dealings with the Japanese went knowingly unreported to the Ming, in supposed violation of treaties and ritualistic norms.

To all extents and purposes then, the *chongmyo* 宗廟 and *sajik* 社稷 (hereafter the Royal Shrines and Altars) were the apex of ritual order in Chosŏn. The Royal Shrines and Altars were often mentioned together, and were referred in the *sillok* as *chongmyosajik* 宗廟社稷, *chongsa* 宗社, *myosa* 廟社, or the *chwajo usa* 左祖右社. The two locations were part of an integrated concept of virtue-maintenance. For civic, bureaucratic, and philosophical (religious) reasons, Sŏnjo had to maintain his own virtue and the kingdom's prosperity by performing or sanctioning worship (*chesa* 親祭) and the feast following *chesa* (*ŭmbokyŏn*

[240] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 22:14 a-b (1588.05.19).

飮福宴) at these places. This became his duty for the socio-political identity of the government and the state.

The Royal Shrines, located to the east of Kyŏngbokgung palace, were the shrines to the spirits of the royal family. The buildings, divided into the Hall of Correctness (*chŏngjŏn* 正殿) and the Hall of Eternal Peace (*yŏngnyŏngjŏn* 永寧殿), contained the royal family name tablets that were brought out on certain memorial and auspicious days of the year. In the *sillok* the Hall of Correctness appears to have been designated as the Royal Shrines and more closely related with the king and ancestor worship. On the other hand, the Hall of Eternal Peace, built by King Sejong, was regarded as a separate building as it contained the ancestral tablets of the ancestors of King T'aejo Yi Sŏnggye's 太祖 李成桂 (r. 1392 – 1398). The Hall of Eternal Peace and Altars appear to have been more closely associated with the stability of the state than the Royal Shrines.[241] The king would pray and offer food to his ancestral tablets, and both the tablets and building were venerated. By worshipping at the Royal Shrines, King Sŏnjo maintained his filial duty which in turn maintained the security of the country.

To the west of Kyŏngbokgung palace lay the Altars. The Altars consisted of two raised square mounds surrounded by stone. One mound was dedicated to the worship of *sa* 社 (god of the land) and the other mound was used to worship *chik* 稷 (god of cereals and grain). Ceremonies typically involved a representative of the king presenting offerings to two sets of stone tablets that represented each spirit. Worship at these shrines was conducted for the protection of Chosŏn's agriculture security. However, the use of the Altars was also connected to the security of the state in matters beyond food sustenance, and the Altars

[241] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 22:12 b (1588.05.07).

contained elements of state security protecting the country from internal and foreign conflicts.[242]

The Royal Shrines appear to have represented the king's private sphere of influence, which also affected the country's security. However, the Altars represented the public sphere and were directly connected (not indirectly connected to the country through the king) to the well-being of the state. In order to protect his own position and primogeniture, the king may have favored worship at the Royal Shrines rather than other shrines, since the Royal Shrines could directly benefit the throne. For example, although the Royal Shrines were typically mentioned in the same context, the Royal Shrines and Altars' exact roles in socio-political identity did change in relation to the other. In the *sillok*, the division of the shrines' roles was illustrated in 1587 and later in 1588 when the king led a ceremony of celebration of the rectified histories.

When praying at the Royal Shrines, Altars, and Hall of Eternal Peace, the following order prevailed,

> The rectification of the Royal Lineage is the greatest of celebrations. The King personally held services (*koje* 告祭) at the Royal Shrine, and sent officials to perform services (*haengje* 行祭) at the Altars and Hall of Eternal Peace.[243]

Perhaps Sŏnjo only performed rituals at the Royal Shrines personally because the occasion was to celebrate a matter of heritage. However, his personal involvement could indicate some preference for the Royal Shrines over the Altars, and also shows that the Altars and Hall of Eternal Peace were more closely related during this time. Whatever the case may have been, the shrines played different roles in socio-political identity, and the king typically performed rituals in person at the Royal Shrines.

[242] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 19:14 a (1585.05.28).
[243] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok*: 22:12 b (1588.05.07).

As the locations of ritual were used as conceptual elements of the state, some modern authors have gone as so far to affirm that the Royal Ancestral Shrines and the Altars of Earth and Grain represented the state itself. They are said to have been the 'most important historical spaces in Chosŏn',[244] and were also the locations where the Chosŏn state derived its basis and meaning.[245] The Altars are also claimed to have been the most symbolic place for the state, as ceremonies celebrating the foundation of the state and the management of the economy where performed here.[246] Both the Royal Shrines and Altars were also categorized as shrines for 'great rituals' (*taesa* 大祀) and are claimed to be the only shrines for the 'great rituals' in Chosŏn's national system of rites.[247]

As the most important concepts in a Confucian society were human relations, the Royal Shrine and Altars formed the Confucian cultural core protecting these concepts.[248] The Altars are currently regarded as the most important building complex of the two during the Chosŏn dynasty, because the Altars were the scene of offerings for agriculture, grain, and rain[249], and were registered at a higher level in the *Book of the Five Rites of the State* (*Kukcho oryeŭi* 國朝五禮儀,).[250] However, this view might only be supported by certain modern historians of Korean history because the Altars are currently related to notions of a purely modern, independent statehood.[251]

During the early reign of Sŏnjo before the Imjin War, the Royal Shrines appeared to have a slight precedence over the Altars in the *sillok*,[252] even though they were both usually

[244] Kang Munsik and Yi Hyŏnjin, *Chongmyo wa Sajik: Chosŏn ttŏbadch'in tu kidung* (Seoul: ch'aek gwa hamkke, 2011), 13.
[245] Kang Munsik (2011), 13.
[246] Kim Munsik and Kim Chiyŏng, *Wangsil ŭi ch'ŏnji chesa* (Paju: Cholbegae, 2011), 144.
[247] Kang Munsik (2011), 14.
[248] Kang Munsik (2011), 15.
[249] In some reigns during the Koryŏ and Chosŏn dynasties, the Altars were used to give offerings directly to Heaven.
[250] Kang Munsik (2011), 20.
[251] Kang Munsik and Yi Hyŏnjin, *Chongmyo wa Sajik* (2011).
[252] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 22:12 b (1588.05.07), 24:1 a (1590.01.01).

mentioned in the same passages. The Royal Shrines were customarily mentioned before the Altars, and even in the abbreviation (*chongsa* 宗社) *chong* always came before *sa*, perhaps reinforcing a relative hierarchy.[253] In addition, the king personally led the ceremony at the Royal Shrines. Kim Munsik and Yi Hyŏnjin argue that,

> The Altars were regarded as more important than the Royal Shrines, even though the Royal Shrines have received more interest. But the king showed his filial piety in front of the people by means of the Royal Shrines, so, from this aspect, the Royal Shrines were more important.[254]

Their argument that the Royal Shrines were more important because of the king's personal involvement appears to be true, as the Royal Shrines carried slightly greater spiritual importance than the Altars due to the Royal Shrine's direct relation to the throne.

But for Sŏnjo's subjects in the government, the Royal Shrine's and Altars' functions were referred to rhetorically to forward certain policies and decisions. Between the years 1575 and 1592, the Royal Shrine and Altars were usually used in entries presented in court to support individual proposals, allegedly for the safety of the shrines. A common ending for letters to the king (*sangcha* 上箚) include 'Rejoice in the Royal Shrine and Altars!' (*chongsa haengsim* 宗社幸甚), or celebrated the 'grand design' (*taegye* 大計) of the Royal Shrine and Altars.[255] There appears to have been no substantive debate on the Royal Shrines and Altars during this time, because they were safe entities and not under any direct physical threat. In spite of this lack of definitive records, the *sillok* reveals the meaning of the Royal Shrines and Altars by other general references to them.

In 1575, the Three Ministries (*samgong* 三公) tell king Sŏnjo to moderate his mourning because he should get back to official duties. They write,

As the lord (*inju* 人主) himself is entrusted to bear the suffering of the Royal

[253] Except in a few cases - *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 23:5 b (1589.07.10).
[254] Kang Munsik (2011), 21.
[255] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok*: 23:28 a, 9:27 a, 17:19 b, 17:24 b.

> Shrines and Altars and the people (*saengnyŏng* 生靈), you should not stay too long in the mourning hut (*yŏch'a* 廬次) insisting to be as immovably loyal as the scholars and people (*sasŏ'in* 士庶人) below you.[256]

On the next day, the Royal Shrines, Altars and people are not considered separate from the virtue of the king. The Royal Secretariat (*Sŭngjŏnwŏn* 承傳院) recommended giving up the small causes for greater causes,

> We cannot allow for the king to cling to trivial matters, and disregard the greater plan. I cannot stop beseeching you. This is not only for the sake of the Royal Shrines and Altars or the people, but because I desire you, my lord, to preserve your great filial piety in its entirety.[257]

Sŏnjo replies to this assertion by stating, 'The grand designs of the Royal Shrines and Altars? How can I not but think about them (and thus I am staying here to mourn)'.[258] He does not resile from his decision, but there is not any substantive talk concerning the Royal Shrines and Altars beyond a loose variety of meanings, including state and government. Such a common use continued in 1587, when Pae Sam'ik 裵三益 returned from China with a new edition of the *Collected Statutes of the Ming Dynasty* (*Dà Míng Hùidĭan* 大明會典). Officials received news that the Ming histories had corrected passages concerning King Taejo Yi Sŏnggye's heritage. This, is turn, helped Sŏnjo's claim to the throne and his standing within the Ming Empire. Although not recorded in the *sillok*, the court also began to repair the Altars after receiving the new *Collected Statutes*, perhaps indicating a sense of renewed importance for the Altars. This was recorded by the overseer of the Altars, Kwŏn Munhae. The entry in the *sillok* presented by Pae Samik reads,

> Because the day to publish the *Collected Statutes of the Ming Dynasty* has been decided,[259] we will soon see the shame and false accusations that lasted for two hundred years in the history of the royal court being washed away in an instant. The Royal Shrines and Altars have truly never seen such a joyous occasion… Let

[256] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 9:6 a (1575.01.20).
[257] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 9:7 a (1575.01.21).
[258] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 9:13 a (1575.02.05).
[259] First Published in 1509 and later a second edition in 1587.

the light of joy continue to shine upon the Royal Shrines and Altars.[260]

Even though the occasion was important for the king, the importance of the shrines remained largely rhetorical. The shrines were not under direct physical attack, but the legitimacy of the king's royal enterprise (*wangŏp* 王業) had been brought into question by the Ming.

The Royal Shrines and Altars became more important during years of internal insurrection and foreign crises that preceded the Imjin War. In 1589, Chŏng Amsu 丁巖壽 wrote a memorial to the king, with a portion of it concerning threats to the state by internal enemy forces (*chŏkpyŏn* 賊變). Not only do they mention the importance of the Royal Shrines and Altars (*chongsa* 廟社), and the 'arteries' of the state (*kungmaek* 國脈), but they place particular importance on the preservation of the Altars. He stated that,

It is certainly in this era (of crisis) when the Altars are most vital![261]

This was not limited to this instance. A 1590 royal edict read,

> There were only a few months before this unprecedented rebellion attempted by these traitors[262] came to fruition. If Pak Ch'unggan 朴忠侃 had not been instrumental in capturing these bandits and righteously suppressing the rebellion, then what would have become of the splendor of the Royal Shrines and Altars ?[263]

Suddenly the danger faced by the Royal Shrines and Altars (and the government) was a palpable reality. The Royal Shrines and Altars could, in particular situations, combine the ideas of the state, the king and royal family, the government, and the people's security and be used as a socio-political centre. However, in the *sillok,* the image of the Royal Shrines and Altars often reflected contemporary political considerations, rather than a strict following of dogmatic principles. Their importance and interpreted meanings frequently came under scrutiny by political factions, and the actions and decisions of the king were controlled by various factions contesting the questions of the importance or inferiority of the Royal Shrines

[260] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 21:13 b (1587.08.10)
[261] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 23:23 b – 23:33b (1589.12.14)
[262] The Rebellion of Chŏng Yŏnip (鄭汝立) in 1589.
[263] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok*: 24:1 a (1590.01.03).

and Altars in regard to virtue. However, with increasing social instability, the differences between the Royal Shrine's and Altars' particular roles became clearer and their social importance increased.

The Altars to the Gods of the Earth and the Five Grains appear to have been related to the physical security of the country and fulfilled a public role, while the Royal Ancestral Shrines were related to the security of the monarch and fulfilled a private and public role. Whatever the exact position, both structures were regarded as vital for the state, and the Royal Shrines and Altars came to represent more than two sites of worship: they were the loci of the king's authority and broader state security and identity, even if this was generally rhetorical. The king lived to serve the immortal Royal Shrines and Altars, and if he could not do so then (theoretically) they would or could be given to another for safeguarding. However, if the king utterly failed in his defense of the state and Royal Shrines and Altars (as occurred in 1592), then it could only mean that his lack of virtue was to blame. In that event, the definition of the shrines, and the king's relation to the shrines, had to rhetorically change for his own security. However, during periods of great unrest the court was not able to completely control the various meanings and interpretations of the state or these shrines.

2.5 Defining the People of Chosŏn

If the canon of Confucian beliefs and ritual practices are to be unquestionably believed, then the people (*min* or *samin* 四(民) were the foundation of the larger body of the state and they in turn gave some form of legitimacy to the king. The basis of relations between the king and the people were defined by the Three Human Bonds (*samgang* 三綱) and Five Human Relationships (*oryun* 五倫) as well as by Filial Duty (*hyo* 孝) and Loyalty (*ch'ung* 忠). Yet these principles do nothing to explain Chosŏn society. The legal basis of a subject (not citizen) was important to Chosŏn due to its rigid social constitution, and the

position of the upper class relied on stringent laws governing identification. The legal standing of each person residing in the country was of great importance to the bureaucracy and to the *yangban*. Even in this pre-modern country, Sŏnjo's subjects were both culturally and legally bound to the state and they remained his subjects even when abroad.

One of the quintessential traits of Chosŏn society was the formalized stratification of social classes. The *yangban* 兩班 were the aristocratic elite, and were given special privileges. Below the *yangban* came the *chungmin* 中民 (middle, artisan class), then *sangmin* 常民 (commoners), the *ch'ŏnmin* 賤民 (lowborn), and the private and state-held *nobi* 奴婢 (indentured class). Even though Chosŏn society was theoretically partitioned into four groups, there were further divisions within the social levels themselves. The *yangban* were divided into bureaucratic and military orders, with the former having a superior position. There were both wealthy and poor *yangban*, and even *yangban* status could be lost. Regional discrimination was also common, especially concerning families from the north of the peninsula.[264] Chosŏn's rigid social order may have been designed to limit competition and excessive growth among the *yangban*, which would restrict both places in government and stifle tax revenues (*yangban* status was tax-free).[265] The superiority of a *yangban's* family was also considered when procuring government positions, and non-*yangban* people were not permitted to take part in the Civil or Military Service Examinations.[266] However, the *chungmin* could sit the Miscellaneous Examinations (*chapgwa* 雜科) in various subjects.[267]

Though the rights of each group were different, all the people were bound by laws, customs, language, culture, public memorial days, and ceremonies. Excluding the *yangban*,

[264] See Sun Joo Kim, *Voices from the North: Resurrecting Regional Identity Through the Work of Yi Shihang (1672-1736)* (Stanford University Press: Stanford, 2013).
[265] Eckert (1990), 109.
[266] Even though non-*yangban* people could sit the exams according to Chosŏn state law, they were barred using other legal mechanisms (such family connections, lineage).
[267] Eckert (1990), 114.

each male had to provide military or public works service for the state. Each man also had to carry a *hop'ae* 號牌: an identification tag compared to 'a modern citizen's identification card',[268] which contained the name, date of birth, class, status, and county of residence. The mutual contract of the Community Compact (*hyang'yak* 鄕約) was supposed to bind the people of a locality in order to mutually encourage morality, mutual supervision of misconduct, mutual decorum in social relationships, and mutual succour in time of disaster or hardship.[269] However, by the time Sŏnjo was king the *hop'ae* system was largely in disuse, even though personal data was collected by the local registery (men and their families) and non-*yangban* males still had to perform works for the state. Therefore, on a local intra-state level, broad socio-political identity was defined by the mutual connection to, and registration with the security apparatus of the king and government. Thereafter, each group had its own unique connection to the state, with various degrees of rights and privileges. But even though there were unequal expectations and demands for the peoples residing in Chosŏn, broad socio-political identity was an issue of state security well before the Imjin War began.

By 1585 understanding which social characteristics separated the people considered the king's subjects (known as either a 'person of the state' (*kug'in* 國人), 'our people' (*a'min* 我民) or 'a person of Chosŏn' (Chosŏn*'in* 朝鮮人) from those who were considered foreign became a major problem for Sŏnjo's government with increasing numbers of legal and illegal immigrants entering Chosŏn during his early reign. Knowing that the failure to protect identification within the state would have resulted in social disorder, the government paid close attention to the identity of every person (subject or not) entering, residing in, and leaving the kingdom.

[268] Eckert (1990), 118.
[269] Eckert (1990), 141.

In 1576, the *sillok* reports on a curious episode when a group of Korean men accidently drifted to the Chinese mainland. The passage reads,

> Yangjun, a man from Cheju Island along with twenty-two others have drifted into Chinese territory. The Ministry of Rites has requested for them to be repatriated by way of the Liaodong peninsula to their country of origin (*pon'guk* 本國). The kindness of the emperor is limitless. Process the matter in accordance with set precedence. In addition, we request that each of the drifters (*pyoryu'in* 漂流人) are treated to a banquet when they get to the gates of the capital, and provide them with one *p'il* of cloth each.[270]

However, this was not the end of the journey for the Cheju islanders.

> The Ministry of Rites informs us that 'Two officials brought the drifters with Yangjun. But, the governor of Ŭiju asked them and the Chinese officials to stay longer. This was an inappropriate request. Since this has already occurred, it is difficult to return the officials quickly. Please grant them 'gifts of kindness' (*injŏngmul* 人情物) and return them to China.' The King replied 'It appears that we are punishing the minister for not sending the Chinese back. This act could appear like a persecution of the officials. If that is the case, we are in violation of treating people properly. Not only that, I fear that we will lose a great deal of face… If we transport Chinese people who had been captured by locals (*chuhwei'in* 走回人), and they are welcomed back into China, then what will happen when China sends back the lower country's (Chosŏn) people? We must welcome the envoy with great generosity.'[271]

Two things are apparent from these passages. One, a Chosŏn individual was essentially either registered as a subject (*sin* 臣), or one of 'our people' (*a'kug'in* 我國人), no matter where they were located. Two, their state-identification was legally recognized and acted upon by the Ming government. Therefore, the recognition by both states of a subject's legal identification creates a legal and accepted basis for identity. Judging from this example, all three actors, the individual, the home state, and the foreign territory understand and recognize the state's rights over individuals. In addition, Chinese subjects residing in Chosŏn were still regarded as Chinese and were expected to return to their homeland.

Later in 1583, the northern borders came under increasing attack from the northern populations (Ho 胡). One of the major problems in defending the region concerned the

[270] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 10:8 a (1576.07.03).
[271] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 10:8 a (1576.07.03).

populating of the area with enough people (and soldiers) to defend the land. The Chosŏn government attempted to do this by two means: One, to settle legal migrants (peoples originating from north of Chosŏn) in the border areas and use them for public and military works; and two, move *nobi* 奴婢 to the areas and encourage them to defend the regions. In 1583 Sŏnjo instructed the Border Defense Council (*pipyŏnsa* 備邊司) to make the following changes to the border situation in the north.

> How can we be sure that they won't turn their swords against us? It is only when we have people that you can expect them to fight. In this case, would it not be beneficial to move people to the borderlands? (In addition) only when military provisions are sufficient, can soldiers have some hope and their courage will double every day. Send grain from Kyŏngsangdo's grain stores by ship to the Yukjin region 六鎭. To the places they cannot sail to, the grain must be transported over land. If the manpower is insufficient, then we will order the local dignitaries (*chongje* 宗宰) to provide cows and horses. This would be the right course of action. However, the holding of private *nobi* (*sano* 私奴) in our land is unjustified. In times of crisis, the *nobi* will join their lords against the thieves. But what of the state-held *nobi* 奴婢? Secure the northern border with a battalion of private nobi, make them into soldiers, and divide them up to protect the northern garrisons. In exchange, send state-held *nobi* to those (lords) or reward them by some other means.[272]

The government appears, from this passage, to look unfavorably upon the holding of private *nobi*. Although it is unclear whether or not the *nobi* are regarded as people of the state, the Border Defense Council prefers the state to hold the *nobi*, another legal recognition that they belong to the state (or king), and that they would defend the country when they join forces with their superiors. The *nobi* would also be entrusted with weapons and be located in a hostile area. This either indicates faith in the loyalties of the *nobi*, an error on the part of the Border Defense Council, or a plan to obtain free labor from the local aristocracy.

Be that as it may, the most efficient way to understand what constituted a person of Chosŏn is not to find the official definition of a Chosŏn subject (which does not exist), but rather to identify what distinguishes a non-Chosŏn subject from a Chosŏn subject. Such an

[272] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok*: 17:2 b-17:3 a (1583.02.10).

approach provides an outline of the socio-political identity that nullifies the internal, and largely empty, socio-political debate. This is due to the fact that internal debate tended to contest the philosophical notion of the king's people (*samin* 士民 and *somin* 小民), and focused on differences, rather than commonalities, between different peoples in Chosŏn. The legal divisions between Chosŏn subjects were the basis of elite society and elite power. Therefore, the borders of the state are some of the only places in which to locate any true discussions concerning common identity in the state, because of the security problems associated with foreign peoples.

The northern communities (including the Jurchen), the Japanese, and the Chinese, who will be discussed in later sections, helped define the subjects of the Chosŏn state. These other foreign peoples spoke different languages, wore different clothes, had different legal rights, observed different cultural practices, and clearly did not fit the Chosŏn socio-political norms. Other foreign populations, especially those who did not clearly fall into the neatly divided subject and non-subject categories, created a number of social and political problems for the government. For example, in 1576 the Ministry of Rites (*yejo* 禮曹) reported on a curious incident concerning the *hyanghwa'in* 向化人, the 'submitting foreigners' from outside the northern borders of Chosŏn. In the *sillok* it is recorded that,

> According to the Governor (*kamsa* 監司) of Hamgyŏng Province in his letter (*sŏjang* 書狀), "After being permitted to reside (in Chosŏn), the *hyanghwa'in* have flourished and are no different from our own people, and they must surely carry out their corvée labor. But as of this moment they do not have to recognize the national law (*kukbŏp* 國法) concerning labor (*chŏngyŏk* 定役) and have complained of these injustices. In addition, concerning the settlement of newly arrived *hyanghwa'in* into the interior (of our country *naeji* 內地), we must work on amending the army register (*kunjŏk* 軍籍) when moving them to the interior as the arbitrary decisions of your offices have created (great) difficulties. Contact military affairs and we will carry our plans as appropriate."[273]

[273] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 10:9 a (1576.07.16).

The *hyanghwa'in* formed part of Chosŏn's strategy to deal with the 'barbarians' and populate the northern regions. If the northern peoples settled in the region, they would likely not raid towns in the area, and they could be called upon to defend their homes in the event of an attack by other groups. Therefore, the state became more secure in vulnerable areas by assimilating peoples into the country. In the above report sent to the capital, the local commander did not see any practical differences between the new population and native Chosŏn population after several generations of residence on the Korean peninsula. The *hyanghwa'in* spoke the same language and appeared to have adopted the same customs and dress. There is also no mention of the population as being designated as permanently foreign due to their ancestry outside of the peninsula. However, there were still legal differences that separated the native Chosŏn population from the *hyanghwa'in*: namely, the corvée labor and military services. In this case, the government was seeking to make the *hyanghwa'in* subjects of the country after their assimilation into the culture. The only remaining step was the rights and duties that the new subjects had to perform, which, of course, did not benefit the *hyanghwa'in*.

Yet some illegal and uninvited visitors in the state presented similar questions. In 1578 a foreign woman was discovered in Chosŏn territory, and the *sillok* recorded that,

> The central office in the southern part of our prefecture has gotten hold of a woman. Her clothing and hairstyle are the same as our own country's people, yet her spoken language is completely different. Since we do not have a translator at this office we are sending this letter since there is no way to inquire about her name or residence.[274]

The authorities were never able to locate her origins, but she appears to be a foreign, non-legal resident. Again the authorities were quick to point out that, although she dressed and looked the same as a Chosŏn subject, she did not speak the language. Her presence in the

[274] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 12:11 a-b (1578.07.10).

sillok proves that her presence in the country was of great interest to the government, and if she was found to be a Chinese subject, she may have been returned to the border.

Even though there was a clear division between the people inside the Chosŏn state between social status and the rights accorded to those people, there appeared to be an even greater division between Chosŏn people and non-Chosŏn people. As there were no substantive discussions on the issue of the Chosŏn people, we can only understand common socio-political identity at the boundaries of the state. This is the approach taken by James Lewis and Adam Bohnet in understanding the identity of the Wae 倭 and *hyanghwa'in* 向化人 respectively.[275] In Chosŏn, common socio-political identity was both legal, cultural, and linguistic and separated the people of the state from the outside world. In other words, an idea of civic and cultural nationality existed, and may have even extended to the lowest levels of society. This was not citizenship, but the acknowledgement of the relationship between king and subject and the cultural bonds that tied one to the other. We can hypothesise that the population could be regarded and conceptualized as a single entity, if the government so wished to do. However, an encompassing identity was not usually required by the Chosŏn state, and the divisions in society upheld the rule of the governing class.

2.6 Customs and Culture Within Historical and Regional Identity

There was no all-encompassing word for culture during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Rather there were a variety of words used to describe cultural customs, artifacts, and connections. One such word *p'ungsok* 風俗 (East Asian regional styles or customs), is described by Martina Deuchler as the 'practical side of Rituals (*ye* 禮).'[276] In other words,

[275] James Lewis, *Frontier Contact between Chosŏn Korea and Tokugawa Japan* (London: Routledge, 2003); Adam Bohnet, "Migrant and Border Subjects in Late Chosŏn Korea" (PhD diss., Univerity of Toronto, 2008).
[276] Martina Deuchler, 'Neo-Confucianism in the Early Joseon Dynasty: some reflections on the Role of Ye', 43-53, in *Korean Philosophy: Its Tradition and Modern Transformation*, ed. by the Korean National Commission for UNESCO (Hollym Corporation, Seoul: 2004), 48.

p'ung is the civilizing or educational influence of the ruler, and *sok* the people's habits. Deuchler states that styles (*p'ungsok* 風俗) is the basic energy of the state, and if it deteriorates, then the state is itself in danger:

> At the inception of the Chosŏn dynasty, it was obviously one of the state's most urgent tasks to replenish the people's customs (*p'ungsok* 風俗) through education.[277]

Yet, on closer examination, customs appear to refer to both good and bad habits, and the ways in which a person can act in accordance with teachings in general. It was not just a civilizing force as stated by Deuchler, but the habits and customs practiced by the people themselves. For example, in 1567 the *sillok* recorded that,

> Recently in our country (*kuk*), the people do not follow commands. This is due to the rise of greedy customs (*p'ung*)… (Only this man) can promote and encourage (the correct) customs (*p'ung*).[278]

The basic definition of *p'ung* is a habit or custom, whether good or bad. Yet the word typically refers to good habits promoted by the government. The malleability of the word allows the government to use it in a range of other situations, especially when broadening the concept of socio-political identity. However, the most important usage for this study is when *p'ung* (-*sok*) 風(俗) represented a specific cultural form in Chosŏn society as compared to non-Chosŏn society. For example, Sŏnjo stated that

> Our country's culture (*p'ung* 風) is different to that of China. Initially the situation was not busied or rushed, and since we focused on not changing the old laws, (this case) was a sad affair.[279]

Arguing that Korean 'customs' differed from Chinese 'customs' had been used in the past by Sejong for the creation of hunmin chŏngŭm 訓民正音 (vernacular Korean writing). Pointing to differences was a literary device to create a necessary division between the external world and Chosŏn society that was useful for certain state projects. Yet, upon

[277] Deuchler, 'Neo-Confucianism', 48.
[278] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 1:3 b (1567.10.15).
[279] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 22:24 a (1588.07.06).

examining such examples, one might come to the erroneous conclusion that they were claiming that Korea had a different culture or civilization to that of China. As demonstrated before, there are both international and peninsular aspects to Chosŏn's culture, and governments were aware that the regions in their own country had different *p'ung*,[280] but the origins of many aspects of Chosŏn culture were thought to have come from China. For example, in 1570 the court heard about multiple sources for Chosŏn culture.

> If we look back on our country's learning, in the time of Kija 箕子 it was difficult to petition since there was no writing. Their nature was pure and attractive in the Three Kingdoms (*samguk* 三國) without sophisticated lettres. In Koryŏ 高麗 they had lettres, but this was only for the sake of beautiful prose. At the end of Koryŏ, after the age of Ut'ak Chŏng Mongju, we began to know of Neo-Confucian (*songni* 性理) literature. At last in the time of Sejong, the rituals and music (*yerak* 禮樂) and cultural items (*munmul* 文物) were naturally renewed. If the Eastern Realm's lettres (*tongbang'hak* 東方學) were to speak to one another, Chŏng Mongju 鄭夢周 would be the originator of the Eastern Realm's study of Lĭ 理.[281]

Although the statement concerns itself with lauding the educational achievments of Chosŏn as being greater than those of the past, the statement contains references to the Chinese who brought Confucian learning (Kija 箕子), past kingdoms on the peninsula (Kŏryo 高麗), and the words Rituals and Music (*yeryak* 禮樂), which contains elements of styles and customs (*p'ungsok* 風俗) and, even, peninsular culture itself. In addition, the passage mentions *munmul* 文物, which can be defined cultural items, achievements and symbolism. Therefore, Chosŏn could be defined by its own version of culture, which is recognized as containing both peninsular and Chinese influences, and identity could flow between these two philosophical points.

The duality of Chosŏn cultural and historical origins was maintained for a number of purposes. States, pre-modern or modern, often use the historical memory of a former country

[280] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 22:19 b (1588.intercalary 06.01).
[281] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 3:33 a (1569.intercalary.06.07).

or people to legitimize their rule. The Later Han 後漢 in China did so in when they named themselves after the Han 漢, and Koryŏ 高麗 adopted its name to connect its reign to the former Kingdom of Koguryŏ 高句麗. Chosŏn, although not directly choosing its own dynastic title, was nonetheless conceptually connected to the first Chosŏn state (circa second to first century BCE). Histories written in Koryŏ were inherited by Chosŏn, and Chosŏn inherited the histories and peoples who had formerly resided on the peninsula or were considered to be of the same cultural stock. There was constant debate and selection concerning the proper histories that should be transmitted, but this was done in order to strengthen a historic sense of socio-political identity with certain entities located not in historical time but in time immemorial.

As mentioned before, any identity is an amalgamation and reworking both of former and desired elements. It was no different in Chosŏn, and regional cultural identity appears to have fluctuated between two polarities: the importance of China and universal civilization (*chunghwa* 中華); and civilization on the peninsula (*tongbang* 東方). Throughout Sŏnjo's reign, past kingdoms and eras were mentioned in an effort to stress the importance of maintaining forms of cultural unity. This was usually done to forward some current political question or, more rarely, during times of foreign attack or changing cultural norms. Former kingdoms from Chinese civilization were mentioned and were very important for both philosophy and history. Yet during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the idea of socio-political identity does not appear to have united around the concept of a singular manifestation of Chinese civilization. Chosŏn was not an administrative region of China. Instead, a mixed heritage proved to be the most important.

Being regarded as a member of the Chinese (civilized) world-order was vital for Chosŏn as historical and literary works that originated in China were largely the bases of

Chosŏn politics, laws, and practices. Yet Koreans copied, mastered, and changed Chinese styles to suit the needs of the peninsula, and by the sixteenth century, Chosŏn had reworked a number of histories to suit their own political and other needs. The Chosŏn literati (and perhaps others) regarded civilization (*chunghwa* 中華) as the basis of the state, but the idea of 'Chinese' civilization did not bind the people of the peninsula: local peninsular ceremonies and practices, along with the ceremonies and practices that originated in China and evolved in Korea, bound Chosŏn culture together. The idea of a binding Chinese civilization was usually mentioned when Sino-Korean relations were under threat or when an inter-state problem arose. However, to properly analyse the idea of *chunghwa* in Korea would take an entirely separate study that is not the main inquiry of this thesis.[282] It is more pertinent to this study to mention how *chunghwa* and peninsular cultures mixed together to create cultural historical identity before the Imjin War.

Even before the Japanese invasions began, Chosŏn historians began to write histories about the Eastern Realm (*tongbang* 東方 or *tong'guk* 東國): historical narrative names for the cultural area of Korea and all the kingdoms that existed in their historical region. The Eastern Realm was a regional title passed down from former Chinese kingdoms which had occupied parts of the 'East' (from their perspective) until the fourth century AD. The Eastern Realm did not mean 'country' or 'state'.[283] The concept of the Eastern Realm was used as a socio-political concept from the time of the Koryŏ kingdom 高麗 (if not earlier). Before the Imjin War, the Eastern Realm was the term typically used in conjunction with the history of Confucian culture in the region or for peninsular kingdoms following the arrival of Kija 箕子, and for local peninsular styles, customs and traditions (*p'ungsok* 風俗).

[282] See Pae Usŏng's *Chunghwa gwa chosŏn: Chosŏn i kkum kkunŭn sangsanghan segye wa munmyŏng* (Tolbegae, P'aju-si: 2014).
[283] It should be clear to see that there are different words for the cultural and political identity of Chosŏn. However, in the *sillok* online translation into modern Korean, some translations of *tongbang* becomes *nara*, which strips the word of its cultural meaning, and alters its intended meaning.

> We cannot say that all the works from our founder (Yǐ Sŏnggye) and onwards were correct. In unwavering accordance with the rights and rituals of their superiors in the Three Kingdoms of China (*samdae* 三代), certainly modeling themselves on the teachings of Confucius, Mencius, and Zhu Xi, the rituals and music (*yerak* 禮樂) of the Eastern Realm were completed, and their light will be handed down for ten-thousand generations.'[284]

> (From Silla 新羅 to Koryŏ 高麗) We were not lazy in our teachings, and the scholars (*sa* 士) of the Eastern Realm knew the teachings of the sages, and certainly these were people of virtue.[285]

Speaking on the defense of the country in the case of a Japanese invasion and the importance of investing in defense for the state, a memorialist states that,

> In our Eastern Realm, after Kija crossed the ocean and until the destruction of the Three Kingdoms (*sam'guk* 三國, Silla 新羅, Paekche 百濟, Koguryŏ 高句麗) and Koryŏ 高麗 (*chŏnjo* 前朝), the people never allowed (the enemy) to take their castles.[286]

All the examples use the Eastern Realm to link the cultural region. Sejong was also described as 'a true sage of the Eastern Realm,'[287] and that 'the Eastern Realm was at peace for ten thousand generations.'[288] The Eastern Realm was a distinct area for peninsular cultural identity, but it was largely connected to the notion of civilization (*chunghwa* 中華), and Chosŏn appeared to have regarded itself as a branch of the same civilization. Therefore, the government was able to claim legitimacy from two sources without (theoretically) infringing upon the other: one local and one universal. The two ideas could coexist as long as good relations were maintained with the current Chinese dynasty, so Chinese civilization remained a hypothetical concept rather than a reality that the Chosŏn people had to debate substantively. The imagined meaning of Chinese civilization could exist in a permeable imaginary space. However, this illusion of Chinese universal culture (*chunghwa* 中華) could only be

[284] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 3:36 b (1569. intercalary 06.24).
[285] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 4:4 a (1570.05.09).
[286] *Sŏnjo sunjŏng sillok* 25:4 a-b (1591.03.01)
[287] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 7:49 b (1573.10.16).
[288] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 23:16 b-19 b (1589.10.28).

maintained as long as the Chinese did not actually appear in vast numbers as happened in 1593.

The purpose of this section is to demonstrate that the Chosŏn government found legitimacy in both the universal culture of Confucianism and in the specific cultural area of the Korean peninsula. Preserving and defending culture from two different sources meant that the government could decide the most important origin of their culture and change the narrative of the country's culture and origin (especially during wartime). Chosŏn was not, therefore, fully dependent on Chinese civilization or the Eastern Realm, and could call on universal and local customs and histories to defend national policies when it suited those in the government.

2.7 Interactions with the Foreign World

> We are in the midst of being attacked on three sides. There are no iron weapons of war of any benefit to us, and we have too few men proficient at using cannons. This is an urgent matter, and we have far too few to face the enemy's attack.[289]

Before the Imjin War began, the foreign world was not a major topic of concern for the majority of the population. The populations in the border areas to the north and those connected to trading at the Japan House (*Waegwan* 倭館) in Pusan both worked, traded, and fought with foreign peoples (non-Chosŏn), but that appears to have been the extent of the interest in their outside world. The existence of these countries was known to many in Chosŏn, especially a knowledge of China, as it was an intrinsic part of their socio-political philosophy. Still, the foreign world was not a major concern of government until the attacks orchestrated by foreign groups infiltrated the interior of the country. Principally, there were three groups of foreigners that the Koreans dealt with: the Chinese, the Manchurian based Ho 胡, and the Japanese. Trade and interactions with foreigners happened more frequently along

[289] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 25:5 a (1591.02.06).

the borders, and the *yangban* even possessed handbooks that mentioned relations with China and Japan.[290] The Chosŏn court had knowledge of other states and peoples beyond the borders of China, but the distant foreigners were not a major concern.[291]

The Ming Empire, at thirty times the land area and population of Chosŏn, was the superpower of East Asia from the fourteenth through the seventeenth centuries. Conceptually, the Chosŏn government probably recognized or understood the real differences in size and population (as reflected in the size of Chosŏn in the regional maps of the time). But China was not merely a political and economic juggernaut. It was a cultural superpower and the Emperor of China granted the lower Chosŏn king authority to rule. Chosŏn was formally second in a regional 'world order'. The idea that China was the originator of culture in the world, not Korea, is clear in many of the aforementioned passages. As the Ming Empire was the centre of the East Asian cultural order, it was often referred to as the highest or first country (*sang'guk* 上國). China was also referred to as the centre of culture.

> The P'yŏngyang region borders on China (*chunghwa* 中華), great vestiges of beauty similar to Suzhou and Hangzhou and all under heaven know of its renown. Moreover, they possess the remains of the eight fields of Kija from around the time of the Chinese Emperor Yao […][292]

Chosŏn, as well as Japan, would also refer to China and the Chinese people by historical names. During the years before the Imjin War, there were increasing incursions on the border (particularly around the Yalu River). Both Chinese and Koreans crossed the border to steal or forage for food (ginseng) and other items. If the perpetrators were

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[290] *Kosa ch'walyo* 攷事撮要.

[291] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 22:1 a-2 b (1588.01.03): 'Your subjects visited Beijing in the *pyŏngsul* year (1586) for the Sage festival to congratulate the Celestial Court. There were a thousand officials in court dress, and the Eastern faction wore black clothes. The Eastern Faction came in and the officials enquired as to why they were wearing these clothes. The Eastern faction answered, 'This is how it was done in former times.' Others said, 'You of the eastern faction, stand up and put on some appropriate clothing!' The Eastern faction inspected the Western faction following their style, which included envoys from Siam (*Sŏmna'guk* 暹羅國) and the Arab lands (*Hoehoe'guk* 回回國) who certainly did not wear these clothes. The ministers thought of petitioning the Ministry of Rites and asking to reinstate the clothing of former times'.

[292] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 22:24 b-25 a (1588.07.07).

caught, the countries would either call for the return of their own people or send back the foreign intruders to their country. In the case of more severe criminal activities, the countries attempted to make diplomatic settlements.

> A number of Chinese people (Tang*'in* 唐人) are crossing the river without restraint and making an unexpected ruckus gathering ginseng. These are the days of suffering and the Chinese are scheming more suffering.[293]

> Thirty (Chosŏn) soldiers secretly crossed the Imjin River into China to plunder, and the Chinese (*sangguk* 上國) were extremely angry.[294] (Later) we returned people from Chosŏn to China who had pillaged villages in China.[295]

Chinese people were recognized as another group of people, and on the borders there were interactions with the 'esteemed' foreign culture. A *sillok* entry for 1571 states that, 'Since our country is located far away from their borders, we must go and observe the rituals, music, and cultural items (*yerak* 禮樂 and *munmul* 文物) of China, master it, feel it, and later utilize it in serving the Great (*sadae* 事大)'.[296] There is no doubt that Chosŏn society acknowledged China as the centre of world civilization, but the relationship was ceremonial and diplomatic. As mentioned before Chosŏn's state policies were typically decided at the Hansŏng court, not at Beijing.

At the same time, there was acknowledgement of internal development and change in Chosŏn that helped develop their own version of Confucian civilization. The only direct connections the Chinese court possessed with socio-political identity in Chosŏn were in the ceremonial and diplomatic arenas and indirectly in socio-philosophical concerns. In 1585, King Sŏnjo asked,

> "Is there anything different between Chinese administration and our own system?" (The official) replied, "Our education system is different. In our country, we send all the Confucian scholars to the Royal Confucian Academy (*sŏnggyungwan* 成均館) in order to take their lectures. But in China it is not like

[293] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 23:6 b (1589.07.12).
[294] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 21:16 a (1587.10.09).
[295] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 22:6 b-7 a (1588.01.22).
[296] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 4:1 b-2 a (1570.04.24).

> this. They only instruct a few Confucian scholars in the classroom, and thus they are not true Confucians." The King asked, "Are our country's scholars' hats (*yu'gwan* 儒冠) similar to those in China?" (an official) answered, "Due to the differences in the materials used to make the hats, it would be difficult to make a hat with a similar outward appearance." The King asked, "What if we were to compare China's treatment of the Ryūkyū (kingdom) to our own country?" and he was answered, "Our offices of the Ministry of Rites always receive their envoys even if they fear to lose their virtue, while in the Ryūkyūs they do not let them in." Paek Yuryang said, "In the *Record of Foreign Countries* (*wàiguójì* 外國記), our country (Chosŏn) sits at the top of the list."[297]

The cultural differences between the countries were recognized and there was no need to cover up such differences unless it did not suit the needs of individual or government. The real politics between the countries took place during the visits to the Ming capital and occasions that required ceremonial status of countries at the Beijing court.

Across the sea from the Korean peninsula lay the warring kingdoms of the Japanese archipelago. Both traders and marauding pirates had been arriving from the islands for centuries, sailing to the coast of the Korean peninsula to trade or to pillage. The Japanese were never entirely welcome to Korea, for the arrival of these 'barbaric' peoples who did not belong to the China-centric world was always viewed with suspicion and their movements were heavily controlled. The Japanese have various names ascribed to them. They were the Wae 倭, the name given to those travelling by ship (traders and pirates), and they were also the people from Japan (Ilbon*'in* 日本人), a term usually applied to diplomats or other officials and recognised as the formal name of the Japanese archipelago. We will first survey the meanings and uses of Wae 倭 and then compare the meaning to its more politically imbued name, Japan, to determine the complex nature of the Japanese in the Korean political and cultural psyche of the sixteenth century.

The first mention of Japan (Ilbon 日本) in Sŏnjo's reign occurs in 1567, the year of his enthronement, when the *Sŏnjo sillok* remarks on a lesson for the king concerning the

[297] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 19:6 a-6 b (1585.04.17).

'Great Learning' (*taehak* 大學) and the *Book of Poetry* (*sigyŏng* 詩經). On the issue of the lower (*ha* 下) serving the higher (*sang* 上) it read,

> The Japanese (Ilbon 日本) envoy was cunning and had a capricious intent. He left after locating what he had come to fetch.[298]

Trade was a common theme in many of the passages in the first decade of Sŏnjo's reign (especially for ginseng and rice), and there were many instances of revolts before Sŏnjo became king. The government often made reference to the incidents of the Japanese Uprising of the Ŭlmyo Year (*Ŭlmyo waebyŏn* 乙卯倭變) in 1555, and noted even small disturbances with the Wae traders becoming angered over new inspections.[299] Reports of the Wae making incursions into Korea were frequent. For example, in 1567 following the death of Military Commander Kim Sumun 金秀文, the Wae 倭 were compared to the Ho 胡.

> [Kim Sumun is dead and] now the Wae 倭 have fallen upon Tamla (Cheju island) and the *Ho* 胡 have ridden into the west. We thought of [Kim] as the bulwark of our country (*kuk* 國), but he is dead and our lands (*pangga* 邦家) are in a perilous state!'[300]

In 1573 in Hadong 河東 along the southern coast of Korea, nine people were abducted by the Wae,[301] and in the same year a Chŏlla general fought with Wae vessels off the Korean coast.[302] Chosŏn people were again captured in 1576,[303] and in 1588 a Wae envoy reportedly killed a Chosŏn commoner.[304] Over the decades there were more reports that 'more Wae are travelling to China (*sang'guk* 上國)'[305] and the movements and diplomatic ties with China became increasingly important for Sŏnjo. In 1589, concern over the northern Ho 胡 and Wae

[298] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 1:18 a (1567.12.09).
[299] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 7:19 a (1573.04.18).
[300] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 2:20 b (1568.07.28).
[301] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 7:13 b (1573.03.17).
[302] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 7:24 b (1573.06.09).
[303] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 10:3 b (1576.03.19)
[304] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 22:22 b (1588.06.28).
[305] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 8:34 a (1574.05.14)

倭 incursions, trade, and China trade mounted. In the first day of the eighth month, there was a discussion on Chosŏn's defense.

> "...The Wae 倭 knew our waterways (long ago), but now no longer know the routes and fear entering Ch'ungch'ŏng province." The king replied, "This is not so. They all know the working of our state (the water routes). If they are able to force their way into Chŏlla province and enter their roads, then what can we do?[306]

The intentions of the Japanese to invade Chosŏn and the Ming were well known by the Chosŏn court before Hideyoshi's ships arrived on the shores of Pusan in 1592. In 1590, recorded that Chindo island surrendered to the Wae country 倭國, and a letter was sent by the court ordering that the captured population be repatriated from Japan (Ilbon 日本).[307] Later, in 1591, over a year before the invasion began, Sŏnjo's offices received a letter that read,

> First we must report that the communication from Genso, the ambassador from the country of Japan (Ilbon *'guk* 日本國), arrived and said, "It is (Japan's) intention to attack the great Ming, and have requested that our county (*a'guk* 我國) guide them along our roads (to the Ming)." …It is the intention of the Wae 倭 to invade China (*sang'guk* 上國)… They also said that "Chosŏn has already yielded (to us) as three hundred people came to surrender to us and will make ships to lead the way."[308]

The growing power of the Japanese, whether or not fully comprehended, was nonetheless a great concern for the court. The Koreans did not see the world divided merely into civilized and non-civilized spheres of influence. They understood that the Ho 胡 and the Wae were different peoples, 'The Wae of Japan (Ilbon *chi wae* 日本之倭) and the Pŏnho 藩胡 (a northern community) are very different.'[309] And in 1590, the *sillok* recorded,

> Japan (Ilbon 日本) is our neighboring country, and since their king has risen to the throne (Hideyoshi) there has been a new binding friendship with our country. In the space of our two country's relations, meetings and housing (one another), our relations are not as burdensome. The Japanese envoy certainly has talent and

[306] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 23:7 b-9 a (1589.08.01).
[307] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 24:3 a (1590.02.12).
[308] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 25:13 b (1591.10.24).
[309] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 7:19 a (1573.04.20).

> is proficient at adapting to circumstances. His generous character is so great that even from far away he can still receive the hearts of the people. Moreover, amongst the Wae 倭, Genso is one who is proficient in lettres (*munja* 文字), and enjoys composing poetry. In addition, following the knowledge of lettres we will be able to deal with (one another), and with the propagation of lettres in their country, there will be no more embarrassment.[310]

Japan was, at one time, recognized both as a state and a place where Confucian teachings could flourish. Japan was a country that was both a state (*kuk* 國) and an uncivilized periphery that threatened Chosŏn institutions. Before the war officially began, Chosŏn understood that the Japanese were becoming more centralized and increasing their diplomatic contacts with China. But the reality of full-scale invasion was probably not apparent to the Chosŏn government and this did not lead to a change in government nor to a change in their culture.

However, the Wae 倭 and the Ming were not the main concern of the Chosŏn government leading up to the Imjin War. As previously mentioned, the northern border areas were the primary concern for the government in Hansŏng. The government wanted the northern areas populated by people who could become subjects of the King of Chosŏn, even if they were culturally non-Chosŏn in origin. There was a real possibility of another war against the northern peoples, which had happened centuries before against the Mongols and Manchu-based groups. The Ho 胡 were a perennial and historical threat. Fearing continued northern attacks, and perhaps criticizing a commander in the north, Sin Chom 申點 wrote that,

> ...the Provincial Military Commander in Hamgyŏng province Park Minhŏn is advanced in age and is without vigour, and we cannot but take him out of office." In addition, "The northern border is completely empty, and if the barbarian horde were to invade, we don't have a strategy to stop them. I implore you to choose a reputable and cultured general." The king replied by saying, "There are many in the court crying out about this, so if the Ho 胡 invade, then I will send you loudmouths to stop them!"[311]

[310] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 24:1 b (1590.01.17).
[311] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 9:29 a-b (1575.09.27)

In 1583, the Pŏnho 藩胡 launched an attack

> I report to the great ministers: yesterday when meeting and discussing with the various lords, these so-called Pŏnho 藩胡 attacked without first indicating their betrayal and struck deep into our land and took prisoners. Now we see the bandit's power, it is nothing but the betrayal of the Pŏnho 藩胡. According to our reports, "They are not of our kind (*chokryu* 族類), and their hearts and minds are certainly different to us. The Yukpŏn (六藩) are composed of the Ho 胡 and they created the Pŏlli 藩離.

Then the king replied,

> It is only that they don't have benevolence? Although they are called barbarians, they are still people. The old and infirm do not direct the places of these unexpected disasters, or so I have been taught. Now being able to capture them alive and release them, should we not deliver them to the south?[312]

Before the Imjin War, there were several incursions from the north. The government realized that the only way to control the areas effectively was to convince the northern communities to give up their pillaging and move to Chosŏn where they would be protected by the government. Then in the 1580s the government wanted the new immigrants to become full Chosŏn subjects with all the rights (and responsibilities) of that status.

The kingdom of Chosŏn was not an isolated country. It was deeply interested in the countries, peoples, and cultures that surrounded the peninsula. The government in Chosŏn recognized the cultural, linguistic, historical, and even the dress differences that differentiated their people from other peoples. The boundaries of the state and culture at the borders helped create a clearer division between the people who were understood to be subjects of the Chosŏn king, and those who were not. The attacks by the Japanese and the northern peoples increased during Sŏnjo's early reign, and these increased the interest in documenting the differences between non-Koreans and Koreans. The knowledge and recognition of Chosŏn's own cultural heritage was not diminished by these attacks, but indirectly resulted in defining the borders of identity (negative ethnicity).

[312] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 19:4 b (1585.04.16).

2.8 Diaries and Individual Perspectives

The purpose of this thesis is to compare a multitude of mindsets, and any steadfast focus on the official history obscures the myriad of individual journals written over the centuries. The *sillok* is both an official record and a piece in the great political game at court, as it adds historical prestige to particular people and ideas. Diaries are one of the only forms of evidence with which one may ferret out a more accurate interpretation of Chosŏn socio-political identity. Often written in the confines of one's home (or on the run), these records include incidental passages on the authentic life of the country, albeit from the *yangban* vantage point. Family life, social relations, and home economics are but some of the elements found in diaries that were left out of the *sillok*. Certain events that can be glimpsed in diaries, politically inconsequential during their own era, have now acquired a new value and offer themselves for reappraisal of their socio-political content.

In order to get a brief overview of individual perspectives of the pre-Imjin War era, I have selected a limited number of journals that were written during Sŏnjo's reign and before the Imjin War (1567-1592). Particular attention is given to the two decades before the Japanese invasion, and only diaries that were continuously recorded (daily or monthly) for numerous years were included. Four diaries have been selected that meet these criteria. The first diary selected is Yi I Yulgok's 李珥 栗谷 (1536-1584) *Soktam ilgi* 石潭日記, also known as the *Kyŏngyŏn ilgi* 經筵日記. Yi I was the most important political philosopher of his day and wrote numerous books on politics, Confucian philosophy, public edification, and poetry. The *Soktam ilgi* begins in 1565, the year Yi entered government, and ended in 1580 when he re-entered government. Yi's entries are mostly monthly summaries, but there are also numerous daily entries. Generally, each entry is quite short and does not focus on daily household activities as it is specifically about the events at court. Political events, history, and Confucian philosophy are the main subjects of his diary.

The second diary chosen is Kwŏn Munhae's 權文海 (1534-1591) *Ch'ogan ilgi* 草澗日記. The diary was kept from 1580, when Kwŏn became the Kongju county magistrate (*moksa* 牧使), to his death in 1591. Kwŏn was a politician who oversaw the compiling of the *Taedong unbu kunok* 大東韻府群玉; one of the first encyclopedias (glossaries) written in Korea. Kwŏn's diary entries are longer than those written by Yi I, and some passages are extremely detailed and mention politics and social interactions.

The third diary is Yi Chŏnghui's 李庭增 *Songgan ilgi* 松間日記 written between 1577 and 1612. Yi Chŏnghui studied under Yi Hwang, T'oegye, and in 1568 became 'Vice-Commandant for Cultivating Righteousness' (*Suŭibuwi* 修義副尉) for the village of Chŏngt'ak. In 1586, Yi Chŏnghui travelled to China, but no details of this journey found their way into the diary. Although Yi maintained his diary for the longest period of time, his entries are generally the shortest of all the diarists considered here. Social matters and relations are the main concern of his diary, but he tends to use the diary as a record of names and meetings. Although useful for understanding social interactions, it is the weakest in terms of socio-political information.

The final diary is the most detailed diary of any from the pre-Imjin War: Yu Hŭichun's 柳希春 (1513-1577) *Miam ilgi* 眉巖日記. Yu Hŭichun was the matrilineal grandson of Ch'oe Pu, author of the *P'yohaerok*. In 1547, Yu Hŭichun was exiled to Cheju Island for nineteen years for his involvement in treasonous activities against the state (*pyŏngsŏ sahkŏn* 壁書事件). Yu was moved to the mainland (Ŭnjin County) in 1565, until a petition was sent to the newly enthroned King Sŏnjo in 1567 to repeal his exile. Yu held a number of positions in government and oversaw major publishing projects both under government auspices and for his own personal endeavors. These include the *Analects*, *Great Learning,* and the *P'yohaerok*. His appetite for literature and learning is reflected in his diary.

Recorded from 1567 to 1576, each entry is a meticulous record of all of Yu's daily activities ranging from household economics and medications to court politics and conversations with his wife. Yu wrote his diary almost every day for nine years, and the entries were far longer than all the aforementioned diaries combined. It is a resource that is often overlooked, due partially to its length and to its intricate record-keeping.

In spite of their distinct diary styles, many of the authors knew of one another and shared common social and political traits. They were all from prominent *yangban* families. Yi I, Yulgok was the most widely recognized scholar-official of his era, and Yu Hŭichun held positions at court. Kwŏn Munhae also worked in the capital and oversaw the maintenance of the Altars, and Yi Chŏnghui was a local *yangban*. They were also all from the *sarim* faction, and only began to write their diaries after the death of Dowager Queen Munjŏng and the enthronement of Sŏnjo.

Keeping these characteristics in mind, I inspected each of the diaries for the identifiers outlined in this chapter (knowledge on literature, the State, the King, the people in Chosŏn, customs, culture, regional history, and the foreign world) in order to search for their understandings of socio-political identity. However, the majority of these common socio-political concepts were secondary considerations to social relations and family-based ceremonies, in particular the concerns of performing ancestral rituals or *chesa* 祭祀. The authors certainly knew about state-wide socio-political concepts and events, as they needed to study political concepts and ideas in order to enter government. But the majority of authors do not appear to have included detailed discussion or even to mention them in their diaries, perhaps due to the fact that these socio-political elements were not under threat and any discussion on the king, state, customs, and culture could be made at court or saved for a text on political theory (or not even written at all). It was only during the Imjin War that the use of state-wide socio-political concepts became more widely mentioned in diaries, because the

state was, quite literally, carved apart by foreign armies and alien peoples who descended upon the peninsula in their hundreds of thousands. Although the mention of socio-political concepts is greater and clearer during the Imjin War, there are nonetheless many passages written by these earlier authors alluding to the socio-political identity of the Chosŏn people.

2.8.1 Yi I, Yulgok: *Sŏktam ilgi*

A prestigious writer, whose works on governance and neo-Confucianism came to be debated until the end of the dynasty, Yi I Yulgok, wrote the shortest and most concise of the diaries surveyed in this chapter. Any contemplation and development of core political and social theories seems to have been limited to his books and other writings (such as the *Tongho mundap* 東湖問答). His position in government, and perhaps fear of the government reading his journal, might have also contributed to limiting free expression in his diary. One's own writings could prove very dangerous, as was the case during the literati purges, and it is no surprise to see that Yi I began his diary the day after Queen Munjŏng passed away. With the rise of the *sarim* at hand, a daily record with the names of friends and visitors could be written without fear of the government, and he kept this loosely recorded diary for fifteen years.

Yi I's diary began in 1565, at the funeral of the Dowager Queen. The people overseeing the ceremony and the king's absence are all mentioned in some detail, even down to the clothes that people wore.[313] The majority of the year's entries are given over to criticism of various people for improper behavior that disrupted public order (*kangsang* 綱常), including Yun Wŏnhyŏng, who left his wife and whose concubine allegedly attempted to murder his wife,[314] and Sim T'ongwŏn, who was criticized for only having risen to office

[313] Yi I Yulgok, *Sŏktam ilgi* (1565.07.13-28).
[314] Yi I Yulgok, (1565.8-11).

through family connections.[315] In 1566, Yi I wrote briefly about the 'base' people's (*sangmin* 常民) beliefs, and that the 'people have always liked ghosts' and built an altar, which they called the 'Great King's Shrine' (*taewangsa* 大王祠). Yi called this endeavor a 'useless' religious activity and a waste of time.[316] A few months later, a major Buddhist temple was shut down and demolished in Hansŏng. Po U 普雨, the head priest and confidant of the Queen Dowager, was accused of tricking the Queen Dowager and people by claiming that he had achieved Nirvana, while living in a house as grand as the King's palace. Po U was subsequently exiled to Cheju Island.[317]

Then the central figure of the state enterprise, the ailing King Myŏngjong, passed away in 1567 without any male heir to the throne. The death of this mortal instrument of governance led to socio-political concepts being trumpeted to defend the strength and continuity of the Chosŏn state. Before Myŏngjong's demise, ministers praised the 'Grand design (glory) of the Altars' (*sajik taegye* 社稷大計), and at the passing of King Myŏngjong, ministers announced that 'The grand design of the Royal Shrines and Altars (*chongsa* 宗社) have been decided.'[318] On calling for Sŏnjo to take the throne, the chosen heir ceremonially declined the calls to take the throne, keeping in line with established convention. Then the ministers asserted that the 'grand calculations of the Royal Shrines and Altars (*chongmyo sajik*) could not forgive this selfish action.'[319] Only then did Sŏnjo step forward and was chosen as king. After the selection of Sŏnjo, Chinese envoys arrived to announce the enthronement of Emperor Longqing and then learned of Myŏngjong's death. They inquired about the state of the country, and presented King Sŏnjo with the Ming investiture seal saying that, 'your youthful vigor is in line with virtues and customs. Here are the Eastern Country's

[315] Yi I Yulgok (1565.12).
[316] Yi I Yulgok (1566.01).
[317] Yi I Yulgok (1566.03).
[318] Yi I Yulgok (1567.06.27).
[319] Yi I Yulgok (1567.07. *pyŏngjin* day).

garbs for the wise king (*tong'guk chi pŏk* 東國之服)!'[320] The next day the envoys visited the Confucian Shrine and the Ming shrine and said to the attendants that, 'let the virtue of the Eastern Region (*tongbang* 東方) be ever stronger!'[321]

In 1568, Yi I went to China with other envoys from Chosŏn but not a single word concerning the journey is to be found in the diary. The only glimpse of his travels is his interest in the border regions near the Yalu (*Amnok*) river. Yi wrote about unwelcome Ho 胡 arriving in the 'plains near the West Sea' (*sŏhae p'yŏng* 西海平). The Military Commander of the region (*chŏltosa* 節度使) Kim Sumun, reported on his progress against the Ho. Government forces were previously unable to defend the area and restore order, both due to the area's remoteness and the former general's alleged incompetence. Yi I recorded Kim's report, stating that the Ho had come in search of the richer soils of the south and that they 'would not submit.' Each time the Ho had been uprooted in the past had only hastened their return and their numbers were increasing. Kim Sunmun then launched an attack on the Ho encampment. After encircling the enemy, a fellow commander is reported to have made the Korean forces' presence known to the enemy, and so 'the barbarians (Ho 胡) then became aware that the Koryŏ people (Koryŏ*'jok* 高麗族) (Koreans) had arrived, and they cried out (to alert the others). The men fled into the darkness and many escaped.'[322] The Chosŏn (our) army (*a'gun* 我軍) descended upon the helpless village and torched it; killing the old and infirm, the women and children. The king was very pleased to hear of these developments, but rumours of the Ho 胡 men's escape followed Kim Sumun until his reportedly stress-induced death. Although Yi I reported on this 'successful' raid, his portrayal of events

[320] Yi I Yulgok (1567.06. *kyŏng'o* day).
[321] Yi I Yulgok (1567.06. *kyŏng'o* day).
[322] Yi I Yulgok (1568.05).

appears to criticise both the commanders who alerted the small band, the overall state of defenses in the north, and the killing of enemy non-combatants.

The following year (1569), Yi I presented his famous 'rich country, strong army' (*puguk kanggun* 富國强軍) memorial to the king, in which Yi I outlines the importance of having a strong army for the country's strength (*kukse* 國勢).[323] The threats to the state are continually mentioned into the next month, when Yi I invokes the image of the Royal Shrines and Altars to call for better governance and a greater defense of the state. Both internal and external threats could be maintained with the proper governance outlined in his book – *Catechism at the Eastern Lake* (*Tongho mundap* 東湖問答).[324] So here is the central theme of the diary that mirrors his own political works: internal political divisions create disturbances that can be used by external enemies. In 1572, this theme is taken up again when talking about the Literati Purge of 1545 (*Ŭlsa sahwa* 乙巳士禍) and the division between members of the same government. Immediately following, the Japanese Disturbance of 1555 (*Ŭlmyo waebyŏn* 乙巳士禍) occurred, and certain individuals leading people into battle are said to have stated, 'As I have received the profound blessings of my country (*a'guk* 我國), I can only repay it with my death.'[325]

The internal stability of the government, with enforcement of proper rules and laws, would bring about better governance that would help the state (*kuk* 國) by getting king (*wang* 王), ministers (*sin* 臣), and people (*sangmin* 常民) to serve their superiors, the Royal Shrines and Altars, the king and the state, and their social superiors. However, it is in the borderlands where the sense of communal socio-political identity is heightened. As reflected in the *sillok*, meetings with foreigners became increasingly common, and even the Chinese came into

[323] Yi I Yulgok (1569.08).
[324] Yi I Yulgok (1569.09).
[325] Yi I Yulgok (1573.07).

Chosŏn. In 1574, a new fort is built in China (presumably by the Ming) twenty *li* 里 from Ŭiju. Yi I mentions that such a construction could pressure more foreigners into Chosŏn. He wrote, 'The Chinese people have mixed and live with our own people. This will only bring trouble in the future.'[326] Yi's fear was that the opening of new lands and larger population in the region would bring about closer Chinese interactions with Chosŏn subjects that would exacerbate border issues. This would then lead to Chosŏn people being the target of theft and pillage. Yi appears to have wanted to make the Chinese call off building the fort but was unable to make his plea, because Chosŏn could not technically ask the Chinese to halt their construction.

2.8.2 Kwŏn Munhae: *Ch'ogan ilgi*

Kwŏn Munhae was born in Kyŏngbuk province on the 28th day of the 7th month, 1534. Kwŏn received first place in provincial examinations (*hyangsi* 鄕試) and in 1560 he entered the Royal Confucian Academy after studying under Yi Hwang T'oegye 李滉 退溪 with fellow pupils Kim Sŏng'il, Yu Sŏng'nyong, and Kim U'ong.[327] Later Kwŏn passed the civil service examination and became the County Magistrate of Yŏngchŏn. Thereafter he became County Magistrate of Andong in 1573, and County Magistrate of Ch'ŏngju in 1575.[328] Kwŏn Munhae was active in politics from his youth. His political ideology, teachers, and friends were all strictly in the Easterner faction. His views are also reported to reflect those of his contemporary Easterners.[329] Kwŏn mentions his meetings with Yulgok, Yi I and Yi U, and wrote on *yangban* relations in Chosŏn. The diary commences as Kwŏn arrived in Kongju to take up his new position as Magistrate, though he had been a Magistrate in Ch'ŏngju prior to

[326] Yi I Yulgok (1574.04).
[327] Kwŏn Munhae, *Ch'ogan* (2012), 11.
[328] Kwŏn Munhae, *Ch'ogan* (2012), 11.
[329] Kwŏn Munhae, *Ch'ogan* (2012), 19.

his new posting. The reasons his commencement of the journal are unclear, as no single event appears to have set off this new desire to document his daily activities.

The *Ch'ogan ilgi* 草澗日記 was originally divided into three volumes: the *Sŏnjo illok* 先祖日錄, the *Ch'ogan ilgi* 草澗日記, and the *Sinmyo ilgi* 辛卯日記. These were later combined and published under the title *Ch'ogan ilgi* by the Academy of Korean Studies in 1997.[330] The diary records events from 1580 (*kyŏngjin* year 庚辰), eleventh month, twentieth day to 1591 (*kyŏng'in* year 庚寅), fourth month, sixth day. Most of the diary flows smoothly, except for a few portions where the author revisits and rewrites the contents of the day's record.[331] Some 2,187 days are recorded with some periods (1582.11 to 1593.01, 1583.06 to 1583.10, 1584.08 to 1587.06, 1590.04 to 1591.07, and 1591.08 to 1591.09) missing, omitted, or unrecorded.[332]

Kwŏn does not often mention the workings of the state. In fact the more important cultural components of his identity were the worship at his family shrine (*ka'myo* 家廟) and the observance of national memorial days (*kukki'il* 國忌日) that focused on the worship of the king and his family. The mortal links of the individual and state were far more important to him than the definitions of state and culture on the peninsula in the broader, national sense. However, he does mention the state and foreign powers on several occasions. On 1580.11.04 he wrote that,

> (The King has been ill from 1580.11.04 to 11.26) Everyone was sent into a panic over the state of the king's health. (After leaving the ward), his majesty grasped the hand of Minister No Susin and said, 'You sir are the most able of our time. You are the only one I believe in for the workings of our state.' Tears flowed down the Right Minister's hand, and he wiped his nose. The king said, 'Even if I were to depart this world, afterwards please do your utmost and look after the workings of the state (*kuksa* 國事).'[333]

[330] Kwŏn Munhae, *Ch'ogan* (2012), 9.
[331] Kwŏn Munhae, *Ch'ogan* (2012), 9.
[332] Kwŏn Munhae, *Ch'ogan* (2012), 10.
[333] Kwŏn Munhae, *Ch'ogan ilgi* (1580.11.04).

As in the *sillok*, the term *kuksa* 國事 is used by the king to relate to the workings of the state and to the safety of the country. If the king dies, then the safety of the state is for another to control. But even though Kwŏn works for the government, he only refers to the 'country' (*kuk* 國) on a few special occasions. The discussion of *kuk* 國, *kuksa* 國事, and *kukka* 國家 do not seem to be important for him, since he is part of a government that is not continuously threatened.

But Kwŏn does mention historical periods and cultural artifacts on several occasions. In 1581 he remarks on inscriptions on the rocks from the Paekche kingdom 百濟 (First CE?-600 CE), but gives no additional information or context,[334] and in 1589 he mentions that 'The Three Han 三韓 numbered 50 or 70 countries.'[335] Again, this is mentioned in passing, but he is talking about the history of the Eastern Realm even though he does not name it directly. More importantly, Kwŏn was placed in charge of repairing the Altars from 1587.09.23 to 1587.09.28. The Altars appear to have been more important for Kwŏn, possibly because of his proximity to the shrine, but also because they were used following extraordinary circumstances facing the country (*haegoeje* 解怪祭). The Altars appear to play a greater role for Kwŏn because of the increasing foreign attacks, the presence of the northern Ho 胡 and the Japanese, and his own work at the shrine. The Altars were also repaired and rebuilt just before the Imjin War began, perhaps indicating the growing importance of the shrine and state symbols in general. Even the memorial service at the Altars to the Gods of Earth and the Five Grains (*sajik*(*tan*) 社稷(殿) was one day earlier than the Royal Ancestral Shrines (*chongmyojŏn* 宗廟殿) service. But Kwŏn did mention the Royal Shrines in a poem saying,

[334] Kwŏn Munhae, *Ch'ogan ilgi* (1581.05.21).
[335] Kwŏn Munhae, *Ch'ogan ilgi* (1589.07.11).

'When raising our offering in the Royal Shrines, we gave protection to our descendants,'[336] and goes to the Shrines on several occasions.

Kwŏn mentions the Japanese pirates (Wae 倭) and northern Ho 胡 on several occasions, with an increasing regularity before the diary ends in 1590. Japanese pirates attacked in 1582, and then the Ho swept down in 1583 with fighting becoming fiercer in 1587. The year 1587 is the turning point in the diary when the outside world (Ming, Japanese Wae, and Ho) became more important in the diary. With the rise of the Ho in the north, Kwŏn mentioned that the Ming Empire became a greater consideration for the Chosŏn court as both countries were harassed by their northern neighbors, the Pŏnho.[337] Between the second and tenth months of 1587, the Ho increased their attacks on Asan and destroyed Noktun island fort.[338] Kwŏn does not mention it directly, but the number of entries on the northern attacks indicates the level of panic at court. This panic continued until 1588, when in the eighth month, eighth day, Kwŏn writes that the Ho have been 'made into our subjects (*sin'ji* 臣之)'.[339]

But one border problem is quickly replaced with another. The Wae 倭 envoys begin to be mentioned increasingly after 1589, primarily because they are passing through Kwŏn's jurisdiction on their way to the capital.[340] He refers to Hideyoshi as 'the King of Japan' (Ilbon *kugwang* 日本國王) and even remarks on a Japanese envoy slaying a passerby on his way back to Pusan.[341] Also, Kwŏn also mentions that the Japanese expressed their intention to attack the Ming and that Chosŏn should make the road ready for them.

[336] Kwŏn Munhae, *Ch'ogan ilgi* (1580.12.12).
[337] Kwŏn Munhae, *Ch'ogan ilgi* (1587.intercalary06.18).
[338] Kwŏn Munhae, *Ch'ogan ilgi* (1587.02.07) and (1587.10.30).
[339] Kwŏn Munhae, *Ch'ogan ilgi* (1588.08.08).
[340] Kwŏn Munhae, *Ch'ogan ilgi* (1589.01.14-18).
[341] Kwŏn Munhae, *Ch'ogan ilgi* (1589.07.13).

Kwŏn probably does not talk about these dealings with the foreign powers in cultural terms because the state in not yet under real direct threat, and he is not yet using the politics of these symbols for his own advantage. But what his diary demonstrates is that connection to the state came through customs (*p'ung* 風) in worshipping the family line, the king's family line, by visiting the Royal Shrines for the well-being of the state, and in worshipping at the Altars for the security of the country (*kuk* 國). Confucian culture ties the civilized region together, and he mentions that the Eastern Realm had a past, but he does not elaborate on any of these points. The pressure of foreign wars became more of a reality over time, but they were not yet severe enough to directly impinge on the internal identity of Chosŏn, and this may be why we see so little elaboration in Kwŏn's diary.

2.8.3 Yi Chŏnghui: *Songgan ilgi*

A diary is not only a reflection of the times in which it was written, but it also reflects the personality of the man who wrote it. Yi Chŏnghui, although having offices in the government, was not a man interested in documenting his inner thoughts nor the politics of the court or country. This makes any investigation of multiple levels of state-wide socio-political identity almost impossible using this diary alone. On a few occasions, Yi mentioned the Wae having a banquet in his town on the way to Hansŏng,[342] and attended a ceremony to welcome the Japanese Ambassador in 1590 (Ilbon*'guk sasin* 日本國使臣).[343] He mentioned the Diplomatic Missions to Japan (*t'ongsinsa* 通信使) and their comings and goings to and from Japan.[344] The Ho 胡 were also mentioned twice. Yi reported that their '[actions] caused chaos' and that the 'entire country is in an uproar.'[345] Yet on the very next day, he reported

[342] Yi Chŏnghui (1581.03.26).
[343] Yi Chŏnghui (1590.08.28). Also an unidentified dinner for the Wae (1591.12).
[344] Yi Chŏnghui (1591.01.06) and (1591.02.20).
[345] Yi Chŏnghui (1583.02.07).

that Kyŏngwŏn County (Hamgyŏng Province) leaders had subdued the Ho 胡. Yi Chŏnghui, referred to the country as *kuk* 國 and mentioned the Eight Provinces (*p'alto* 八道) during massive crop failures throughout the country.[346] Even a ceremony (*chesa* 祭祀) at the Altars was documented in 1591 but with no context.[347] As an aside, there was even a short note written in the vernacular (*ŏnmun* 諺文).[348]

Although this author does not provide as much information as the others, Yi Chŏnghui focuses on his personal relations, family, and national ceremonies that may have reflected the more important aspects of socio-political life on a daily basis during peace time. The diary is a list of daily meetings and ceremonies, and Yi Chŏnghui used the diary more as a record book than as a personal diary reflecting his inner thoughts. Visits to friends, ceremonies at the family shrine (*kamyo* 家廟),[349] other memorial ceremonies (*kije* 忌祭 and *chesa* 祭祀),[350] visits to friends in mourning, and state memorial ceremonies (*kukki'il* 國忌日) are mentioned almost daily, but without much detail to accompany them. The uniting factors for the *yangban* (and perhaps many other in Chosŏn society) were both family ceremonies at home and ceremonies for the king and royal family that were held less regularly. The balance between family worship and state worship was still maintained, even though the concepts were not elaborated in Yi's diary.

2.8.4 Yu Hŭich'un: *Miam ilgi*

In the longest and most detailed of the diaries, Yu Hŭich'un documented the last eleven years of his life in the *Miam ilgi*. Due to its later inclusion in the *Sŏnjo sillok*, there have been many studies and books published in modern Korean on his diary. Studies include

[346] Yi Chŏnghui (1578.10).
[347] Yi Chŏnghui (1591.08.05).
[348] Yi Chŏnghui (1590.10.22) (그럭재너머 ㅁ ㅅ).
[349] Yi Chŏnghui (1577.03.05).
[350] Yi Chŏnghui (1577.03.08, 1577.04.03, 1592.01.5-6).

research and a partial English translation made at Harvard University in 2009.[351] Although Yu Hŭich'un documented Chosŏn era folk-customs, medicines, social relations, marital (and extramarital) relations, it is more pertinent to focus on his views of socio-political concepts, such as the king, Royal Shrines and Altars, and ideas concerning the foreign world. The majority of his political thoughts were recorded in his entries from the royal court (*kyŏngyŏn* 經筵), but a more concise review of this diary would take an entirely different thesis to complete. Therefore, I will only focus on some parts of the diary, primarily the last three years of his life. Although the journal appears to be written as a personal diary, he may well have known that it would be published after his death as he had also published his grandfather's diary. This may have affected how and what he recorded.

As with many of the other sixteenth-century diaries, broad socio-political identity often goes unmentioned by Yu. National rituals observed at home were extremely important elements of socio-political identity and practice and Yu frequently mentioned these when he held his own family rituals.[352] But the list of people he met and ceremonies he held does little to reveal the strong socio-political identity which is the subject of this enquiry. Yu did mention state-wide customs or civility (*kukp'ung* 國風) at one point, but his entry might only mean customs recognized by the state and not refer in a broader sense to commonly practiced 'national' customs.[353] As with the other diarists, ceremonies for one's family were the most important rituals recorded, and only the national memorial days (*ki'il* 忌日) for the king's family were mentioned as having similar importance. The workings of the state (*kuksa* 國事) are mentioned in passing,[354] but the content of these 'workings' are left vague in order

[351] Sun Joo Kim and Kwon Oh-young (ed.), '*Miam ilgi*: Selected Translations with Introduction,' Harvard University, accessed 30th April 2016, http://projects.iq.harvard.edu/gpks/miam-ilgi.
[352] Yu Hŭich'un (1575.11.06).
[353] Yu Hŭich'un (1574.05.24). Harvard wrote this as 'Our country's customs.'
[354] Yu Hŭich'un (1576.06.06) and (1576.07.08).

to put forward different personal plans and seem to be given in order to forward an individual author's plan or opinion.

For our purposes, three things stand out in Yu's diary concerning socio-political identity: the great number of books being produced and lent among the *yangban*; customs and regional history being well known and recognized; and the foreign world becoming more of a threat to Chosŏn society. As Yu wrote the most of any of the diarists surveyed in this thesis, the collection and use of books and paper were a major concern for him. Yu noted when he lent books to friends, noted the books he received from friends, and noted the amount of paper he bought and received as gifts throughout the entirety of his diary. Although many diarists used their diaries to record their household finances, it is very rare to find such attention given to paper and books.[355] Of most interest are the books that he loaned to friends and relatives. The volumes of written material that were produced by the government and individuals did not sit unused at home merely for the owner to occasionally peruse. Printed books and manuscripts moved throughout the regions to different cities and through many hands, and the printed and manuscript culture was very much alive and thriving in Korea before the war. In one entry, Yu sent thirty volumes of the *Comprehensive Mirror of the Eastern Country* (*Tong'guk t'onggam* 東國通鑑) to Son Hyŏng,[356] and he also praised a man who repaired over 300 books.[357] However, the book that was mentioned the most was the *Elementary Learning* (*Sohak* 小學) and the new volumes being produced. In 1576, Yu received the three volumes of the *Elementary Learning* as well as a copy of the annotated *Conversations on the Analects* (*taehaksŏksŏ* 大學釋疏).[358] Yu later wrote to the king

[355] Yu Hŭich'un (1575.11.04).
[356] Yu Hŭich'un (1574.10.13).
[357] Yu Hŭich'un (1575.11.21).
[358] Yu Hŭich'un (1576.07.03).

extolling the virtues of the *Elementary Learning*,[359] and mentions that education in the provinces helps people's customs (*p'ung* 風) and learning.

Yu mentioned Korea's historic name (Eastern Realm) in passing,[360] and the king (*sang* 上) ordered an official to install a painting of Koryŏ founder King T'aejo Wanggŏn 太祖王建 (r. 918-943) in a Yongch'ŏn temple.[361] However, the historical references are few and far between showing that although the people knew of these events and histories, they may have not been mentioned very often. Yet the foreign world, as reflected in the *sillok*, was slowly becoming more of an issue for Korea. Friends were mentioned when they visited China (*chungwŏn* 中原),[362] but Chinese and Chosŏn customs are regarded as being different.[363] The Ho 胡 were still the major concern at court and the Jurchen (Yojin 女眞) are recorded to have invaded the Ming in 1574.[364] Yu also comments on the differences between the Chinese people (*chunghwa'in* 中華人)[365] and a northern group known as *Pŏnhan* 藩漢 who both use the same name Han 漢 to refer to themselves.[366] The Japanese occupy more and more entries over time reflecting their increased raiding on the coast. Thieves struck Chŏlla province in 1574 (probably the Japanese),[367] and the Wae 倭 are reported to have invaded in 1576.[368] Again in 1576, the Wae capture ten people from a village before the Koreans take one of the Japanese Wae ships.[369] Although the *Miam ilgi* is an excellent record for many undocumented social aspects of the mid-Chosŏn era, it contains

[359] Yu Hŭich'un (1576.05.03).
[360] Yu Hŭich'un (1574.10.19).
[361] Yu Hŭich'un (1576.06.05).
[362] Yu Hŭich'un (1575.09.12).
[363] Yu Hŭich'un (1576.09.23).
[364] Yu Hŭich'un (1574.11.03).
[365] Also referred to as the Tang*'in* 唐人.
[366] Yu Hŭich'un (1575.11.24).
[367] Yu Hŭich'un (1574.12.06).
[368] Yu Hŭich'un (1576.03.30).
[369] Yu Hŭich'un (1576.04.10).

little more than the other diaries do concerning broad socio-political identity. This was not because Yu did not know of these concepts, but there was no reason to display these ideas without a proper cause and his uses of concepts reflected the national and international realities of his times.

2.9 Chapter Summary

Sŏnjo's Chosŏn created the basis of identity going into the Imjin War of 1592. The ascendancy of new political parties brought about the re-evaluation of Confucian philosophies and literature, and philosophers of various schools sought to influence the court. Books were published in ever increasing numbers, in both Chinese characters and in Korean script (*ŏnmun* 諺文), and these government and local productions joined the myriad of manuscripts that had circulated around the country for generations. All of these efforts led to increased information on socio-political identity that expanded knowledge throughout the country.

The definitions of the state, country, king, and culture were divided between both the mortal and immortal structures of socio-political identity, and the king and court sought to control the immortal elements of the state's identity by publishing national histories favorable to their own family's histories. The king was the centre of the country as long as he could control various locations where the spiritual powers of the state resided: Royal Shrines, the Altars, and royal family shrines. The country also recognized its long cultural history dating back to former dynasties. In this way, the country saw itself as both Chosŏn, headed by the mortal Yi dynasty, and the Eastern Realm that had existed for over a millennium. The people of Chosŏn were legally bound to their home state, and they were recognized as both culturally and legally different from their non-Korean neighbors around them. The foreign world of the various cultures, from the Ming in the West, to the Japanese in the East, and the

populations in the North, were long recognized as being different to their own. At the same time, the threats and opportunities of the outside world started to create debates in Chosŏn regarding nationality long before the Japanese and Manchu Invasions. These views were not only held by the government, but a number of individuals outside the government also held similar views and recorded their own definitions of socio-political identity and the encroachment of the foreign world.

It was into this world that the Japanese first stepped when they came off their ships in 1592. Korea was not a void where common socio-political identities had not existed before; it was a place of centuries of political development. The definitions of the state, monarch, people, customs and culture, and the foreign world were defined before the war began and, for the most part, remained the basic definitions of the state even until the Manchu Invasions fifty years later. As we will see in the next chapter, the war that came in 1592 heightened many of the aforementioned aspects of socio-political identity, and many people took the various interpretations of political and historical identity to create an identity suitable for their own causes. The war brought about the intermixing of already formulated (and competing) ideas and also forced Chosŏn identity to move in unexpected directions.

3. THE IMJIN WAR

3.1 Invasion

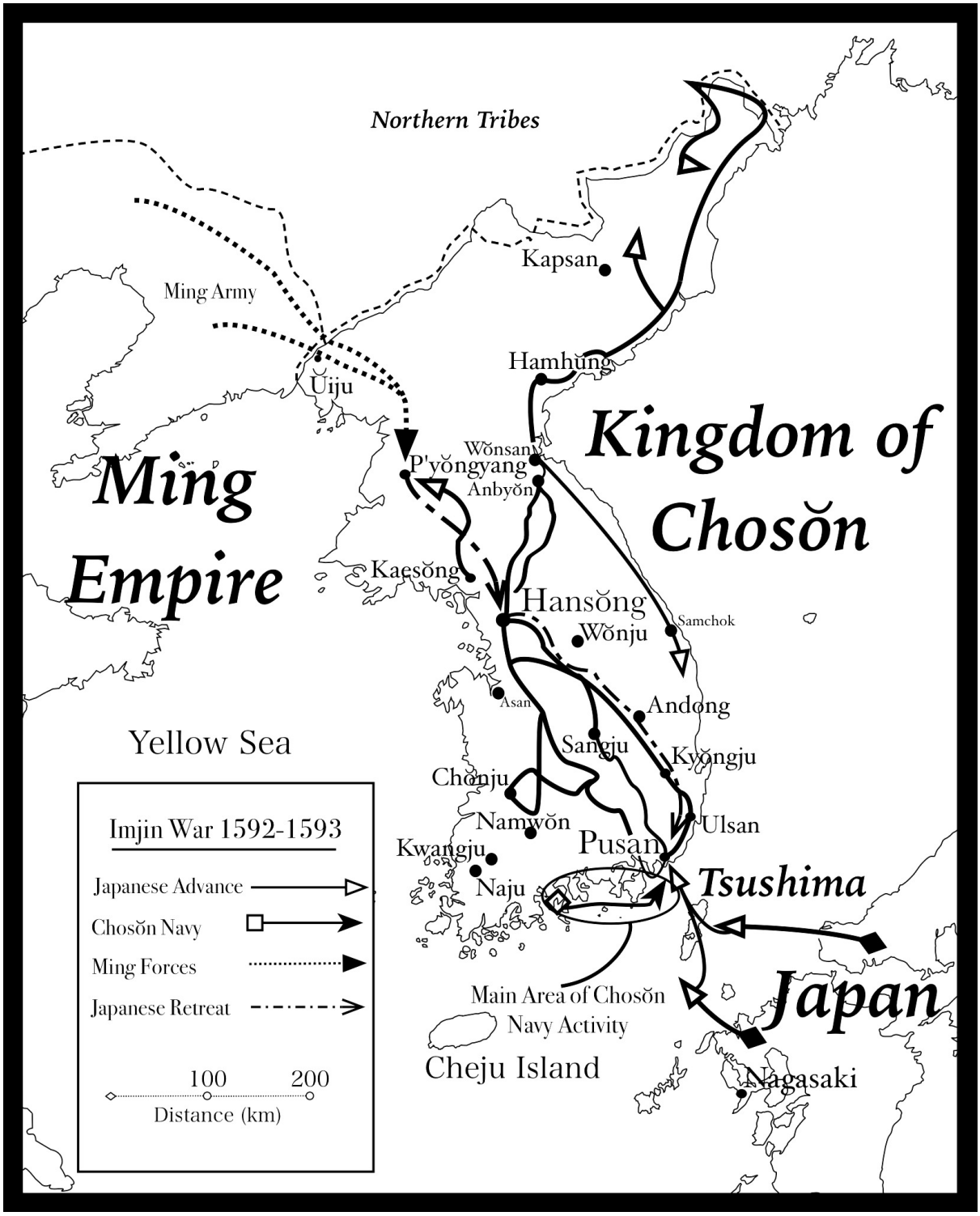
In the midst of border disputes, capital politics, and general issues facing the state, Toyotomi Hideyoshi's armies arrived on the shores of South Kyŏngsang province and invaded Pusan on 1592.04.13. The Chosŏn government knew of the potential of an invasion well in advance of the initial landings, but did not take the threat of a mass invasion seriously as an attack of this magnitude had never before occurred. On the day of the Japanese landing, the *sillok* duly noted that 'the Japanese (Wae*gu* 倭寇) have arrived,'[370] but the *sillok* did not mention that the Japanese had been sitting offshore, well in sight of the Pusan fort, for two entire days before attempting to land.[371]

News spread quickly throughout the peninsula, and in the first few days following the Japanese invasion, people from across the country heard of the Japanese landing at Pusan. Yi I Yulgok, Yu Hŭichun, and Kwŏn Munhae were long dead by this point and only Yi Chŏnghui was alive during the invasion, and even survived the war. The war began in a side note on one of his entries: 'Somewhat cloudy. I went to look at the work on the embankments and returned to town. It was the first that I had heard of the shock of the Japanese invasion (*waeran* 倭亂)'.[372] Yet for the duration of the war, Yi wrote very little and only began to seriously write his diary after the war ended in 1599. Perhaps the burden of supplying his

[370] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 26:1 a (1592.04.03)
[371] *Sŏnjo sujŏng wangjo sillok* 26:1 b-2 b (1592.04.14).
[372] Yi Chŏnghui, (1592.04.16).

Righteous Army during the conflict, or his apparent lack of interest in even keeping a diary, limited his recording activities for seven years, and we can only return to his diary in the decades after the war. Elsewhere, a new generation of writers appeared on the scene to document the plight of their king, clan, and country. Suspiciously, many of the diarists began writing just before or following the invasion. Perhaps earlier entries and volumes of their diaries were lost or discarded; or perhaps many *yangban* saw the diary as a way to document their exploits during the war for the sake of future advancement. No matter what the reasons for this sudden increase in diary writing, the Imjin War became the most documented war in Chosŏn history and one of the best documented conflicts in premodern world history. Thanks to the survival of these diaries, due in no small part to the *yangban* families across the country who kept them preserved for over four centuries, we can glimpse the country torn apart by the Japanese.

The next section looks briefly at key terms and concepts during the Imjin War from the perspective of the *sillok*. As the court and people inherited the majority of their understanding of terms from the pre-war era, their understanding of the state, the monarch, the people, customs and culture, and the foreign world were not altered to any recognizable degree. But as the foreign world arrived and threatened the actual security of the entire state, all of those prior concepts of socio-political identity (both common and uncommon) were given a new lease of life and past and present identities were used to bring the people of the country together for the purpose of protecting the king and state; their culture and histories. Although the court tried to control expressions of socio-political identity to serve their own needs and generate veneration for court and crown, the diarists outside of the capital used many of these concepts with abandon to forward their own reconnected socio-political identification, for their own purposes.



Map 2: Imjin War 1592-1593, First Invasion

Map 3: Imjin War 1597-1598, Second Invasion

3.2 Socio-Political Identity during the Imjin War

> The Japanese have arrived …but for 200 years our people have known nothing of war.[373]

The surprise of the initial landings and the later shock of the Japanese army's power led to a court that not only relied on its limited military resources, but on socio-political identifications to motivate the people to come to their aid. Although the government's calls to battle the foreign enemy were initially met with limited success, especially when the government was running away from the capital, the court could rely on the socio-political identity that they both inherited and built up preceding the Imjin War. The components of this identity were largely covered in the preceding chapter, but the signifiers of state, king, people, customs, and the foreign world were worked into surprising new shapes.

The Imjin War can be divided into three distinct phases: the initial invasion that began on 1592.04.13 and lasted until hostilities wound down sometime around the end of 1593; the occupation, small skirmishes during the peace negotiations from the beginning of 1594 to the seventh month of 1597; and the second invasion from the eighth month of 1597 until the total retreat of the Japanese towards the end of 1598. However, the Imjin War portrayed in the *sillok* can also be divided into two distinct periods: the war before and following the arrival of the Ming army. This is due to the fact that the government was very active in using common socio-political concepts while they were under direct threat, before the Chinese auxiliary force arrived. But as soon as the Chinese army moved into the peninsula, the court may have wanted to limit the aspirations of various groups and reined in many of the militias who had fought for the crown. However, this was not the case for many individuals who used broad socio-political identity throughout the crisis in order to forward their own objectives. Therefore, there are two sides to the socio-political debate in Korea during the Imjin War:

[373] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 26:1 a (1592.04.13).

one being the government protected by the Chinese army, and the other people located throughout the country who were not directly protected by the Chinese army (and who were often threatened by the Chinese).

In order to understand Chosŏn identity alongside the government's interpretation of the war, five personal journals from the Imjin War are analysed below, partially translated and, where possible, have been compared to extant modern Korean and English translations of these documents. Many of the qualities relating to definitions of the nation were readily found in these five journals. These authors not only considered how the Chosŏn people survived, but also described how various people expressed their thoughts and emotions concerning the state, the culture, and their own identities. The documents concerned include some well-known journals, such as *Chingbirok* by Yu Sŏngnyong and *Nanjung ilgi* by Yi Sunsin, and some lesser-known but perhaps more important diaries, *Swaemirok* by O Hŭimun, *Kodae illok* by Chŏng Kyŏng'un, and *Chukkye ilgi* by Cho Ŭngnok. Although the books reflect elite perspectives on society, their various viewpoints, from different social and political positions, give us insights into how people at different levels of Chosŏn society viewed the crisis.

The purpose of this chapter is to capture the various viewpoints from court to countryside that helped create the socio-political environment during the Japanese invasions. The chapter is divided into sections that treat of both the government and individuals' perspectives during the war. The chapter will briefly mention the government's viewpoint on the war from the *sillok*, but it will primarily focus on five diarists' accounts of the war. After analysing the development of thought during the invasions from the *sillok* and the diaries, the chapter will conclude with an explanation of the forms of socio-political identity throughout the entirety of the invasion.

3.2.1 *Sillok*: Socio-Political Symbols from the Imjin War

In less than a week after the invasion by the Japanese, it was clear that the invaders did not only threaten the southern coast with plunder but also the capital itself. The definitions of state and country had not changed overnight, but the safety of the state and of all of its workings were put in an increasingly more tenuous position with the advance of a seemingly unstoppable army. It was obvious that it was the monarch himself and all his family and court politicians who were in the most danger and their capture could spell the end of their dynasty and his mortal reign. As the invasion continued, the court realized that they would have to abandon the capital and move north to P'yŏngyang. But Hansŏng was the very centre of Chosŏn royal authority. Now all of its symbols of power and history lay within the grasp of barbarous pirates. Not only was the capital the most important location in the state because the king and court resided there, but also because the shrines that upheld the king's royal authority and claims to the throne were also in the capital. The Royal Shrine and Altars (*chongsa* 宗社) were the centre of the king's immortal claims to power, and if he lost them to the enemy, Sŏnjo's claim to kingship could be seriously affected. As the king was a mortal device to serve the gods and his ancestors by cultivating virtue, the current crisis could be interpreted as his inability to care for the state and royal enterprise (line).

Because the locations were a major concern to the court and king, many of government's discussions centred on the safety of the Royal Shrines and Altars. On the 28th day of the fourth month, the First Minister without Portfolio Kim Kwiyŏng said to the court that,

> The Royal Shrines and royal tombs are all located in this place (Hansŏng). Where, then, will I be able to flee to? I will certainly remain here in the capital and await the auxiliary army.[374]

Later, and in a similar context, the court was criticized for its failings,

[374] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 26:1 b (1592.04.28).

> We have not been able to defend the Royal Shrines and Altars, and the royal carriage has fled from the royal palace. This is not just a crime of the great ministers; it is a crime committed by all ministers.[375]

Nevertheless, the king needed to leave the capital and the Shrines and Altars of the state were abandoned. The artifacts that could be relocated were removed and buried. Demands from the court not to abandon the capital rang out and even '…a group of six thousand formed an auxiliary army and promised to retake the Royal Shrines and Altars.'[376] Although an army to recapture the locations never appeared, the retaking of the Royal Shrines and Altars remained the most important fount of socio-political identity in the state (along with the safety of the king's person). In addition, the focus on the shrines could have been used to take attention away from the king's having abandoned the capital. Sŏnjo was pelted with stones by the populace as he left to head north. The spirit tablets of the Royal Shrines and Altars were later moved out of the capital for protection,[377] but the government continued to complain that the people should have died for locations instead of fleeing for their own lives.[378] As the rhetorical battle for the safety of the king and shrines was occurring, there were political battles happening at court, and the Altars were used to advance the ideas of certain officials and groups. Many courtiers wanted to make Prince Kwanghae'gun the official heir to Sŏnjo, and this too involved the locations of the immortal elements of the state. The minister Sin Chap said, 'When we decide upon a long term plan [for the Kwanghae'gun], then we can create the great plan of the Altars.'[379] The Royal Shrines and Altars remained socio-political devices to be used at court, even as their substantive safety was under threat.

As the king moved north to P'yŏngyang and then to Ŭiju, the symbols of the state and its history began to be used in defense of the country. At one point the age of the country

[375] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 26:1 b (1592.05.02).
[376] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 26:3 a (1592.05.02).
[377] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 26:11 a (1592.05.10).
[378] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 26:13 a (1592.05.13).
[379] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 26:2 a (1592.04.28).

(kuk) was presented: 'at the beginning of the state (*kukch'o* 國初), the Buddhist monk Muhak 無學 wrote about the works of the country (and king) (*kukka* 國家)'.[380] Muhak lived at the end of Koryŏ and the beginning of Chosŏn, which would mean that, if taken literally, the state in this passage is regarded as being two hundred years old. *Kuk* 國 has both elements meaning the state and the dynasty, and in this case *kukch'o* 國初 refers to the age of the dynasty rather than to the age of the Eastern Realm. But as mentioned in chapter two, there were two time periods that the king followed. His own lineage time and the immortal continuity that flowed in socio-political identity. As with other entries before the Imjin War, these cultural time lines and histories before the Chosŏn dynasty were frequently mentioned to increase the apparent lineage of the country. When mentioning the plight of the king to the north, Yun Tusu added that,

> Hyŏnjong of Koryŏ was forced to flee to Naju when the Khitan invaded, but was ultimately restored (to his rightful place). We lost the capital, but we can defend P'yŏngyang.[381]

A few days later, a similar case was made before the king that refers to both Korea's and China's history,

> In spite of past Chinese emperors and Koryŏ kings being driven out of their capitals, they were later restored, and in spite of the workings of the state (*kuksa* 國事) being in a perilous position, the king should not lose his faith in overcoming these troubles.[382]

Whether or not King Sŏnjo had any real connection to these past states and foreign countries is irrelevant, as he only needed a pretence to make it seem that his connection to the past was real and that he could repeat their achievements.[383] The shrines and history were the immortal evidence that the king required to demonstrate his station in society, and as the

[380] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 26:3 b (1592.04.30)
[381] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 26:5 b (1592.05.04).
[382] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 26:10 a (1592.05.10).
[383] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 36:34 a (1593.03.20). There is also mention of the return of the lands of Paekche 百濟 after the Chinese army moved south.

inheritor of these pasts he needed to prove that he could repeat what his forbears (both Korean and Chinese) had done and also be victorious. Nevertheless, these definitions of the state were nothing new and the government had been making reference to them long before the war. This is also clear in the next passage when the king was heading north that mentions the mortal king's line and the country,

> …In a single morning, the graves of our ancestral line (*seŏp* 世業) have been reduced to a pile of ashes. …the entirety of our country's (*kuk* 國) peoples' hearts are gathering around the single body of his majesty.[384]

As for the populace, there were very few discussions regarding the people during this time, but the people were expected to serve their lords with loyalty (*ch'ung* 忠) for the greater good of the state (king, Royal Shrines, and Altars). The people, and the vassals of the king, were expected to serve king, country, Royal Shrines and Altars, and give their lives for the greater good. There 'nothing greater for generals than to serve their king (*kŭnwang* 勤王),'[385] and to offer oneself to protect the two hundred-year-old dynasty and prevent the destruction of royal authority in the Royal Shrines and Altars[386] were seen as obligatory by the government. Although this appears as an obvious reaction of the government to the massive invasion, a great many people suddenly became more connected to the safety of the symbols of royal authority and legitimacy. Before this time, the king had, more or less, monopolized care for the safety of the shrines and the state. This control had solidified the king's control over immortal symbols and given substance to his claims to rule. With this claim and power shattered in the face of the Japanese army, people across the country were now, albeit briefly, a vital part of the immortal identity.

Yet a majority of the concepts used by the government during the war to fashion socio-political identity had already been used during the pre-war era. Even during the six

[384] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 26:9 a (1592.05.09).
[385] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 26:13 b (1592.05.13).
[386] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 26:11 a (1592.05.10).

years of the invasion and occupation, certain concepts that were already common currency were solidified and heightened, but they were hardly novel concepts. This is particularly true of the foreign world that became a palpable reality for all the people in the peninsula. The Chosŏn court understood (as they had done before the invasion), that Japan was a separate state with a different culture and the court treated it as a foreign state. Even later, when the Chinese accused the Koreans of helping the Japanese, the Chinese refer to the Koreans as Chosŏn, the Japanese as the country of Japan (Ilbon*'guk* 日本國), and themselves as the state of China (*Chungguk* 中國).[387] The war, although based on a hierarchy of states due to necessity, was still a war of individual states that recognized some form of sovereignty and international obligations.

But the court was divided over the prospect of taking refuge in Ming territory. The Ming had not yet committed themselves to the war effort when Sŏnjo entered Ŭiju, and if Sŏnjo left Chosŏn territory he would have left the Grand Prince Kwanghae'gun as the sole mortal ruler in the country. This would be tantamount to Sŏnjo relinquishing his throne.

> There is no further place for us to flee within our own country (*kuk* 國). But if we go to the Liaodong peninsula, as we are currently debating, to whom will we entrust the Royal Shrines and Altars of our forefathers?[388]

Politics at court, the loss of the king's and state's sovereignty, the Japanese army halting at P'yŏngyang, and connection to the immortal concepts of the state all played a role in the king not going into China. As the Chinese agreed to enter the war and the Ming army arrived, the Korean court's reliance on the 'Heavenly Army' increased and the court could begin to place the immortal symbols of the state firmly back under the monopoly of the king. The socio-political identity that the court supported once more centred on the king alone and his need to maintain the shrines and state. King Sŏnjo's faith and reverence for the Ming also

[387] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 27:12 a (1592.06.18).
[388] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 27:5 b (1592.06.13).

became the main reason for Chosŏn's potential rescue from the Japanese by the Ming, and the reverence for the Ming joined the socio-political identities already in play on the peninsula.

As the Chinese were now a real part of the contemporary socio-political debate, the Ming-Chosŏn armies represented a 'civilized alliance' that supported the rule of the Chosŏn court. The people had to support both their court and the Emperor's army. This was in spite of the court's knowledge of the Chinese (Tang*'in* 唐人) stealing from the people they were meant to protect.[389] The arrival of the Ming army signaled that the king and court did not have to rely on their own people for defense, and from that point on the Chosŏn court began to look towards the West for salvation.

> From long ago if the state (*kukka* 國家) faced catastrophe and the ten thousand people were not sufficient, then one word was sufficient to bring them all together. If the Heavenly Court does not come to our aid, then our two hundred years of Serving the Great will also end.[390]

At the end of 1592 and into 1593, the socio-political effort for the king and court went from mixed support of native armies to the support of the foreign Ming army in fighting the foreign Japanese army. This sentiment is also reflected in the roles of Righteous Army commanders who were given charge to obtain food and materials for the Ming army.[391] The Japanese army left P'yŏngyang in early 1593 and headed south to Hansŏng, and from there on to the southern coast, which they occupied until 1598. There were further battles after the Japanese left P'yŏngyang, notably in Chinju, and socio-political identity continued to evolve during this time. The war demonstrated that the same socio-political concepts from before the invasion were continually used by the government to broaden people's connection to the state in order to stop the Japanese army. The war did not create these socio-political concepts, but

[389] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 35:36 b (1593.02.20).
[390] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 27:5 b (1592.06.13).
[391] See the following diaries in the next section.

gave them an opportunity to grow and flourish. The initial invasion made the government try to connect as many people as possible to the king's protection, but the arrival of the Ming and the Japanese retreat south switched the court's efforts toward aiding the Ming army. This change of direction worked to create a new form of socio-political identity.

The Chinese and Japanese were not the only foreigners involved in the Imjin War. The northern Ho 胡, recognized as the largest threat to the state before the Imjin War, were still a group that could threaten Korea. Nurhaci sent letters to the Korean court proposing that he send troops into Chosŏn to drive the Japanese out, but the court respectfully declined this invitation. Troubles with the Ho flared up on the northern border when a group of Ho travelled into Chosŏn to collect food and ginseng and were slaughtered by Chosŏn troops.[392] But relations were peaceful for the majority of the conflict as the Koreans did not want the northern border attacked, and Nurhaci thought the war could play to his advantage.[393]

After the initial invasion and the retreat of the Japanese to the south, the preliminary definitions of the state from before the Imjin War continued to be the focus for the central government, as their control over those symbols and places gave their reign power and legitimacy. After Hansŏng was liberated and the king returned to the capital, the court sought to rebuild the Royal Shrines and Altars as quickly as possible as symbols for a court ready to take control of the country.[394] The government did not seek to change the state due to the war, and they wanted normalcy to continue as soon as possible. Not only did they want the Ming to conclude the war as quickly as possible and kill all the Japanese, they took steps to limit the recruitment of the Righteous Armies and even imprisoned and tortured generals who proved to be too successful. The maintenance of the mortal core and the lineage time was too important for any threat that could appropriate any immortal symbols or continuity. The fear

[392] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 72:1 b (1596.02.02).
[393] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 30:11 b-12 a; 62:22 b.
[394] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 45:30 a-35 b (1593.11.14).

of a rebellion following victory over the Japanese (a victory brought about using the Ming army) may have been too great for there to have been any real discussion and change on the government's approach to socio-political identity during the Imjin War.

Nevertheless, the war created much greater communication between the various peoples in Chosŏn and the court. As the court's own narrative of socio-political identity largely relied on concepts created prior to the war with a renewed focus on 'Serving the Great' (*sadae* 事大)and the Ming military, the court was interested in expanding socio-political concepts albeit within certain limits. These limits for reestablishing the status-quo, however, were not held by others outside of the court. The war was an opportunity to change many people's current social situation. By proving their loyalty to crown and to country they could win merit and advance their own individual causes. These were the individuals and groups who were on the front lines, and who witnessed the foundation of the state come under threat, together with the arrival of foreigner friend and foreign foe alike, into their country. The next section provides a step away from the government's view of things and delves into the various perspectives of those who chose to fight, and those who could not escape, the Japanese hordes.

3.2.2 Diaries: Socio-Political Identity

The next section contains an overview of the contents of five diaries written during the Imjin War. In order to show perspectives from a variety of people during the war, the diaries selected were written by politicians, generals, Righteous Army soldiers and commanders, and *yangban* without position. Some of the journals are well known (such as the *Chingbirok*) and others are relatively obscure (such as the *Chukkye ilgi*). The following discussion will briefly introduce the contents of the diaries and mostly focus on their references to socio-political identity in Chosŏn. The chapter will then conclude with a section

comparing and contrasting their interpretations of socio-political identity in order to understand the galaxy of meanings that are inherit in certain concepts.

3.2.3 Yu Sŏngnyong: *Chingbirok*

Yu Sŏngnyong 柳成龍 (1542-1607) wrote *Chingbirok* 懲毖錄 [*The Book of Corrections*][395] and was Chief State Councilor for most of the Imjin War. Yu was a student of Yi Hwang T'oegye 李滉 退溪, and at the age of twenty-seven he was sent to the Ming capital on a congratulatory envoy mission for the Emperor Longqing. Yu was a member of the Southern faction (*nam'in* 南人) and a career politician with a well-connected family. Yu wrote the *Chingbirok* primarily for apologetic purposes and completed the book after the war ended. Although the document has some dates and appears to be a true diary it is more of a political memoir designed to defend his actions during the conflict. Be that as it may, *Chingbirok* contains a lot of interesting details that make it more than a mere political memoir. Yu gave special attention to his friend Commander Yi Sunsin, other Korean military commanders, the Righteous Armies and Buddhist forces, and the suffering of the people. Elements of socio-political identity were also frequently mentioned. Yu did not cover the years of peace negotiations (between 1593-1597) and mostly focused on the two eras of invasion in 1592-1593 and 1597-1598. He also devoted two chapters to Yi Sunsin, whom he credited for saving the country. As Yu's diary was written after the war, we are able to analyse both his reaction and the sources of Chosŏn's salvation from the perspective of politicians after 1599. This also makes the book useful in understanding socio-political identity following the war.

Throughout *Chingbirok*, there are many passages relating to socio-political identity, which reflected both Yu's own socio-political concerns and the concerns of the state as a

[395] Choi Byonghyon entitled his translation 'The Book of Corrections', but a more literal translation might be 'A Record of Discipline and Restraint' or 'A Record to Warn and Prevent (such future conflicts).'

whole. Yu's proposed socio-political identity is summarized in the introduction to the book where he mentions immortal bonds to the spirits of the past, the present mortal king, the people, and the Ming Empire.

> The unceasing strength of our previous lords bound the people tightly together. As the people's hearts had an unceasing love for their country, our Lord impressed the Emperor with his devotion to China (*sadae* 事大). It is because of these actions that (the Emperor) mobilized a great many divisions to save the country.[396]

The purpose of Yu's diary was not to write a pure record, but to present a carefully woven tapestry of events that would help his current political problems and also his own historical memory. Most of the other authors in this chapter could not or did not have the luxury of personally rewriting their diaries. Yet, Yu's diary shows the continuation of certain ideas upon which the state was founded (the Royal Shrines and Altars) and the growth of other concepts that were not as important as in the past (connections with China). The first part of the *Chingbirok* focuses on praising the actions of the Righteous Armies, mentioning the king's care of the Royal Shrines and Altars, and the pious actions and suffering of the court. Yu also takes the opportunity to criticise the Confucian scholars and the generals who fled from the front.

Before the Imjin War, Yu was much more aware of Chosŏn international relations than the average diarist, and he had a greater connection to symbols of state power and authority. Therefore, it was highly unlikely that Yu would have deviated from the court's opinions concerning concepts of the state. He saw the king as the pinnacle of society, the Royal Shrines and Altars supporting the king and state, and understood the myriad of histories (both peninsular and regional) that contributed to Chosŏn culture (*Bildung*). He also appeared to understand that the Japanese were not just 'barbarians' but came from a governed state (*kuk* 國) with a king (*kukwang* 國王).

[396] Yu Sŏngnyong, *Chingbirok* (Introduction (Chasŏ), Lee Chaeho (trans.), 12-15.

Yet the savagery of the Japanese was not the first focus of Yu's ire. Instead, Yu criticized the preparedness of the country and blamed the Korean generals[397] and the scholarly elite for evading their duty to the state while seemingly praising the Righteous Armies.

> While all the middle classes and other people gathered in the town centre, only half of the moaning Confucian scholars appeared. The so-called 'Confucian Scholars' wore their uniforms and held their books in their hands as if they were ready to take the Civil Service Exam. While those loudmouths kept wearing their scholarly black caps, they tried all they could to avoid conscription into the military. As such, there was not one among them who could be sent to the front.[398]

Then he went on to say,

> It is fortunate that the enemy forces have not yet reached the towns of Yŏngch'ŏn and P'unggi. As a result, the Righteous Armies have risen up in increasingly larger number.[399]

Yu continually mentioned the Righteous Armies,[400] and praised their efforts more than the regular forces. This is noteworthy as Yu's diary contradicts the actions of the court following the end of the war: the government ignored the Righteous Armies' soldiers and only bestowed titles to the courtiers who followed Sŏnjo north.

Later, as the Japanese moved north and Sin Ip's army was defeated before Hansŏng, the king and court were forced to flee to P'yŏngyang. This meant that the king had to abandon the capital without losing connection to the mortal and immortal bonds of his reign. Yu recorded that,

> His majesty spoke, "But the Royal Shrines and Altars are located here (Hansŏng). How can we speak of going somewhere else?"[401]

On the way from the capital (with the angry mobs that stood in their way) people on the side of road looked at the train of officials, and are recorded to have said

[397] Specifically, the Commander Sin Ip.
[398] Yu, *Chingbirok* (1592.04.17), Lee Chaeho (trans.), 63.
[399] Yu, *Chingbirok* (1592.04.17), Lee Chaeho (trans.), 69.
[400] Yu, *Chingbirok* (1592.04.17), Lee Chaeho (trans.), 71.
[401] Yu, *Chingbirok* (1592.04), Lee Chaeho (trans.), 76.

> As the king (and government) (*kukka* 國家) abandon us to our fate, what can we poor souls rely on? How will we survive?[402]

Yet the court headed north nonetheless and the tablets of the state were forgotten in Hansŏng, but were later moved as they 'were not to be merely left for the enemy'.[403] As the court headed north, Yu wrote about the disintegration of the armed forces, tactical errors, and the weakness of men of letters. Yu then recorded that the Chinese envoy arrived, and he even accused the Chosŏn court of colluding with the enemy.

The king and court were forced to leave P'yŏngyang, but the people did not want the king to abandon them yet again. Yu used the concepts of loyalty to the king to both motivate people to defend the city, and also allow the king to leave, but the people accused the court of 'destroying the state (*kuk* 國)'.[404] In this hopeless situation, officials were sent to the royal tombs of Tan'gun, Kija, and King Tongmyŏng 東明王, the founder of the states of Puyŏ 扶餘 (first-fourth centuries) and Koguryŏ 高句麗, to pray for rain and for the survival of the country.[405] Here we can see the immortal continuity wherein spirits of the past are summoned to the aid of the current mortal king.

As the court slipped away to the north, Yu accused generals of abandoning grain to the enemy and noted that mobs ran amok throughout the kingdom. Yu's own people, especially the *yangban*, were failing the king and state. It was at the last moment, by the border of the Ming and Chosŏn, that the Ming envoy arrived and the Ming army followed. From this point, Yu finally appeared to sense that the Koreans could march south again and retake the country. But Yu's own focus had to change, and he was primarily concerned with supporting the newly arrived foreign army. To support the tens of thousands of foreigners about to arrive, Yu had to cajole the people into helping Chosŏn aid the Ming.

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[402] Yu, *Chingbirok* (1592.04.30), Lee Chaeho (trans.), 100.
[403] Yu, *Chingbirok* (1592.04.14), Lee Chaeho (trans.), 106.
[404] Yu, *Chingbirok* (1592.04.30), Lee Chaeho (trans.), 95.
[405] Yu, *Chingbirok* (1592.06.11), Lee Chaeho (trans.), 130.

> The reason that the king (and country) (*kukka* 國家) has raised you in normal times was to use you in times like these. How dare you flee?! As we speak, the Heavenly army (Ming) is about to arrive, and the affairs of our country (*kuksa* 國事) are in a great state of urgency. Because we have raised you, it is the time for you to exert yourself and win merits![406]

Whether or not his words had any effect is unknown, but the Ming army marched south to meet the Japanese. However, the combined forces could not take P'yŏngyang, and the court was shocked by these developments. Instead of praising the work of the Chinese, Yu began to praise the exploits of Chosŏn soldiers such as Yi Sunsin who 'saved the country by securing the seas'.[407] Some scholars, such as Cho Ho'ik were commended for their loyalty as they fought and bowed to the king's location.[408] The Ming army were not the focus of Yu's praise in the *Chingbirok*, and he often subtly criticized them for not fighting or allowing the Koreans to fight the enemy. The real praise was saved for the people from Chosŏn.

As the Chinese had not yet chased the Japanese out of P'yŏngyang, Yu returned to events throughout the peninsula. For instance, the enemy were reported to have entered Chŏlla and destroyed a number of troops, but the Japanese are also said to have collected the Chosŏn forces' bodies, buried them, and commemorated the Chosŏn dead. The Japanese even wrote a sign that read 'to the brave of the country of Chosŏn'.[409] As foreigners moved into the country, the old concepts of merely being a person of the state (*a'min* 我民) were transformed. The host population were now referred to by a foreign title in their home country (Chosŏn*'in* 朝鮮人).

While the praising of the Koreans continued, Yu began to subtly criticise the Chinese and their aims for the war. An example, he wondered why the Chinese allowed the Japanese

[406] Yu, *Chingbirok* (1592.07.27), Lee Chaeho (trans.), 146.
[407] Yu, *Chingbirok*, Lee Chaeho (trans.), 167-173.
[408] Yu, *Chingbirok*, Lee Chaeho (trans.), 174.
[409] Yu, *Chingbirok*, Lee Chaeho (trans.), 185.

to march south without the Koreans attacking them, which infuriated Yu.[410] Instead of praising the Ming for their efforts in the north, Yu continued to praise the Righteous Armies for their loyalty to the king, and even praised the Supreme Monk Commander Yujŏng who 'raised a monk army and raced West to P'yŏngyang to show their devotion to the workings of the state (*kuksa* 國事)'.[411] Later the Chinese retreated after facing the Japanese in Pyŏkchegwan and Yu continually had to worry about locating provisions for the Chinese. The Japanese still seemed to get the upper hand in many battles utilizing superior tactics and weaponry and Yu was angry that the Chinese did not pursue the enemy. Even when the Ming did not advance, Yu was punished for not finding enough provisions for the Ming army and there were constant troubles between the Chosŏn politicians and Ming commanders. The attitude of the Chinese commanders and politicians must have added to Yu's distrust and anxiety.

During this time, Yu reported on the terrible situation facing the people in the country and stated that the people were starving. A struggle between Yu and the Ming commander Li Rusong 李如松 broke out over the prospect of a peaceful settlement with the Japanese. For his criticism of the Chinese general Yu was sentenced to forty lashes. Yu escaped this punishment but he continued to highlight the general animosity and antipathy between the Koreans and the Chinese. Yu wished to pursue the enemy and destroy them, but Li Rusong was reported to have made excuses as for why he could not follow the enemy. Following their disagreement, the Japanese troops retreated back to Pusan and made fortifications and the royal princes were released in June 1593. The Japanese then attacked Chinju fortress and destroyed it, leaving no one alive. Yu mentions the coolheaded tact of Kwak Chaeu, Ko Ŏnbaek, and other Righteous Armies throughout the battle. But overall Yu had a negative

[410] Yu, *Chingbirok*, Lee Chaeho (trans.), 234.
[411] Yu, *Chingbirok* (*minbyŏng* 民兵 Chapter), Lee Chaeho (trans.), 200.

perception of Korean troops and criticizes his own people in the battle. Yu mention that their forces were nothing but ignorant rabble and that they must be cautious in taking action.

The first part of Yu's diary was used to support prior socio-political concepts, defend the actions of the court, praise the Righteous Armies and monk soldiers, and criticise the Ming army. In the second part of the diary, Yu did not give many details concerning the peace negotiations. Instead, he moved forward to the events of the last invasion in 1597. Yu primarily focused on the Chinese being unprepared for the re-invasion, and his friendship with the man whom he credits for winning the war: Commander Yi Sunsin. At this point in 1597, Yi Sunsin was arrested and imprisoned on false charges of not following orders. Chŏng T'ak is recorded to have said, '(forgive Yi Sunsin) and grant him one more chance to serve his country (*kuk* 國)'. While Yi Sunsin is tortured in prison, his mother passed away and Yu continued to criticise the Chinese, stating that they had very low numbers of fighting men on the peninsula. Yu appears to blame the peace talks for having allowed the enemy to regroup. The decisions at court in turn led to Yi Sunsin's arrest and gave Wŏn Kyun command of Yi Sunsin's ships. Wŏn Kyun's utter defeat at the battle of Ch'ilchŏllyang led to the loss of most of the southern fleet, and could have led to the Japanese domination of the Korean coast.

Yu was a friend of Yi Sunsin, and obviously benefitted from the popular image of the commander. Yu praised Yi Sunsin's contact with his troops, his hoarding of provisions for his marines, and his skills on the battlefield. These actions, Yu claimed, led to many people joining the navy. As Yi Sunsin headed back to the front after his imprisonment, Namwŏn was taken by the enemy. Yu wrote that Wŏn Kyun's ignorance led to defeat at Namwŏn. Yi Sunsin was then reinstated as commander and crushed the enemy at Chindo Island (Battle of Myŏngnyang) and the Japanese were pushed back to the southeast of the peninsula. The Chinese commanders are continually berated and the Ming fleet commander Chen Lin is described as a cruel and barbaric man by Yu. But Yi Sunsin was supposedly able to control

him and win him over by letting him take the spoils of war (heads) and by using his 'guidance and knowledge'. On land at the Battle of Ulsan, the Chinese were continually driven back and Yu blamed the Ming army for the defeats. Yu then related the death of Yi Sunsin and the building of a shrine to Yi. The last part of the book ends with two short biographies about Yi Sunsin.

Yu used the *Chingbirok* as a way to warn future generations about the follies of a sovereign state being unprepared for the event of a large invasion. Yu's conclusion appears to be that the Chosŏn people were either unwilling or ill-prepared to protect the king, and that a foreign power (the Ming) should not have been allowed to control the course and development of the war. Chosŏn should 'correct' its actions by creating a greater defense system, by relying on its own power, and by promoting those individuals who were willing and able to defend the country.

Whether or not it was his intended aim, Yu also provided plenty of examples of socio-political identity to defend his own actions, and gives us a glimpse of his own *Weltanschauung*. Yu uses socio-political words and ideas from his prior *Bildung* to create his preferred view of the world. The sovereignty of the state (*kuk* 國) and the state's workings (*kuksa* 國事) were of critical importance. The monarch was also important, and the mortal reign of the king was the basis (or a major part) of the state and the state's workings. The suffering of the people was a concern to Yu, but a superficial one at best. Customs and culture, including the mortal lineage and immortal continuity, crept in and were used on occasion, but were not as utilized as the state or king in creating a socio-political identification. The foreign world and the threat of violence, both from the Japanese and the Ming, were used to support the notion that the state and state's workings could only be secured if the people fought for themselves. It was in Yi Sunsin, a man who died for the state, that Yu found a way to solidify and concentrate socio-political identity into a single person.

Yi was portrayed as a competent man, who worked hard to defend the state, respected the state and the king, and died in battle. Yu may have wanted to write a eulogy to his friend, but wrote a story about a vassal who died for the state and became an even greater common social symbol than the king.

3.2.4 Yi Sunsin: Nanjung ilgi

Nanjung ilgi 亂中日記 [The Record in the Midst of the Crisis][412] was written by Commander Yi Sunsin 李舜臣 (1545-1598). Yi Sunsin (mentioned in great detail in Yu Sŏngnyong's *Chingbirok*) was a military officer and was first stationed on the northern border to deal with the Ho 胡 threat. After frequent spats with his superiors (that would continue to dog him throughout the Imjin War), he was transferred to the Left Chŏlla Navy to deal with any possible incursions by maritime pirates. Yi's diary covers the conflict from the outbreak of war to the time before Yi's death at the battle of Noryang, which was the last major naval engagement of the war. In the diary, the commander wrote on the state of the navy, preparations, battles, and named those men to the king that he felt were worthy of honours. But Yi also exhibited his true feelings concerning his mother, the poor state of his health, and the decisions of the central government. Of most interest are his feelings concerning the people, the king, the state, and the Japanese, and his petitioning to have the servile status of monks abolished on account of their bravery, which all illustrate the meritocratic spirit that existed during the war.

The purpose of military men maintaining a diary was not for the same reasons as those in the Righteous Armies or *yangban* without position. It was as much a personal decision as it was a duty for a commander to record the happenings of his forces. Yi was required to give updates to his superiors and, as previously noted, the military journal may

[412] Translations will also include passages from the *Imjin changch'o* 壬辰狀草.

have been one of the sources for the individual journal. The utilitarian value of the diary far outweighed its value for the individual. This is reflected in the diary as Yi Sunsin's own views on socio-political identity are quite sparse and Yi primarily focuses on his own forces. However, socio-political concepts can still be located in his diary.

The centre of the state for Yi Sunsin is the physical location of the monarch. The general constantly bows towards the location of the king (as do the Righteous Army soldiers)[413] and his primary concerns are not the defense of the Ancestral Shrine or the Altars, but rather the king himself.[414] His focus is primarily on the real and mortal elements of the state rather than the theoretical and immortal ones. Although Yi does thank the spirits of the Altars, he continually mentions the king as the most important location in the country.[415] Yi's reason for fighting was both a hatred of the Japanese enemy who destroyed, plundered, and burned the country,[416] and his duty to king and country. In one of his dreams, an apparition of his mother calmly told him to 'wash away the disgrace of the country (*kuk* 國)'.[417] Yi did not have to create a pretence to defend the state; it was his job.

Yi Sunsin's diary style substantially changed after his arrest, imprisonment, and torture. His entries become fewer, and his descriptions of the battles are less detailed. Yi Sunsin appears to have lost faith in the court and in the king's actions. When Yi returned to the front to command a nearly destroyed fleet, he recorded in his diary.

> Towards the end of the night in the course of our conversation someone revealed that the king had issued orders in which the king expressed words of regrets. Another said that, 'however, the heart of His Majesty is doubtful! I cannot understand what it really means'. He also said that the wicked man (Wŏn Kyun) brought the throne extremely false accusations. But the king did not know of it. How can state affairs be conducted in such a way?[418]

[413] Yi Sunsin, *Nanjung ilgi* (1594.03.01).
[414] Yi Sunsin, (1593.05.12).
[415] Yi Sunsin, (1595.05.29).
[416] Yi Sunsin, (1593.05.17).
[417] Yi Sunsin, (1594.01.12).
[418] Yi Sunsin, (1597.05.20).

It is clear that for Yi Sunsin, socio-political identity had less to do with political and immortal elements than with the substantive value of victory at the front for the mortal king. Yi's apparent primary concern was the safety of the king and the people of the country in general. The only way to secure these was complete victory over the Japanese enemy, but peace negotiations and poor management of the state (*kuksa* 國事) did not allow Yi to proceed with his goals. Over time, Yi appeared to have lost faith in both the king and the workings of the state, but continued to fight until his death.

Socio-political identity was a great concern for Yu Sŏngnyong, but it was not for Yi Sunsin. Yi's job was to maintain the form of government that had existed and the elements of identity that held the state theoretically together. He used the concepts of the Royal Shrine and Altars occasionally, but never mentioned ideas of cultural items or achievements (*munmul* 文物). Yi most definitely understood the existence of immortal elements of the state and the cultural background of the state (*Bildung*). But for Yi, the suffering of the Chosŏn king, soldiers, and civilians was real enough and his duty to the king was the primary basis for his conception of socio-political identity.

3.2.5 O Hŭimun: *Swaemirok*

> I have heard word of hundreds of Japanese ships arriving at Pusan. They landed at night and have taken Pusan and Tongnae. I cannot overcome my shock at hearing of these events.[419]

Swaemirok 瑣尾錄 [*The Record of the Refugee*] was written by a *yangban* without position in the government, O Hŭimun[420] 吳希文 (1539-1613). O Hŭimun was a landowner with various holdings in the Chŏlla region. Although he never entered government office, his

[419] O Hŭimun, *Swaemirok* (1592.04.16).
[420] See Michael Finch, 'Civilian Life in Chosŏn during the Japanese Invasion of 1592: The "Namhaeng Illok" and "Imjin Illok" in Swaemirok by O Hŭimun' in *Acta Koreana* Vol. 12, No. 2, pp. 55-77, which includes an initial analysis and partial translation of the first two books of O Hŭimun's diary (1592-1593).

son went on to become Chief State Councilor during the reign of Injo.[421] *Swaemirok* spans the entirety of the invasion and even continues its narrative after the war is over. As O Hŭimun was not a member of the government, his account of the war and writing style is very different to Yu Sŏngnyong and Yi Sunsin's diaries. *Swaemirok* gives an extremely detailed account of everyday life during the war that includes O Hŭimun's views on the war, socio-political identity, finances, and general issues facing his family during this devastating period. These attributes make the diary style very similar to a *true* diary like Yu Hŭichun's diary than to other *war* diaries surveyed in this chapter. O never served in the armed forces or with the Righteous Armies.

O Hŭimun's book can be divided into two sections. One section is the diary that he personally wrote; the other section are the notes that he collected during the war (*chamnok* 雜錄). His personal diary contains information on his daily life, close encounters with the Japanese, and the sufferings of the country. The *chamnok*, although not his personal writing, contains many official letters and announcements. If the cited material by O was also a reflection of the author's sentiments, then the official announcements and O Hŭimun's responses to those announcements will be analysed in order for us to assess popular understandings of socio-political identity during the war.[422]

Until the 'Pusan incident', O Hŭimun was inspecting his farms and travelled across the country. He was accompanied by his servants as he took stock of his land production, oversaw inheritance, and visited relatives. Following the invasion by the Japanese, the author was separated from his family and lamented that, 'my old mother, wife, and children had for their entire lives never gone outside the gate (of the house) and do not know the streets… In

[421] O Yun'gyŏm 吳允謙 (1559-1636). Lead envoy to Japan (1617), Chief State Councillor (1628-1633).
[422] Cited evidence and speech was used to express the writers' sentiments. Chosŏn authors would generally shy away from writing their own opinions with their own voice.

this situation, I thought I would die'.[423] The chaos drove O Hŭimun to the west where he sought to find his way back to his hometown. He eventually returned home and remained in Chŏlla province for the remainder of the war. Socio-political identity mentioned by O Hŭimun in the invasion centred around a few common themes: the safety of the king, the stability of the state with the Ancestral Shines and Altars, his own family's worship at their home shrine, the strength of the Righteous Armies, and Yi Sunsin.

The state, as an abstract concept, remained undefined in O Hŭimun's diary, but he and others began to understand Chosŏn's place in international affairs both by the scale of the invasion and through the king's petitions to the people. It appears that the people of the entire country were suddenly united by the magnitude of the event, and O Hŭimun recorded that 'Everyone in Choson is trampled down by these bloody bandits'. The king was one of the most important elements for O Hŭimun, and he was also regularly informed of the king's location as the court headed north. People throughout the state received letters from the king that called for soldiers to come forth and sacrifice themselves for the country.

But the king was not the only individual calling for men to die for the country. The Crown Prince began to write petitions and used a variety of histories and symbols to motivate the people.

> Hereby speaks the Crown Prince. Heaven is furious! The island barbarians have caused this disturbance and have destroyed many towns... the Royal Shrines have taken refuge and the King's carriage has gone far. For two-hundred years of rituals, music and cultural achievements (*yerak* 禮樂 and *munmul* 文物) were lost in a single morning. The cruel fires of war were rare in the past. It is sad! …but China has sent a relief army and are like clouds stationed at the Taedong river. In the two southern provinces, the brave men who have raised the Righteous Armies in the fields of Hansŏng are gathered like the fog and the place where the soldiers' blades are pointed at the dreadful sight of the fiend. … It is through your strength that the ruinous barbarian will be destroyed. … you brandish a great axe and killing the enemy will be like cutting down mushrooms sprouting in the morning!

[423] O Hŭimun, *Imjin namhaeng illok*, (1592.05.03).

> I have received our majesty's instructions and have come east to examine our country… upon my oath I plan to leave none of the enemy alive.
>
> Think of the Royal Shrines and guardian deities of the Altars' disgrace! From below think of your own house's disgrace and get ready, for the time to destroy the enemy is now! Those given government positions and those without, I say to all of you do not be parsimonious!
>
> O! If there is a wish to die and no wish to live together with the hated enemy, take heart and follow the good and wise king and before going to Hansŏng, increase your hope and recognition![424]

Letters were also sent by a number of the Righteous Army commanders including the Righteous Army commander Kwak Cheu, who called for the people to rise up and defend the two hundred years of their culture and civilization.

> These are indeed ambitious men (*chisa* 志士) who put their spears under their pillows (ready to fight). Loyal subjects (*ch'ungsin* 忠臣) die for the country. So is it not deplorable when, in all the sixty-seven regions, there are a few people who exert themselves, call for righteousness, and enlist only for them to see others flee into the mountains to avoid the enemy. Those cowards seek to maintain their houses and bodies. This is a great shame to the men who give their own lives to a noble cause (*yŏlsa* 烈士)…This enemy was so intent in his assault on Hansŏng that the army could not withstand his assault for long. The Japanese anger has not reached many towns, but if the crazed enemy achieves his goals, if this ominous band were to fill the interior our country, even the mountains and forests would not be a place where you could avoid death, would they?[425]

Chosŏn was not the only country to be mentioned by O Hŭimun. The immortal continuity of the Eastern Realm in the past states of Silla 新羅 and Koryŏ 高麗 were used to strengthen his sense of socio-political identity with the court and others.

> (Talking about Yongnam's long history with Silla, Koryo)…in these times, we are proud of our loyal subjects' (*ch'ungsin* 忠臣) and dutiful sons' (*hyoja* 孝子) exemplary minds. Our righteous ardor (*ŭiyŏl* 義烈) is immortalized in history. With filial piety (*hyo* 孝), immutable loyalty and deep conviction to their way of life, they were the greatest in the Eastern Realm; this is truly known to all the people (*samin* 士民).[426]

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[424] O Hŭimun, *Imjin namhaeng illok* (Letter of Support from the Crown Prince to the People's Forces) (1592.09).
[425] O Hŭimun, *Imjin namhaeng illok* (1592.09.01).
[426] O Hŭimun, *Imjin namhaeng illok* (1592.09.01).

The state, the monarch, customs and cultures, the defense of the people, and the expulsion of the barbarous foreigners were used to unite the people in the early stage of the war. This was very similar to the state using such concepts during peacetime, except that they were used without restraint by the state and individuals seeking to protect the country and to advance their own interests.

After the Japanese retreated to the south, O Hŭimun refocused his diary entries to his family life and the daily battle of getting food and materials to live on. As with Yu Sŏngnyong, O Hŭimun also criticized the Chinese for taking too long in their political efforts in Japan, perhaps reinforcing a widely-held negative perception of the Chinese forces.[427] The return of the Chinese ambassadors was also met with the news that the Japanese were increasing the number of ships off the shores, and O Hŭimun hoped that this meant that the Japanese would shortly leave.[428]

The second invasion began in 1597 and O Hŭimun and his family were directly threatened by the Japanese advance. O Hŭimun was primarily concerned both by the Japanese army and also by Yi Sunsin's imprisonment. The Japanese attacked Namwŏn Castle and O Hŭimun worried that the people would suffer when fleeing from the enemy.

> In six years of war, those who have survived have all become haggard and did not know how to repent for heaven's anger. The sinister blades of the enemy appeared again and the people remaining in Honam (South Chŏlla Province) and Hosŏ (West Chŏlla Province) are miserable. Heaven is kind and will comfort the people, but how can we force all the people of Chosŏn into the Buddha's land (afterlife)?[429]

The king then called for calm and looked back to the Three Han (*samhan* 三韓) for guidance.

> Our Eastern Realm as well in dynasties of past confronted the enemy. Kang Kamch'an[430] cut up and mastered the Khitan; Chŏng Seun[431] sent the Red Turban

[427] O Hŭimun, *Py'ŏngsin illok* (1596.02.06 and 1596.04.11-14).
[428] O Hŭimun, *Py'ŏngsin illok* (1596.05.22).
[429] O Hŭimun, *Ch'ŏngyu illok* (1597.08.23).
[430] Kang Kamch'an 姜邯贊 (948-1031), Kŏryo dynasty.
[431] Chŏng Seun 鄭世雲 (?-1363), Kŏryo dynasty.

Bandits to their destruction.[432]

As the war continued into 1598, the Chinese army was reported to have arrived and the tide of the war turns in favour of the Chosŏn-Ming alliance. As the enemy finally retreats from the Korean peninsula, O Hŭimun recorded that,

> Already, all the enemy have crossed the ocean. The Chinese navy and our naval forces pursued them, attacked them, and chopped many of them up. However, Commander-in-Chief Yi Sunsin was shot and was killed. Around ten of our top chief magistrates, army officers with special expertise, and naval officers were lost, and many rank and file soldiers were killed in the last battles. This is truly deplorable. The Chinese general was also struck by a bullet and died. Yi Sunsin was posthumously elevated to Third State Councilor. He became Honam's bulwark from the time of the first crisis, but in the end he was killed by an enemy's bullet. What a deplorable and sad thing it is![433]

There was a competition of ideas and socio-political elements during the war, and O Hŭimun's diary offers many examples of the complexity these concepts embodied during the invasion. O Hŭimun's *Weltanschauung* and *Bildung* developed thanks to the active transfer of news of current events, and the recording of that information. As with Yu Sŏngnyong and Yi Sunsin, the basis for O Hŭimun's socio-political identity throughout the conflict appears to have been based upon cultural knowledge (*Bildung*) prior to the Imjin War. The transfer of cultural knowledge was due to Chosŏn's strong manuscript culture and strong bureaucratic government prior to the war. There were no novel concepts that sprang up due to the war, but rather re-workings of prior identities.

Be that as it may, *Swaemirok* is very different to Yi's and Yu's diaries in that it recorded many forms of socio-political identity from a variety of individuals (some not at court). Although the mortal core and lineage time associated with the king were the most important elements of socio-political identity, peninsular histories, culture, and immortal continuity were continually mentioned in order to bring the people together for a common

[432] O Hŭimun, *Kyesa illok* (1597.09.29).
[433] O Hŭimun, *Musul illok* (1598.12.16).

cause. The court and others used the great diversity of elements available to them in order to forward their own causes, but immortal elements of the state proved very valuable in creating socio-political identity outside of the court. Cultural items or achievements (*munmul* 文物) and the immortal continuity of one thousand years were used alongside calls to defend the king and the mortal lineage of two hundred years. Outside of government office or the royal court, it appeared that an individual needed to be persuaded to die for the country for more than just the mortal reign of the king.

3.2.6 Chŏng Kyŏng'un: *Kodae illok*

Kodae illok 高臺日錄[434] (1592-1609) was written by Chŏng Kyŏng'un[435] 鄭慶雲 (1556~?), a *yangban*. Although born into a family with political ties, Chŏng never passed the Civil Service Examinations and never held office in the government. The author started writing his diary before the war began, maintained the diary throughout the conflict, and kept writing until 1609. It appears that Chŏng wrote his diary for personal reasons, and he was an avid writer. Entries maintained during the Imjin War had more in common with war diaries (such as Yi Sunsin) than with individual diaries that recorded more family details (O Hŭimun). This was probably due to Chŏng's involvement with the Righteous Army in the Hamyang area in the southwest of Kyŏngsang Province with commanders Kim Sŏngil and Kim Myŏn.

Chŏng recorded the problems concerning the Japanese, his own forces stealing the people's possessions ('without hesitation, they stole what they wanted' with 'no law and

[434] The *kodae* refers to a tall tower or viewing point near Chŏng Kyŏng'un's town (*sogodae*).
[435] Some scholars have remarked that some of the contents might have been changed by his family over the years, but maintain that the core text was written by Chŏng Kyŏngun.

order'),[436] and problems with the Chinese army ('the Ming army filled the camp and the people were completely gone; their unscrupulous damage was no different from the Wae 倭').[437] He also wrote about the suffering of the common people, their motivations for fighting, the spirit of the common people, and the importance of the physical location of the king. Until the king returned to the capital, the author usually mentioned the king's location, as if Sŏnjo himself were the centre of the country and state. The public messages that he received were similar to those found in *Swaemirok* and *Chingbirok*, indicating a strong communicative space and network that regularly let people know of the king's location.

After explaining that some pages had fallen out, Chŏng Kyŏng'un's diary begins on 1592.04.20 by mentioning the Japanese force's invasion. He continues with his diary on the 1592.04.23 to state that he and others were heading to Sangju 尙州, and that the counties they had conquered had become 'the dens of the enemy'.[438] During the first year of the war, the focus of Chŏng's socio-political identification was the king and the immortal bonds of the state. The king and Ancestral Shrine and Altars appear to be the most important elements of the state for the author. At the same time, the idea of ordinary people being united by a common cause was a continuous theme for Chŏng, because he was trying to build his own Righteous Army. Chŏng writes that Commander Kim Sŏngil arrived in the Hamyang district and gathered gentlemen without rank and declared, 'universal civility (*yeŭi* 禮義) is the universe's immutable way and in spite of your position, cannot be abolished. Take your revenge on the enemy and pledge to subdue him and wash away our country's disgrace!' These and other speeches were made to unite the general public in order to defend the

[436] Chŏng, *Kodae illok* (1593.07.04).
[437] Chŏng, *Kodae illok* (1593.07.15).
[438] Chŏng, *Kodae illok* (1592.04.23).

country.[439] Chŏng also received a letter from Commander Kwak Cheu that contained the same information received by O Hŭimun. The letter focused on the Royal Shrine and Altars.

> Those robbers from the sea cross our land, and our castles are attacked and surrender while our people are massacred. Certainly, if one person in the sixty-seven regions early on had risen up and led a righteous army, the dishonor that the country faces would not have to be exonerated. While you were sitting quietly, the Way fell into the enemy's hands and the Royal Ancestral Shrines (*chongmyo* 宗廟) and the Altars (*sajik* 社稷) are in peril. A righteous spirit sweeps across the land; mountains and rivers harbour our shame. If there are people with great ardour, who of them would not feel such great indignation? Take on your duty, receive the king's orders, and arrive at your posts… Grab (your) arms, and pledge to not let these Japanese live under heaven with us![440]

The socio-political elements of service to the king, Shrines and Altars, continued into 1592 and 1593 when troops were called up in loyal service to the king (*kŭnwang* 勤王).[441] The themes of previously existing socio-political identity employed to gather people to fight for the king and state continued throughout his diary.

> As a result of the king (and court's) flight (*kukka p'ach'ŏn* 國家 播遷), court officials cannot offer rites to the Royal Ancestral shrine and Altars of the guardian deities of the state. Even though there will be towns not trampled by the enemy, it is not peaceful enough to carry out rites in honor of Confucius (*sŏkch'ae* 釋菜 or *sŏkchŏn* 釋奠). I wish to suspend the religious ceremony for political expediency.[442]

> Fathers and sons having met death together for the workings of the state (*kuksa* 國事), the splendor of their loyalty and filial piety will shine for eternity. But in this family not one heir has remained. The young widow sheds bitter tears at the tomb in the mountains, and wishes to die together with her family because she will have no one to rely on. This is truly a wretched scene![443]

> The King has stopped and remains in Ŭiju. It is now the second year that (his majesty) has left the capital and fled to Ŭiju to live a refugee's life. As I lament the fact that the people of this country did not lay down their lives… o how sad it is![444]

[439] Chŏng, *Kodae illok* (1592.05.08).
[440] Chŏng, *Kodae illok* (1592.05.08).
[441] Chŏng, *Kodae illok* (1592.05.10).
[442] Chŏng, *Kodae illok* (1592.08.07).
[443] Chŏng, *Kodae illok* (1592.10.30).
[444] Chŏng, *Kodae illok* (1593.01.01).

As the tide of the war turned, Chŏng welcomed the arrival of the Heavenly army and the benevolence of the Ming Emperor. However, as soon as the Ming arrived in the south, Chŏng's horse was stolen by a Ming soldier.[445] Both Koreans and Chinese ran amok through the towns and destroyed a great many villages.[446] Then the needs of the Ming army grew and Chŏng could not help but show his anger at their increasing demands.[447] As the king returned to the capital, Chŏng mentions the symbols of the state and laments that,

> King Sŏnjo returned to Hansŏng and the Crown Prince (later King Kwanghae'gun) remains in Haeju 海州. His Majesty crossed the waters, mountains, and valleys. It has now been one full year but the king has finally returned. How must His Majesty feel, seeing the overgrown bushes in the old palaces? The two-hundred-year old Royal Shrine, Altars, and royal palaces are only ashes. When his Majesty arrived and saw this, oh, how will he grieve!? How can he persevere?

The main problems facing Chŏng were the low numbers of men in his company (around four hundred) and the lack of provisions they needed to wage war. The Righteous Army began to tax the local people for weapons and food stuffs to support their forces.

> The people of the precincts were all considered according to their circumstances and we decided upon war funds. Gentlemen without position included from the various places *chokch'ol* 炙鐵 (iron for arrow tips) 5 pieces, and 15 feathers (for arrow fletches) to prepare long and short arrows. We trained the people in how to use (these) bows and arrows. In all there were 249 pieces. We looked for and gathered war horses and called and gathered the soldiers and thereby we completed the set (required) number of war horses.[448]

These themes of securing provisions for the Chinese and for his own forces, and the suffering of the people continue until the second invasion in 1597 when Chŏng first confronts the Japanese on their way north.[449] On hearing that Wŏn Kyun had lost the fleet, Chŏng said, 'That which our country relies on is the navy, but Wŏn Kyun was truly not the person to

[445] Chŏng, *Kodae illok* (1593.05.20).
[446] Chŏng, *Kodae illok* (1593.05.04-14).
[447] Chŏng, *Kodae illok* (1593.08.03).
[448] Chŏng, *Kodae illok* (1592.06.10).
[449] Chŏng, *Kodae illok* (1597.12.23).

manage it. Yi Sunsin was suddenly dismissed and replaced by Wŏn Kyun, how lamentable!'[450]

As Chŏng's forces engage the enemy, the Japanese are pushed further south and the war comes to an end. On the last entry of the war, Chŏng lamented the death of the commander Yi Sunsin.

> The enemy commander has fled, and the commander of the Chŏlla Right Fleet, Yi Sunsin, has died. Yi Sunsin answered the call and went out to meet and wreak havoc upon hundreds of the enemy's ships. The commander attacked from both sides, and the sea turned into an ocean of war. The commander stood in front of the rank and file soldiers and fought a bloody battle all day. But he took a bullet to the head and died in battle.[451]

The socio-political identity quoted and mentioned by Chŏng contains themes used by Yu Sŏngnyong, Yi Sunsin, and O Hŭimun. As a member of the armed forces, his primary concern was the king and the mortal elements of the state (just like Yi Sunsin). At the same time, immortal themes and elements were also cited and used by Chŏng that reflected his own *Bildung* and cultural environment. However, his main reason for using immortal symbols was not a mere belief in the divine, but to work towards creating an army that could throw out the Japanese and restore order. For Chŏng, the practical and mortal aspects of identity were enough of a motivation to fight the enemy.

3.2.7 Cho Ŭngnok: *Chukkye ilgi*

Chukkye ilgi 竹溪日記 (1592-1615) was written by Cho Ŭngnok 趙應祿 (1538-1623). Cho was a career bureaucrat, having passed the Literary Civil Service Examination in 1579 after which he became a scholar of Classicism. When the Imjin War broke out, Cho began to work as an official in charge of overseeing army equipment, particularly the development of a Chosŏn musketry battalion, for the duration of the war. The remaining portion of Cho's

[450] Chŏng, *Kodae illok* (1597.10.18).
[451] Chŏng, *Kodae illok* (1598.11.19).

diary begins in the eleventh month of 1592 and the entries remain consistent until the third month of 1598, when all entries stop until the eighth month of 1599. Cho's diary is similar in form to a war diary, such as Yi Sunsin's and Chŏng Kyŏng'un's diaries. Cho documented the development of the war, his meetings with companions, and he also wrote about his own work. Cho was a pragmatist and focused on the development of the war; not the political or cultural reasons for fighting. Socio-political elements are not mentioned as often as in Yu Sŏngnyong's or O Hŭimun's diaries, but he mentions them nevertheless as they are part of his lexical and cultural identity (Bildung).

From late 1592 until 1593, Cho was racing around Chŏlla province learning the secrets of the Japanese firearms and teaching the methods of production and use to other people.[452] While going around the country, Cho even managed to meet O Hŭimun and stay at his house.[453] As the Chinese fought with the Japanese and advanced south, Cho celebrated with his friends and believed that victory would soon be at hand.[454]

> Son Yŏhae and Sang Sison came and told me that, 'Last month on the 28th, the Chinese (Tang 唐) army set up camp in Yŏnsŏ. Our vanguard, including Chihyŏn and Sinwŏn arrived and they won a great battle against the Japanese (Wae 倭) forces. They took twenty of their heads. I am so very happy that the days to victory can be counted on one hand.[455]

As the war dragged on into the next year, the initial joy at the arrival of the Chinese began to ebb during the long-drawn out negotiations. Cho lamented the occupation of the southern coast and criticised the peace negotiations in his diary, 'Will the day never come when these thieves are vanquished?'[456] Cho did not mention many cultural or historical identities during this period and instead focused on the suffering of the king and the common

[452] Cho, *Chukkye ilgi* (1592.11.14).
[453] Cho, *Chukkye ilgi* (1592.12.24).
[454] Cho, *Chukkye ilgi* (1592.11.14).
[455] Cho, *Chukkye ilgi* (1593.02.05).
[456] Cho, *Chukkye ilgi* (1593.04.25).

people. Cho also began to pass by the towns destroyed by the war and on his way to Ch'ŏngju the author wrote,

> As I passed a town near Ch'ŏngju around midday, I saw that all the houses were burnt to the ground and that wisps of smoke came from the few houses we passed. I could only see bramble bushes filling the area, and I could not stand to see the cruelties of this war. In the evening as we reached the town Ch'ojong, we saw that all the old houses had been burned to the ground and only the broken roof tiles and shattered foundation stones remained.[457]

Cho and the other soldiers also bowed to the king's location (as did Yi Sunsin and Chŏng Kyŏng'un) on a regular basis throughout the war (*sukpae* 肅拜)[458] as if he were the literal centre of the state. Politicians also tried to restart national ceremonies (both at the Royal Shrine and the Altars), and to conduct their own household ceremonies as quickly as possible.[459] The role of state-wide and royal ceremonies were a symbol of the political capital and strength of the ruling house as the king was the cultivator of Chosŏn's virtue.

However, and unlike some of the other authors, Cho Ŭngnok did not openly criticise the Ming army as much as he criticised the Ming ambassadors. Cho gave Ming soldiers a fan as they passed on the road[460] and never appeared to have received harsh treatment by the Chinese (unlike Chŏng). However, as with Chŏng Kyŏng'un, O Hŭimun, and Yu Sŏngnyong, Cho had no respect for the Ming envoys and their actions at the Chosŏn court.

> On the arrival of the Heavenly Ambassadors from China. The Heavenly Ambassadors said, 'Since China (*chung'guk* 中國) does not have the Greeting Ceremony, everyone should just sit down.' To this the translators (*tongsagwan* 通譯官) replied, 'Before this day, all summoned ambassadors had done the Greeting Ceremony and they did not just sit down.' To this the Heavenly Ambassador said, 'All those ambassadors were a bunch of bums. Why should we stoop so low?' We could not proceed with the ceremony and just sat down. Also, according to established custom, the king and acting ambassador would sit and face each other from the East and South. But it was not the case this time, and the ambassador told the king that, 'As I have come to bestow the Imperial Letter, I should sit in the North.' The king then sat down in the southern seat. This was as close to an

[457] Cho, *Chukkye ilgi* (1593.05.24).
[458] Cho, *Chukkye ilgi* (1593.07.25).
[459] Cho, *Chukkye ilgi* (1593.08.07, 1596.07.08).
[460] Cho, *Chukkye ilgi* (1593.06.15).

insult as you could get, being an occasion without precedent![461]

The king appears to have been the most important element of state for Cho, and the apparently poor ceremonial conduct shown by the Chinese envoys only made the centre of the state appear vulnerable and weak, and the Ming representatives abusive of their powers.

As the peace talks progressed, Cho began to comment on the works of the state (*kuksa* 國事) when envoys went to the Japanese camp.[462] Cho even referred to Hideyoshi as the King of the Japanese country (Ilbon *kukwang* 日本國王) and not as some 'barbarian' despot.[463] However, substantive comments on the Japanese are kept to a minimum. Instead, the Ming army are mentioned increasingly often, especially as they were involved in more and more thefts.

> Im Ch'unggan said, '[…] Whenever we stop to feed our horses then the Heavenly Envoys enter into (the houses) and take their things. They distribute the items among their own vassals, but they are clearly unimpressed by what they have received. [464]

The arrival of the foreigner, both ally and enemy, across the state's boundaries must have had some effect on identification with various people of Chosŏn who suffered alongside Cho. Where Cho's diary does differ from all the others is in his writings on the Ho 胡 who were the greatest foreign concern of state before the Japanese invasion. In 1595, the author mentioned the Ho 胡 on various occasions.

> The thieving Ho 胡 of the north have transgressed the boundaries of Kalhŏndong. (Hearing of these) troubles brewing along the border makes me extremely fearful.[465]

> Last spring and summer, Wiwŏn garrison commander Kim Taech'uk killed seventy Ho who were gathering ginseng. Now I have heard that, 'Nurhachi 奴羅赤 regards this as an unjust action and will certainly take his revenge against our

[461] Cho, *Chukkye ilgi* (1593.intercalary12. 11).
[462] Cho, *Chukkye ilgi* (1596.02.28).
[463] Cho, *Chukkye ilgi* (1596.04.08).
[464] Cho, *Chukkye ilgi* (1596.06.07).
[465] Cho, *Chukkye ilgi* (1595.07.29).

> country (*a'guk* 我國) for the fallen Ho. We sent a letter for consultation with the Liaodong Horse (riding?) thieves, but I am still very fearful.[466]

After this point, discussion of the northern Ho 胡 disappear and Cho's diary turned to the failed negotiation period and the last invasion from 1597-1598. After the Japanese re-invasion in 1597, Cho began to mention the safety of the state, the workings of the state, and the Royal Shrines and Altars. Cho related the Royal Shrines and Altars to the stability and safety of the state,[467] and during the invasion Cho recorded the king writing,

> You must help and promote the workings of the state (*kuksa* 國事) as much as you can.[468]

The second invasion from 1597 ignited more discussion and usage of socio-political identifiers that had not been mentioned so much during the peace talks. After talking about the new Musket Forces and their effect, the office of the Inspector General also said,

> As the workings of the state (*kuksa* 國事) become more precarious each day, those who are our vassals work with all their might and will have no chance to rest. I have also heard that there are many great ministers and vassals who could not enter the court for a long while. They have forgotten their own (suffering), and are adamant in their determination to lay down their lives for the country (*sun'guk* 殉國).[469]

As the Japanese army headed north during the second invasion and the court feared that the capital could be taken, the safety of the immortal elements of the state are mentioned by Cho,

> I heard that, Her Majesty (the queen) and the Crown Prince have decided to take up residence on Tosan (To mountain) and have gathered the ancestral tablets from the Royal Ancestral Shrine and the Altars of the Guardian Deities of Earth and the Five Grains. I shed bitter tears as I heard him speak of the flight of the royal family and the workings of the state (*kuksa* 國事).[470]

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[466] Cho, *Chukkye ilgi* (1595.10.07).
[467] Cho, *Chukkye ilgi* (1596.08.14).
[468] Cho, *Chukkye ilgi* (1596.intercalary 08.07).
[469] Cho, *Chukkye ilgi* (1597.05.12).
[470] Cho, *Chukkye ilgi* (1597.09.15).

But at this same critical point in the first invasion when Cho recorded and employed socio-political identity more often, Cho's diary stopped and did not continue until well into 1599.

In sum, we are able to discover some elements of Cho's *Bildung* and of his socio-political identity. The state was embodied in the monarch, who was both the figurative and literal centre of the country. The cultivation of virtue and household ceremonies were also an important part of this socio-political identity, and they connected the king and the people to the stability of the state. The suffering of the people was a common theme in the diary, but Cho does not mention cultural items or achievements (*munmul* 文物) or other customs (*p'ungsŏk* 風俗). Lineage time and immortal continuity were hardly mentioned, but the Royal Shrine and Altars became more common as the second invasion progressed.[471]

3.3 Review of socio-political identity during the Imjin War

3.3.1 The State

There are several interpretations of the state that the authors supported in their writings which are linked to interpretations found in the *sillok*. The idea of *kuk* 國 meaning country, as described in the previous chapter, remained the same as it had before the war. But the individual diarists often referred to their country as *a'guk* 我國, and pledged loyalty to the king or mentioned various combinations of *kuk* 國, such as *kukka* 國家 and *kuksa* 國事.

In *Chingbirok* (written by the Prime Minister) the concepts of the state, the king, and the nation do not appear to be treated as separate elements of identity. They are all expressed by Yu Sŏngnyong as one and the same idea (i.e., the governing apparatus, which includes Yu himself). This can be seen in a passage as the Japanese army forced King Sŏnjo to leave the

[471] As Cho's diary largely skipped over the first and last year of the invasion, he may have mentioned socio-political identity on a more frequent basis as he did in 1597, but the matter is inconclusive.

capital. When the king and government officials were leaving, Yu wrote that the people said that the *kukka* 國家 was abandoning and leaving the people.[472] Also, in a speech to the people on 1592.07.17, Yu said to an angry crowd that the *kukka* 國家 had raised them in normal times and that the '*kuksa* 國事' was in a great state of emergency.[473]

From Yu's perspective, *kukka* 國家 focused on the entire state apparatus headed by the king, which naturally included Yu and other court officials. The state is furnished with a mortal core, headed by specific individuals who try to broaden the definition of *kukka* 國家 for their own political benefit. It appears that Yu's purpose was to strengthen the basis of the mortal foundation of the state, to support the king as a central point thereof, but also to include himself in the definition of the country. Moreover, he portrays himself as one of its vital mortal components. As in the times before the war, *kukka* 國家 referred both to the king and to the court, but the concept was mostly rhetorical and was only used to advance individual political ambitions.

In *Nanjung ilgi*, the meaning of *kukka* 國家 appears to be slightly broader than Yu's interpretation but it remains the same in that Yi Sunsin is probably commenting on the king and court rather that the country (or nation) as a whole. Yi Sunsin commented that

> This is the day when the country (*kukka* 國家) is in danger and facing disaster, and you sir have been given a weighty duty. And yet your arms are around the waist of a woman of pleasure, and you fail to register at your office. You stay at her house outside the walls and you are subject to the people's scorn. What are you going to do?[474]

[472] Yu Sŏngnyong, *Chingbirok* (1592.05).
[473] Yu Sŏngnyong, *Chingbirok* (1592.07.17).
[474] Yi, *Nanjung* (1594.11.25).

Further away from the center of power, Chŏng Kyŏng'un, a man without official position during the war, appears to use *kukka* 國家 in a similar fashion by stating that after the war began 'the *kukka* 國家 showed concern for the people…'.[475]

The concept of *kuk* 國 is malleable and its meaning depends, to a certain extent, on a particular individual's intention and usage. As with *kukka* 國家, the word *kuksa* 國事, the workings of the state, remain similar to the pre-Imjin era. In *Nanjung ilgi*, Yi Sunsin recorded in the entry for 1592.09.03 Yi wrote that

> As I sat there, I thought about the workings of the state (*kuksa* 國事) to myself, collapsing and falling (to pieces). There are no plans to save the state (*kuk* 國).[476]

Later in *Kodae illok*, Chŏng referred to the *kuksa* 國事 and wrote that families had even died for the *kuksa* 國事.[477] In the *Sŏnjo sillok, kuksa* 國事 indicates the functioning of the state, but it also refers to a broader concept of the country and everything that made the state operate and exist. It was the state in motion that had to be fought for and defended with one's life.[478] As seen in the previous example of *kuk* 國, Yi Sunsin identifies *kuksa* 國事 with the workings of the state, while Chŏng Kyŏng'un uses the word in a broader sense that was also common in the *sillok*. On the surface, the inheritance of concepts used before a war may not appear to be important. But, as the Imjin War is widely credited with creating proto-national and national identity in Chosŏn, these concepts become important because of the values we also place on them today. For example, consider the term 'nation'. I translated a passage above by Yi Sunsin (1592.09.03) in the following way:

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[475] Chŏng, *Kodae* (1592.11.08).
[476] Yi, *Nanjung* (1592.09.03).
[477] Chŏng, *Kodae* (1592.10.13).
[478] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 23:03 A: At all times (he) exerted himself for the affairs of state (*kuksa*), employed his people's hearts/minds to obey him); and *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 22:22 a-b: 'Now (he) has combined these affairs, and (he) is aware of the power of his dear subjects for the affairs of state.'

> As I sat there, I thought about the workings of the state (*kuksa* 國事) to myself, collapsing and falling (to pieces). There are no plans to save it (the state).

But, an English translation by Ha Tae-hung has Yi Sunsin stating,

> As I think of the state affairs (*kuksa* 國事) in utter confusion and disturbance, there seems no one in the central government who could save the nation from danger. What should be done?[479]

The use of 'nation' for the commander's sentiments is an example of the translator's literary flair, and he may have wanted to variegate his vocabulary. But some scholars have understood similar sentiments to argue that the Korean 'nation' began as a result of the Japanese invasion.[480] I would argue that Yi Sunsin took *kuksa* (*kuksa* 國事) as meaning the country as defined by Chosŏn subjects who included political and cultural elements.[481] In another example, *kukka* 國家 has been translated as 'the country.'[482] However, when Yu Sŏngnyong and Yi Sunsin use *kuk* 國 and its variants, they were usually describing the state and statesmen,[483] not a cultural nation, even though Yi's usage of *kuk* 國 has been translated as 'national fate' in the only full-length English edition we have.[484] However, Yi was most likely talking about political identity, rather than cultural identity. Chŏng Kyŏng'un used the word *kuk* 國 slightly differently to describe the country as it existed at his time, perhaps even referring to a broader concept of culture.

Rather than being located in a single living person, many cultural aspects of the state were immortal - not merely dependent on the mortal cores existing and mutually connecting with the people of Chosŏn. Chŏng clearly indicated that men were dying for more than just the narrow concerns of government, but for the most part the king and state were

[479] Yi, Ha, *Nanjung* (1977), 117.
[480] See the works of JaHyun Kim Haboush.
[481] See section 2.3 of this thesis.
[482] Yu (trans. Choi), *Book* (2002), 75.
[483] As is the definition provided by Kwŏn Munhae in the *Taedong unbu kun'ok*, see Kwŏn Munhae, *Taedong unbu kun'ok Volume 20* (Seoul: Somyŏng ch'ulp'an, 2003), p. 257.
[484] Yi Sunsin (trans. Ha Tae-hung), *Nanjung Ilgi: War Diary of Admiral Yi Sun-sin* (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1977), 133.

fundamentally linked. Yi Sunsin and Chŏng Kyŏng'un's differing usage of *kuksa* 國事 again indicates that there is more than one meaning and use for words in the same era, and we choose the meaning that best suits our modern interpretations in order to forward certain arguments.

3.3.2 The King and Mortal Lineage

As in the *sillok*, all the diarists considered King Sŏnjo as the centre of the state's mortal identification. He is often mentioned in both writing and ritual as the purpose for fighting and as the de-facto centre of the state. While King Sŏnjo took refuge in Ŭiju, both Yi Sunsin and Chŏng Kyŏng'un bowed towards the king's location as if he were the true centre of the country.[485] The government made sure that the king's house and lineage remained the core of the country's identity in edicts and letters, and the upholding of the kings' house and lineage was mentioned by the authors as a compelling reason to defend the country. On hearing that the Ming army had arrived in Chosŏn, Chŏng wrote that

> Since the spirits' and people's revenge is almost satisfied, and the Royal Enterprise (*wang chi ŏp* 王之業) will be restored. O! What happy time will be greater than this for the people?[486]

A similar concept to Royal Enterprise was also mentioned by O Hŭimun, when the king addressed the country shortly after the war began and stated

> I have been fighting against my ignorance and defending the first king's lineage (*pigi* 丕基), and I have ruled the country for the last twenty four years with apprehension and industry.[487]

Both the monarch and his subjects broadcast formal messages mentioning the defense of the king's lineage and royal house. *Wang chi ŏp* 王之業 and *pigi* 丕基 in the *Chosŏn*

[485] Chŏng, *Kodae* (1593.03.27).
[486] Chŏng, *Kodae* (1593.02.03)
[487] O Hŭimun, *Imjin illok* (1592.04.25).

wangjo sillok[488] appear to refer to the works left by former kings for assisting the existing monarch to control and lead the Royal Enterprise. Rather than using cultural symbolism, the king himself became the subject of the country's consciousness, and his continuation of the mortal family line constituted the country's identity. King Sŏnjo had to ensure that he remained the centre of the country's identity, and to remind the people that they were fighting for him, rather than for a separate identity (or somebody else).

The king again became the inspiration for fighters in *Chingbirok*, when Yu Sŏngnyong stated that the Buddhist monk commander Yujŏng, 'raised a monk army and led them west in loyalty to the king (*kŭnwang* 勤王)'.[489] Chŏng also makes use of *kŭnwang* when describing the motives of commanders going into battle.[490] Although *kŭnwang* 勤王 has been interpreted as 'country and king' in an English translation,[491] in the *Sŏnjo sillok*, *kŭnwang* 勤王 should be defined as 'services to the king' (its literal meaning). Therefore, *kŭnwang* 勤王 should not be divided into 'country and king', since both concepts are embodied in the one monarch and such a division was not apparent in this word.[492]

The king was the centre and the focus of loyalty in Chosŏn, and his power was usually expressed through the concepts of country (*kuk* 國) and lineage (*wang chi ŏp* 王之業). However, even though the king was at the pinnacle of society, he remained mortal, and he was the custodian of certain shrines and ideals. Remarkably, never was the Chinese emperor's investiture of the Chosŏn king used as a source of legitimacy in these diaries, even

[488] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok sujŏng* 28:9b. No such definition for these characters exists in the *Taedong unbu kun'ok*, but Kwŏn refers to *ŏp* as meaning 'works'.
[489] Yu, *Chingbirok* (Seventh Chapter: Righteous Armies).
[490] Chŏng, *Kodae* (1592.06.15).
[491] Yu, Choi, *Book* (2002), 148.
[492] Although 'king and country' has been used in the English language for the last several hundred years (well before 1675), it remains unclear whether the king or the country (state, cultural region) are the premier components of identity. As in Chosŏn, identity changes with politics in the respective era, and under Cromwell, 'king and country' was replaced with 'Liberty of Parliament' and 'Glory of England and the Church.' It seems that the mortal can always be replaced.

though they praised the Wanli Emperor for sending his armies to the peninsula. To dignify and protect the king, cultural icons and symbols that represent the state were often used in place of *kuk* 國 and lineage. The most commonly found concepts representing the grandeur and cultural power of the state were references to the Royal Shrines and Altars. They were the sources of the king's legitimacy, and without his divine backing he could not show a justification for the existence of his power. In *Chingbirok*, the king lamented about the Ancestral Shrines and Altars as he is told to leave the capital in 1592.[493] The king feared to leave, because he knew that his power and legitimacy would be weakened by so doing, and that his royal prestige would suffer in consequence. The shrines were again mentioned by Chŏng Kyŏng'un when King Sŏnjo returned to the capital and saw the two-hundred-year old Royal Shrine, Altars, and royal palaces in ruins.[494]

The Altars were mentioned by Yi Sunsin on 1595.05.29, when he wrote:

> The spirits of the Altars have used their divine power, but I have only been barely effective and that crudely. The affection and glory of the Altars transcends and steps over me. My body lives to guard the gates.[495]

In the context of the diaries, the Royal Shrines and Altars were directly related to the king, and his monopoly of the immortal rituals and symbols was a vital part of the state's (or nation's) culture. Immortal rituals and symbols were used in letters by the king, generals, and individuals as reasons to fight for Chosŏn's survival. But at the same time, the symbols were seen to be solely held by the king, and they were his immortal and divine support. The Royal Ancestral Shrines to the Yi dynasts did not uphold the country's sovereignty. It protected the sovereignty of the state in the monarch's guiding hands.

In other English translations, nationalistic sentiments have been grafted onto Yi Sunsin's statement to make it read,

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[493] Yu, Chingbirok (1592.04.17).
[494] Chŏng, *Kodae* (1593.10.15).
[495] Yi, *Nanjung* (1595.05.29).

> 'Thanks to the august protection and spiritual aid of the Guardian Deities of the State and the Earth, I have only crudely been able to render a small service to my *fatherland*.[496] The gracious royal benevolence overwhelms me beyond my ability. As Fleet Admiral I could not be of any service to the state.'[497]

But there is no word for the concept of 'fatherland' in the original passage. It has been inserted by the translator for greater impact and nationalistic tone. This interpolation does not mean that the sentence does not contain a cultural or national symbol, but the notion that the symbolism may actually reside in the word 'Altars' itself. The observers of the war express a point of view that the king connects the people together, and they also mention a cultural component of the country that exists in support of the king. Multiple meanings of words used by different participants in the Imjin War are again observed, just as we have seen in the variants of country (*kuk* 國).

What is most interesting in the last few statements written by Chŏng Kyŏng'un is that he gives a date for the age of the Shrines and Altars at two hundred years. In most circumstances, the people of Chosŏn recorded time using the Chinese emperor's reign year, and their own king's reign year. However, this two-hundred-year period is not linked to a Chinese date and represents lineage time: the beginning of the Chosŏn dynasty and the Yi family's rule over Chosŏn. The theorist Benedict Anderson mentions 'common time' as an important concept for the existence of the modern nation, and here is evidence of the people in Chosŏn mentioning a historical, common time that bound the country together. This was the king's lineage time that was cited even before the war began. O Hŭimun also mentioned quoted a letter by the Crown Prince (Kwanghae'gun) in which he mentions 'the two hundred years of rites and music (*yerak* 禮樂) and cultural items (*munmul* 文物) have suddenly met their demise'.[498] Chŏng Kyŏng'un again mentioned the two hundred years of Yi rule,

[496] Italics added.
[497] Yi (trans. Ha), *Nanjung* (1977), 157.
[498] O, *Imjin illok* (1592.08.11).

Chŏng Kyŏng'un again mentioned the two hundred years of Yi rule,

> We entered into Hansŏng (*tosŏng* 都城). The palace was in ruins, and the people's houses were burnt to ashes and not one house remained. The whole world has been crushed. Out of sadness, my heart helplessly shed tears. Alas, our country's two-hundred-year cultural achievements (*munmul* 文物) and institutions suddenly collapsed, broke, and left no traces. Even an ordinary man without position cannot help but feel the despair of total loss. How then could gentlemen of the country who receive their stipends not feel any anger? If they become determined to recover the country through the co-operation of their hearts with an indestructible resolution, then there will be no difficulties in restoring heaven and reorganizing people's powers to take revenge.[499]

The two-hundred-year concept is used as a rationale for defending the country and fighting for it. The authors also make mention that the lineage and system that has ruled the state should be defended for the benefit of the country. In his letter, the prince was calling out to the people to aid in the war-effort using these concepts to persuade them, and in his diary Chŏng indicated a personal connection to the two-hundred-year Chosŏn kingship. What is surprising is not that the authors are either writing or quoting the same socio-political concepts that had existed before the Imjin War, but that they are referring to these particular concepts with much greater regularity than was the case before the war. Therefore, the war appears to have enhanced certain images of socio-political identity rather than giving rise to the creation of an entirely new one.

3.3.3 Cultural Elements: *munmul* 文物, *Samhan* 三韓, and *Tongbang* 東方

In the last section, the two hundred years of Yi lineage time to which I referred was accompanied by another word used by both the Crown Prince and Chŏng Kyŏng'un. This word, unlike the preceding concepts, had a clearly inherent common cultural element. This word was *munmul* 文物, which in the *Sŏnjo sillok*[500] means something akin to cultural items, achievements, civilization, or cultural inheritance in the broadest sense (and which did not

[499] Chŏng, *Kodae* (1594.11.19).
[500] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 30:01 B-2 A.

have to be limited to Chosŏn). In some cases, *munmul* 文物 referred specifically to Chosŏn's cultural inheritance, more than it did to the idea of a broader civilized world.[501] This indicates that the writers (and with them, many people in Chosŏn) had a sense of localized heritage and a local time-frame. But, as with the Royal Enterprise (*wang chi ŏp* 王之業), the immortal concept of *munmul* 文物 was continually connected to the mortal king and to his legitimacy even though it could have its own immortal timeline. Any separation between the immortal and mortal components would have undermined the king's authority, and the government made sure that there was no such separation between the mortal and immortal elements even though it was possible, theoretically, to divide them.

Although important and often cited, the two-hundred-year concept was not the only time period used to talk about the history of Chosŏn. O Hŭimun also mentioned the Three Han (*Samhan* 三韓) and Koryŏ 高麗 periods as constituting a part of Chosŏn identity. Connection with the past gave a time-frame and a cultural inheritance origin to the Chosŏn state for a time before the Chosŏn kingdom existed.[502] When quoting a general calling on the people to help the war effort, O Hŭimun recorded,

> ... for a thousand years it was with Silla 新羅 and for five hundred it was with Koryŏ 高麗, and now with our Chosŏn; we are proud of our loyal subject's and dutiful son's exemplary minds, and our heroic fighters are immortalized in history and offer fidelity in regard to one's immutable loyalty and the deep convictions in their way of life. They were the greatest in the Eastern Realm (*tongbang* 東方), and this is truly known to all the people.[503]

Later in 1597, O Hŭimun included a letter by the king that looked back on the histories of that their ancestors Eastern Realm and how they overcame their own foreign invasions.[504]

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[501] Although the previous example from the *sillok* indicated the broader concept of civilization, the examples from the diaries offer a more focused and localized definition.
[502] Perhaps even support for the 'charter state' or 'proto-nation.'
[503] O, *Swaemirok* (1592.09.01).
[504] O, *Swaemirok* (*Chapnok*, y*ŏpaek chapgi* 1597.08).

For the purpose of motivating the people to come to the aid of the country, the king, his generals, and his people spoke not only of their dynasty and their cultural inheritance – they also made reference to the regional (i.e. *tongbang* 東方) history in order to connect the living populace with their historical inheritance extending thousands of years into the past. In the *Sŏnjo sillok*, Eastern Realm (*tongbang*) referred (in many examples) to the cultural region[505] and *Taedong unbu kun'ok* 大東韻府群玉 refers to several names for the cultural region, history, and people from the Eastern Realm as either *taedong* 大東, *tongsa* 東史, or *tongin* 東人.[506] The fact that the king's letters made mention of foreign states having once threatened Silla and Koryŏ could also validate theories concerning the creation of identity through negative-ethnicity. In addition to these time periods, Yu Sŏngnyong mentioned that officials were sent to the shrines of Tan'gun 檀君, Kija 箕子, and T'aejo Wang Kŏn 太祖王建, to pray for rain[507] showing that, at least for these writers, the country and the population were comprehended in a long, continuous, and separate history: an immortal and supra-dynastic continuity.

Any state has two conceptual elements in its founding: the age of its cultural region and identity, and the age of the current state and form of identity. The past, whether or not it was actually connected to the contemporary government, was used to legitimise claims of entitlement made by the king and court. At the same time, it also functioned to create a sense of common identity and history in countries that had been united at some point in the past. But these elements, written about during the war, appear to have been well known and used before the invasions even took place and only the number of entries devoted to the immortal time frame of the country increased.

[505] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok* 32:07 A-B.
[506] Kwŏn, *Taedong Volume 1* (2003), 67, 85; and *Volume 4*, 129.
[507] Yu, *Chingbirok* (1592.06.11).

3.3.4 Confucian Cultural Elements: *hyo* 孝, *ŭi* 義, *ch'ung* 忠, and *Chosŏn'in* 朝鮮人

Even with the participants' knowledge of the state, administration, culture, and history, other cultural identifiers were frequently employed to solidify socio-political identity. In particular, we see Confucian values – which the Chosŏn people, particularly the *yangban*, were exposed to during their entire lives. In the *Kodae illok*, Kim Sŏngil arrived at the Hamyang'gun. He called together all gentlemen without official position (*sain* 士人). Chŏng Kyŏng'un recorded that,

> The general said, 'Civility (*yeŭi* 禮義), the universe's immutable way, cannot be abolished. Take your revenge on the enemy and pledge to subdue him. Wash away our country's disgrace'! … He selected officials and ordered them to various towns to call up a Righteous Army to save the country. As for the remaining officials in each village, he ordered them to enlighten and instill in the people the idea of undertaking action in the public interest and to call and gather the scattered common soldiers needed to subjugate the enemy. [508]

In addition, Chŏng Kyŏng'un and O Hŭimun both recorded the same message from Kwak Chaeu, who sent encouragement in 1592.09:

> Those sea robbers cross our land rampantly, running amok and destroying our towns and levees. Massacring our people everywhere, they run around our land as if it was their own! Indeed, there was not even one person in the country who cried for righteousness (*ŭi* 義) and called up a Righteous Army. As a result, we handed over one province into the hands of the enemy. The Royal Shrines and the Altars have faced no greater danger than this. Our fair and righteous spirit has fallen to the ground, and even the mountains and rivers feel our shame. …If there were people with great ardor, who would not feel such great indignation? Take on duties, receive the king's orders, arrive at your post… grab your arms, and pledge to not let these Japanese live under the same heaven with us! …Even if one has no talent and is inferior, loyalty and filial duty (*hyo* 孝) are rooted in one's natural character, (and) you must repay the country (*poguk* 報國,) through your death and dare not to be outstripped by others. Now, as those like-minded spirits rally together, I pray to ignite (his) bravery. All you gentlemen help one another, together pay respect to heaven, and let us succeed in washing this public enemy away! My dear sirs, what do you think of such things?! To live and become a filial and loyal man of virtue? Or to die and become a spirit of filial (*hyo* 孝) duty? I hope that we endeavor to do so![509]

[508] Chŏng, *Kodae* (1592.05.08).
[509] O, *Imjin illok* (1592.09).

These passages clearly show that the fighters were motivated by, and were themselves motivating people with, concepts that represent more than king and country. Here the words describing those who fight for the country are filial duty (*hyo* 孝) and righteousness (*ŭi* 義). Since all men served the king in a Confucian hierarchy, like loyal sons, they are bound to the king through universal philosophical principles. These concepts are not coterminous with the boundaries of the state, or the majesty of the king. They represent the way in which the entire universe should operate. It appears that the fighters of the period allied themselves with a host of different concepts and meanings.

On the one hand, there were the concepts that represented the state, country, king, and culture. But Confucian vocabulary goes beyond the imagined realm of Chosŏn and mandated that the population fight because the barbarous enemy sought to destroy the immutable way of all these things. The concepts for the state and for righteousness are also balanced so that the participants still mention the defence of the king. It is interesting to note that O Hŭimun and Chŏng Kyŏng'un both record these messages in almost exactly the same way, even though the writers were over a hundred miles apart. The corroboration could prove that these letters, and the dissemination of their information gave the people reading and hearing them a sense of commonality, because the people of Chosŏn in scattered parts of the country read and heard the same information.

Although loyalty and following the righteous path are used as motivation, there is also another set of words that describe the participants. In one of O Hŭimun's passages, he quotes a general as writing about ambitious men (*chisa* 志士), loyal subjects (*ch'ungsin* 忠臣), and those who would sacrifice themselves for a noble cause (*yŏlsa* 烈士).[510] *Chisa* 志士 and *yŏlsa* 烈士 are used to describe those participants who fulfill their duty. But in modern

[510] O, *Imjin illok* (1592.09).

Korean, they are translated as 'patriot' or 'political martyr'. One of these modern translations has also been used in an English version of *Nanjung ilgi* to state that Yi looked upon the battlefield of 'patriotic soldiers'.[511] However, in the *Sŏnjo Sillok, chisa* and *yŏlsa* are defined as 'meritorious officers', and 'brave and determined soldiers' rather than as 'patriot', which can be easily misconstrued.[512] 'Patriot', as a translation, alters the meaning of Yi Sunsin's words in that both *chisa* and *yŏlsa* are similar to *ŭi* and *hyo,* which, while they were concepts used to support the state, actually represented a grander idea than any one monarch, even grander than any one state or political order. In this sense, they border on the suggestion of a religious conviction.

Another concept was also used, and that was loyalty (*ch'ung* 忠). In the *sillok*, loyalty was given to the king and not the country without the ruler. Loyalty in the modern world can be used to indicate loyalty to the state or nation, and this modern usage has apparently carried through into a translation of Yu Sŏngnyong's book, where the translator calls Yi Sunsin's *Minch'ungsa* 愍忠祠 'Shrine of the Loyal Patriot' rather than the 'Caring and Loyal (subject's) Shrine.' Yi Sunsin was loyal to the real centre of Chosŏn: the king.

There are a few cases in which a warrior states that he fights, 'because I am a man of Chosŏn (Chosŏn'*in* 朝鮮人), I have come under this banner, and I order you to kill all those who surrender.'[513] This reference to oneself as a person of Chosŏn is quite rare, because the idea of Chosŏn'*in* (as described in chapter two), was used to identify the country in the international sphere rather than domestically. Perhaps, after years of war, and with foreigners amongst them, the people of Chosŏn no longer saw themselves as just *a'min* 我民 or *kuk'min* 國民, but rather as possessing a nationality (Chosŏn'*in*) that distinguished them among others

[511] Yi, Ha, *Nanjung* (1977), 172-173.
[512] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok*: 54:18 B.
[513] Chŏng, *Kodae* (1593.01.23).

(Wae, Ilbon'*in*, and Tang'*in*) in their home country. Although this appears to be a reasonable interpretation, the few instances of the use of the term Chosŏn*'in* prevents us from drawing a firm conclusion as to its meaning.

3.3.5 The Foreign World

As the Koreans were being described as righteous, brave, and fighting for the king, the enemy that had created the disaster was described as a group of 'barbarians' and 'thieves.' These words reflect the Korean memories of Japanese pirates attacking the Korean coast before the invasion. The Koreans called the Japanese 'thugs' and other demeaning titles, but they always identified the enemy as the Wae 倭, an ancient term used to refer to people from the islands east of Korea. Although the Chosŏn government and people described the Wae as pirates and thieves, it is apparent that the Chosŏn people also saw Japan as a legitimate foreign state (Ilbon'*guk* 日本國), and that state threatened the way of life of the people in Chosŏn. In the beginning of the *Chingbirok*, Yu Sŏngnyong calls Hideyoshi 'the king of Japan (Ilbon *kukwang* 日本國王)',[514] indicating that Hideyoshi was not regarded as a complete savage, because he allegedly held kingship in the Chinese world order. Yu also uses the character *kuk* 國 to indicate that Hideyoshi was in possession of a state with borders. The Koreans did not regard the invasion as a large pirate raid, but a war between two viable states. But the Japanese, while intending to replace the Emperor in China with the Japanese Emperor, may not have viewed themselves as a national force in service to a central government or people.[515] Although the Koreans saw the enemy as a single group, the Japanese probably continued to identify themselves with their provinces in Japan, their army, or religion, rather than with a unified Japanese state. Japan was still nominally divided in 1592 and even

[514] Yu, *Chingbirok* (chapter one).
[515] Although the war may have helped develop this concept, that discussion is beyond the scope of this study.

throughout the war. The Japanese soldiers may have become more aware of their 'nationality' while in a foreign country, but the Korean authors make no mention of this.

While Japanese atrocities were taking place, the Ming became the saviour of Chosŏn. As soon as China stated that it would enter the war, the tone of the *Swaemirok* changes, and O Hŭimun writes that after 1592, the fight no longer just involves Korea, 'but what of China?'[516] Because the Chinese Emperor came to the rescue of the Korean king, Yu Sŏngnyong wrote,

> The humaneness and compassion of the first kings greatly held the people together, and their loving heart for China never ceased, as (was demonstrated by) our sage king's sincerity in serving the Great (*sadae* 事大).[517]

Chŏng Kyŏng'un mentions that,

> In all sincerity, if the august Emperor of China had not bestowed benevolent kindness upon us, then the recovery would have taken months and years.[518]

O Hŭimun also mentions at the outbreak of the war that the king is not lazy and does not spend his days hunting, and, 'with the highest sincerity serves the Great (*sadae* 事大)'.[519]

Rhetorically, China came first among all countries. *Sadae* 事大, or 'serving the Great (China)' was the policy that Chosŏn kings followed in order to receive China's investiture to rule Korea and maintain 'harmonious' relations between the two countries. Theoretically, Korea was not an equal member on the world stage. It was a lesser country, with this position reinforced by ritual and codes. But even though these rituals were important in the relations between Chosŏn and Ming, the concept of *sadae* 事大 was rarely used as a motive for fighting. It does appear as evidence to the Koreans that the Ming are required to come to the aid of Chosŏn.

[516] O, *Chŏngyu illok* (1597.03).
[517] Yu, *Chingbirok* (*chasŏ*).
[518] Chŏng, *Kodae* (1593.02.02).
[519] O, *Imjin namhaeng illok* (1592.04).

As the Chinese army approached the peninsula, all of the diaries mention that the 'disgrace of the country' would be cleared away at any moment, and O Hŭimun exaggerates when reporting that all the Japanese in P'yŏngyang were killed by the Ming army, which was not the case. But as soon as the Chinese arrived and did not clear away the enemy in one battle, the Koreans became suspicious and angry that the enemy remained on their soil.

The Ming army also proved a problem inside Korea. Yu Sŏngnyong was almost flogged at the command of a Chinese general; Chŏng was beaten and his horses and possessions were stolen by Ming soldiers; and O Hŭimun was also robbed by the Chinese. Yi Sunsin did not report these events, but then he probably had more to fear from his own court than from the Chinese commanders he had to work with. The Ming Emperor also harshly criticised the Chosŏn king for not adequately taking care of the Ming troops. It was only on the arrival of the relief forces that the Koreans recognized that the Ming could also pose a threat to security, stability, and their nominal 'independence', not to mention the economic burden they almost immediately became.

Chŏng Kyŏng'un both praises and criticizes the Ming at the end of the war by saying,

> Alas! The fires of war for our country have been (going on) for seven years until this day; thankfully because of the Ming Court's unbiased treatment and kindness, (they) dispatched generals and their soldiers. They increased (pressure on the enemy) and (they pursued them) for many *li* 里 … They promised to kill the enemy, but (in the end) fled!... In actuality, if the Ming soldiers did not have the spirits of mountain tigers and leopards, the victory would not have been won. However, the Ming generals did not exert themselves on the battlefield. Is it not wonderful to see the generals simply sit back and enjoy their riches and fame?[520]

The popular belief was that the Ming soldiers would quickly rid Korea of the Japanese threat. When this did not happen and peace talks were initiated, all of the diarists voiced their displeasure (especially Chŏng Kyŏng'un). Still, the fighters from Chosŏn continued to use the king as the motivation for fighting, and the emperor was only mentioned in appreciation of

[520] Chŏng, *Kodae* (1598.11.19).

his having sent the army. However, the welcome dissipated over time as the Chinese became a burden on the Chosŏn state and people.

Although the outside world was known by many, and especially by those at court who travelled and worked with foreigners as traders and envoys, the Imjin War brought the outside world into Chosŏn itself. Everyone could see the differences in clothing, the various languages and customs, and other differences that differentiated the peoples of the region. Suddenly the vast and various group of people in Chosŏn were clumped into the same definition, Chosŏn*'in* 朝鮮人 by the outsiders. Although the Koreans were affected by this, it failed to change the rigid social structure that had existed before the war, and merely elevated apparent cultural differences between peoples that were known about in border areas from the time before the war.

3.3.6 Communal Memory and Suffering

The memory of suffering and worship of the fallen was the one thing, besides the king, that all the people had in common. Not mentioned by the theorists or historians was the importance of certain tragic events in a single conflict in creating an identity (negative-ethnicity). Although historians have focused on the function of entire wars, such as the Khitan invasions of Koryŏ 高麗, in creating an identity, the power of single events in the creation of identity during conflict in frequently overlooked. There were two disasters in the Imjin War that were mentioned by nearly every diarist: the destruction of Chinju in 1593 and the death of Yi Sunsin in 1598. Although Yu Sŏngnyong thought that Korean forces in Chinju were 'ignorant'[521] and lost the city as a result of their ineptitude, Chŏng Kyŏng'un mentioned the battle as a very important event which was 'actually the reason why (our)

[521] Yu, *Chingbirok* (chapter 49).

national fortune (*kukun* 國運) was blocked.'[522] The battle seems to have carried some special significance for Chŏng Kyŏng'un, O Hŭimun, and the commanders whose letters were recorded by both authors. Chŏng later wrote that the king sent an Officer of Protocol to oversee rituals for the dead, and then named the battlefield the 'Altar of Great Loyalty (*chŏngch'ungtan* 精忠檀)'.[523] This was the only time mentioned in the diaries that such privileges were bestowed upon the dead.

The victories of Yi Sunsin, his unjust imprisonment, and his death were recorded by every author. But since he perished just as the war ended, all the writers were overcome with grief. Yu Sŏngnyong lamented the loss of his childhood friend and devoted most of *Chingbirok* to praising the general's actions and merits. O Hŭimun wrote about Yi Sunsin's death[524] and Chŏng Kyŏng'un finished his record of the war by also writing about Yi Sunsin fighting until his death. These single events encapsulated certain points in time, became the topic of many stories to come in the following decades. Their deeds were taken and made part of the state's stock of lore and identity, to the extent that they supported certain elements of the state. Yet the effect of these single events had a more profound effect than many others did during the war and show that certain, negative events were much more important than other events in constructing a socio-political identity.

3.4 Chapter Summary

The Imjin War was a turning point in Korean history. From military improvements to the histories and social changes it created, the war affected Chosŏn society and politics in the decade following the end of the conflict when the country was being rebuilt, and for centuries to come. For all its original contribution to societal and political change, the socio-political

[522] Chŏng, *Kodae* (1593.06.29).
[523] Chŏng, *Kodae* (1593.09.05).
[524] O, *Swaemirok* (1597.12.16).

concepts used during the war, often cited as evidence of a new identity taking root in Korea that cut through all social divisions, were the same concepts used in the decades leading up to the Imjin War, by both the government and the populace. It was simply the case that many of those elements in their identity that we associate with ideas of 'modern' nationalism were more often mentioned and pronounced than in the decades prior to the invasion.

Gadamer wrote that the present and past understandings of concepts need to be combined in order to achieve a 'fusion of horizons'. If we are to understand the past in terms of its own definitions and combine them with our own, then an agreement between both the past writer and present reader can be created. Authors have tried to argue that the war created a new 'national' identity in Korea that had never existed before. But, if we look at the definitions of the state and the culture before and during the war, they remain remarkably similar. The memory of the war gave some new content to socio-political identity, but it did not rewrite the centuries of history and society that had developed until that point. Historians give the war more credit for changing socio-political identity than it deserves, while ignoring what aspects it actually did change.

The next section will look at the question of socio-political identity following the Imjin War, and the projects, literary and philosophical, leading up to the First and then Second Manchu Invasions.

4. THE INTERWAR ERA AND THE MANCHU INVASIONS

4.1 The Interwar Era

The Imjin War was at an end and the vanquished Japanese enemy returned to his lands across the sea. The threat of invasion and piracy would remain, but Japan would not become a real threat to Chosŏn until two and a half centuries later. The war was a lesson on the follies of indirect communications with the barbarian archipelago, and Chosŏn would seek to communicate directly with the Japanese shogun in 1607, 1617, and 1624 and then continue in this fashion with the re-established Diplomatic Missions to Japan (*t'ongsinsa* 通信使), which took place nine times from 1636 to 1811. The Korean peninsula was safe, at least temporarily, on its southern flank, and the court was also re-established as the heart of the country.

Politically, Chosŏn still looked very similar to 1591: Sŏnjo still held the throne, the Yi family was venerated at the Royal Ancestral Shrines, and ceremonies at the Altars to the Gods of the Earth and the Five Grains continued. Thanks to the help of the Chinese army, the ruling classes were able to re-establish the basic social order of the kingdom that was disrupted from 1592 onwards. The strong, encompassing, and broad identity often associated with modern democratic nationalism never developed and never shook Chosŏn's rigid social hierarchy. In fact, social power may have become more concentrated in the hands of fewer

people.[525] Be that as it may, mutual identification between the social elite and the state was temporarily strengthened using literature and the common experience of war. The Imjin War enhanced certain elements of Chosŏn identity, but those elements changed during the course of the war to reflect the particular concerns of various groups. The time for rebuilding the state and re-establishing authority in Hansŏng had arrived, and the literary projects[526] of Sŏnjo's first two decades in office could finally continue, albeit in new directions.

But the hordes to the north, who could ride almost at will into Chosŏn, began to consolidate into a single state. Beyond the reaches of a weakening Ming Empire and a reluctant Chosŏn army, the northern Ho 胡 could never be completely stopped by the civilized south, and Chosŏn had to quickly realign itself with the two great powers to its north and west. This created problems for King Kwanghae'gun, as he fought against the factions who had opposed his appointment to the position of Crown Prince during the Imjin War. With affairs in the international arena in disarray, and the king's loss of control over politics at home, opposition to the king mounted, and he was removed from the throne. The supposed 'restoration' of Injo (*Injo panjŏng* 仁祖反正), a man with no direct lineage to King Sŏnjo, became the standard-bearer for the Chosŏn-Ming alliance. King Injo's reliance on political parties who had helped him usurp the throne weakened his connections to the immortal elements of the state. The lack of legitimacy of the mortal core of the country, poor political and military decisions, and political necessity eventually led to the king's personal submission to the newly inaugurated Qing Empire.

This chapter is a brief look at the period of transition from the end of the Imjin War in 1599 to the First Manchu Invasion in 1627. The period of transition was an era of social reconstruction and political realignment that laid the foundation for the next invasions. In

[525] Peterson, *Korean Adoption* (1996).
[526] Please refer to chapter two. Korean translation of the *Mencius*, *Sohak* and *Tongguk pogam* [*A Mirror of the Eastern Country*].

some ways, the events of these decades proved much more important than the Imjin War itself, but have received little attention from European and American scholarship. There are no books in the English language that focus on the Manchu Invasions, or the politics from the Imjin War to the Manchu War. Sun Joo Kim has looked at some aspects of the Manchu Invasions and certain diaries, and JaHyun Kim Haboush at the emergence of national sentiments after the Imjin War and the role of new literature. However, the majority of studies focusing on the interwar period and socio-political identity of foreigners in Chosŏn were theses produced only in the last few years. These include Seung B. Kye's thesis [527]covering the reign of King Kwanghae'gun, and Adam Bohnet's thesis addressing the *hyanghwa'in* 向化人 (submitting foreigners).[528]

As one would expect, there are many more studies in the Korean language devoted to the period between the foreign invasions. As with the Imjin War, the Manchu Invasions have received renewed interest due to recent political events in an unstable Northeast Asia. The histories of the reign of King Kwanghae'gun, King Injo's reign, and the Manchu Invasions rank only second to the Imjin War in new historical works. In Korean letters, Han Myŏnggi has been a leading scholar addressing the Manchu Invasions, writing and editing various general histories of the wars. The following discussion draws on this secondary literature but primarily relies on information drawn from the *sillok* and diaries written during the interwar period (1598-1627).

4.2 The Last Years of King Sŏnjo: *Sillok*

Following the battle of Noryang, when Yi Sunsin was killed and the Japanese enemy finally retreated from the peninsula, the king and court gave praise to the Chinese Emperor

[527] Seung B. Kye, "In the Shadow of the Father: Court Opposition and the Reign of King Kwanghae in early Seventeenth-Century Chosŏn Korea" (PhD diss., University of Washington, 2006).
[528] Adam Bohnet, "Migrant and Border Subjects" (2008).

and Commander Yi Sunsin, and even sent the king's emissaries to bow in front of the memorial to the deceased commander.[529] Even though King Sŏnjo was perturbed by the fact that hundreds of enemy ships had escaped back to Japan, the war was finally over, and the king remained on the throne. The state, the monarch, and his mortal line were intact and the king had control over the most important immortal centres of socio-political identity – the capital, the Royal Shrines, and the Altars to the Gods of the Earth and the Five Grains. Yet the war had affected and altered many aspects of Chosŏn socio-political identity. The general mentality among the populace had changed as customs and culture had been used to unite various people in the service of a common cause. Histories were used to promote and support the king. The practice of elite customs and culture expanded to include a wider array of people. Promises of reward and social recognition were used to gather forces and materials for the war, and the foreign world was a much more palpable reality than it had been for many centuries before. All people in the country, from elite *yangban* to unfree labour (*nobi*), were connected by their common experience of the war.

But the initial expansion of identity that had occurred early in the war was quickly curbed after the entry of the Ming army into Chosŏn. Various leaders of the Righteous army were put on trial, including Kwak Cheu, and even the greatest military commander in Korea, Yi Sunsin, was put on trial and tortured. The threat of an internal rebellion, launched by newly-empowered irregular militia and upstart military commanders, became an overriding concern for King Sŏnjo and his court. By the end of the war, the Righteous Army commanders had not received full recognition for their efforts, and Yi Sunsin's death ensured that he could be recognized for his contribution to the war (as he was perceived as a threat to the court later in his career). The Japanese army sailed away, and the Chinese army eventually left the peninsula in 1599-1600.

[529] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok*: 106:16 A (1598.11.26).

Nevertheless, the combination of the war, court politics, and former identities began to create new socio-political elements that were grafted onto the already strong Chosŏn bureaucratic and regional identity. One of the new identities was the worship of the Chinese war gods that, while interesting, was but one short-lived addition to Chosŏn's socio-political identity before the Manchu Invasions,[530] which included the worship of the Chinese court and the Wanli Emperor. These later rituals in particular were directly affected by the politics playing out at court. Prince Kwanghae'gun was in a precarious position: not only would his father not recognize him as Crown Prince until the events of 1592, his father appears to have regarded the son of his concubine as a political threat. Nor was Prince Kwanghae'gun the oldest son of the king. The Ming Court, although appearing favorable to the prince during the war, did not promptly bestow the rank of 'official' Crown Prince upon Kwanghae'gun and this dealt a further blow to his political capital.[531] With the death of Queen Ŭi'in in 1601 and the birth of a new prince Yŏngch'ang (1606-1614) by the new Queen Inmok, the situation grew more dangerous for the claimant to the throne. Perhaps in an effort to consolidate political power around himself, play down the efforts made by Prince Kwanghae'gun during the invasion, and dismiss criticisms of the court's actions during the war, King Sŏnjo took to praising the Ming and worshipping the Wanli Emperor.[532]

Both Seung B. Kye and Han Myŏnggi argue that the main new political catchphrase to develop from this period was *chaejo chiŭn* 再造之恩 (the favour of restoring the country and king).[533] Although Han argues that Ming China participated in the war to protect its own territory, the idea that the Chinese benevolently assisted Chosŏn (a view partly promoted by

[530] Kuwano Eiji, "Chosŏn Korea and Ming China after the Imjin Waeran: State rituals in the Later Chosŏn period", in *The East Asian War, 1592-1598*, (2015): 294-322.
[531] Kye, "In the Shadow of the Father" (2006), 43.
[532] Han Myŏnggi, *Imjin Waeran gwa han-jung kwangye*, 67-88.
[533] Han Myŏnggi, "The inestimable benevolence", 277-293.

the Chinese generals) grew towards the end of the war.[534] Although Chosŏn suffered from the drain on resources that were given to the Ming army, the Chinese were able to keep the Japanese out of China and assist the Koreans in defeating their attempts to stay in Korea, and the court praised China for its actions at no matter what cost.[535] Han Myŏnggi also appears to give more credit to the Righteous Armies than to the Ming for military victories, perhaps in a bid to present a glimmer of Chosŏn self-reliance.[536] Regardless of Chinese motivations and questions over the military efficacy of the Chinese intervention, the reason why the Korean government identified the Ming as saviours was due to the king's loss of face and the evaporation of his power over the population of Chosŏn. The Righteous Armies and the regular army and Navy received less praise, because they presented evidence of the king's failures.[537]

Though I would agree that the Chosŏn court praised the Ming for their entry into the war because the Chinese protected the Korean court, the worship of Ming intervention was only one out of multiple new identities that began to circulate at the time. It was primarily a political tool used by the central court to increase their own power, but it was hardly an intrinsic part, or the only point of, socio-political identity. In addition, looking more closely at the *sillok*, which Han uses to argue his conclusions, the term *chaejo chiŭn* 再造之恩 is not mentioned very often.[538] Yi Sunsin receives far more mention after the war in the *sillok* than *chaejo chiŭn* 再造之恩 or any Ming general. Although China is praised for helping, the court remembered the cost of losing sovereignty. The concept of *chaejo chiŭn* 再造之恩 became a weapon for certain individuals to wield, and the king used it to support his mortal hold on the throne.

[534] Han Myŏnggi, "The inestimable benevolence", 277.
[535] Han Myŏnggi, "The inestimable benevolence", 278-279.
[536] Han Myŏnggi, "The inestimable benevolence", 282.
[537] Han Myŏnggi, "The inestimable benevolence", 279-280 and 283.
[538] *Sŏnjo wangjo sillok*: 109:13 B, 109:27 B, 178:9 A, 178:14 B.

4.2.1 Diaries in Sŏnjo's Late Reign

Chŏng Kyŏng'un, O Hŭimun, and Yi Chŏnghoe continued to write their diaries after the war and the journals quickly revert back to their original purposes: a collection of contact names and business activities conducted by the writers with the occasional mention of family ceremonies. Relations with Japan were carefully re-opened in 1607, not only in an attempt to rescue Korean abductees in Japan, but also to bring back information and intelligence on the Wae 倭. Many of the people who returned from Japan wrote diaries and gave the court information on the inner workings of the Japanese situation.[539]

Following the thread of the development of socio-political identity during this time, the most important diary written after the Imjin War was *Namsarok* 南槎錄 by Kim Sanghŏn 金尙憲, when in 1601 he journeyed to Cheju Island. Kim Sanghŏn was later a leading minister during the Second Manchu invasion in 1636, and was present at King Sŏnjo's capitulation to the Qing Emperor, Hong Taiji. Kim was the main proponent and supporter of the War Faction (*ch'ŏk hwap'a* 斥和派) and argued for continued resistance against the Later Qin (eventually Qing) and in favour of an alliance with the Ming Empire. However, in 1601, such concerns were decades away. Kim was a minor official at the time, and the most pressing problems for the country then was rebuilding after the Japanese invasions.

In 1601, an insurrection occurred on the southernmost island of Cheju 濟州. The government quickly sent troops to that distant island and quelled the revolt. It appears that the rebellion had broken out on the island, and the government, scared by the possibility of losing control of a strategic point to a nativist revolt[540] and the potential for the Wae to capitalize on

[539] Haboush and Robinson, *A Korean War Captive in Japan, 1597-1600: The Writings of Kang Hang* (2013).
[540] Cheju's earliest name was T'amla 耽羅 and had been an independent territory from antiquity; it acquired its current name, Cheju, only in the early thirteenth century.

the incident, sent Kim to investigate the territory. Its strategic importance, between China and Japan, was noted on several occasions in his diary.

> This island is located between China (*chungwŏn* 中原) and the Wae island (*waedo* 倭島), (and this is) the Japanese route coming and going to China. Because they certainly pass by Cheju, the island is a strategic point, and there is no defense in the south.[541]

Kim uses his time in Cheju to document the culture, customs, agriculture, military strength, language, and politics of the island. In this regard, his book is very similar to the description of the kingdoms on the Korean peninsula in the third-century *Wei shu* contained in the *Records of the Three Kingdoms* (*Sānguózhì* 三國志).

What is clear from the journal, other than the details concerning the lives of the islanders, was that the experiences of the Imjin War were being used to create a sense of common identity alongside the histories and socio-political identifiers that had been used before and during the invasion. On his arrival to Cheju, Kim read a letter to the people of the island from the king:

> Please listen to these words of clarity, you people of T'amla island (Cheju)! …The perpetrators are all dead, and all of you must now try to restore our customs (*p'ung* 風) as they were before. As I look towards the southernmost point, your (island) is still the land of the three spirits (*samsin* 三神).[542] … In the Silla 新羅 period, the Sillans cast a horoscope and knew in advance that you would send tribute. In the time of Koryŏ 高麗 you offered horses, and your sincerity towards the mainland was admirable. This land's people were kindhearted, and their customs were as they ever were. …The invasion of the barbarians was fruitless, but it was hard to maintain the situation and you fell into silence. …We gave the oranges from your island to the Chinese envoys. Protect the state (*kuk* 國), and do not fall into temptation.[543]

> Even as (you) escaped the fires of war in the Imjin (invasion), the towns were completely empty; you were cruelly extorted by the administrators, and the public and private realms (*kong* 公, *sa* 私) were bare. A great many people died from disease and starvation. The disasters from pirates, storms, and (loss of fishermen

[541] Kim Sanghŏn, *Namsarok* (南槎錄) (*p'ungto'rok* chapter).
[542] The 'three spirits' were the founding clans of the island's political and elite order: Ko (高), Yang (梁), and Pu (夫).
[543] Kim Sanghŏn, *Namsarok* (南槎錄) (*Royal Edict*).

> has been great); every year these disasters came from the sea and dragged people away to die. It was even difficult for the two or three Chinese (Tang 唐) generals to withstand the invasion.[544]

Here, the king is trying to invoke a commonality between mainlanders and islanders, and a key component appears to be that the Chosŏn court was consumed by the war and could not pay sufficient benevolent attention to the islanders. But, those times are over, and the Cheju islanders are being recalled to the fold.

The identities that preceded the Imjin War remained after the Imjin War as the court remained more or less the same. But the Imjin War was more than a story to bind the people together: it was living history that the people remembered, and it was used to not only fashion a new identity all over the peninsula, but also used to re-determine the extent of Chosŏn's cultural and physical boundaries.

4.3 The Rise and Fall of King Kwanghae'gun: *Sillok*

There are two portrayals of King Kwanghae'gun in academic circles. One is of a wise ruler who oversaw the rebuilding of Chosŏn after the war and who maintained a balance in international relations between the Ming and the rising Qing. The other is of a king who recklessly disregarded the advice of his council and government, antagonized the Chinese, and overspent limited government resources on large building projects. Be that as it may, the portrayals given by both Han Myŏnggi and Seung B. Kye remain quite positive and they praise his actions during his rule. Seung B. Kye claims that Kwanghae'gun became Crown Prince due to his own merits[545] and was effective during the Imjin War.[546] Although the reasons for King Sŏnjo's fear of Kwanghae'gun remain unclear, the prince was regarded as a legitimate threat to King Sŏnjo's mortal authority on the peninsula. This was one reason why

[544] Kim Sanghŏn, *Namsarok* (*Royal Edict*).
[545] Kye (2006), 27.
[546] Kye (2006), 33-34.

King Sŏnjo did not leave Chosŏn and seek refugee with the Ming, as the Crown Prince would thereby have gained greater legitimacy to become the sole defender of the mortal and immortal instruments of the state.[547] But Seung B. Kye does think that during this time the *kukka* 國家 was more important than the Royal Shrines and Altars.[548]

After the death of King Sŏnjo, King Kwanghae'gun consolidated power and began to undertake various projects, including the costly building of a new palace. Book production was seriously affected by the war and the most important book centres in the country were located in Kyŏngsang province, which the Japanese had occupied the longest and where they had done the most damage. In spite of the challenges of producing new literature, such as the *Record of the Black Dragon Year* (*imjinnok* 壬辰錄) the court continued with both old projects from the pre-Imjin War era and new versions of already published books. These included the 1611 'Great Learning' (*taehak* 大學) and *Lessons for the Home* (*naehun* 內訓) in both Chinese and the vernacular that had been started over three decades earlier.[549] However, the most celebrated piece of book production from this period was the reprinting of the *Tongguk sinsok samgang haesildo* 東國新續三綱行實圖 [*Eastern Realm Newly Extended Illustrated Conduct of the Three Bonds*]. Kwanghae'gun ordered the book to be compiled in 1617,[550] and it included examples of loyalty, filial piety, and female virtue from before and during the Imjin War.[551] With around 1,123 stories contained in the book, no more than 50 copies were printed by the end of Kwanghae'gun's reign.[552] In spite of its low publication numbers, the 1617 edition is now considered a book that reflected the new values of a Korea-centric identity due to its focus on stories of people from the peninsula. The

[547] Kye (2006), 32.
[548] Kye (2006), 246-247.
[549] Lee Chaejŏng (2009), 39.
[550] *Kwanghae'gun ilgi*: 08:73 A (1617.10.01).
[551] Young Kyun Oh, *Engraving Virtue: The Printing History of a Premodern Korean Moral Primer* (2013, Leiden: Brill), 231.
[552] Young (2013), 231-232.

widely popular *Record of the Black Dragon Year* (*Imjinnok* 壬辰錄) reflected Kwanghae'gun's *Sinsok Samgang Haengsildo* project in highlighting the sacrifices of ordinary Koreans who battled the Japanese.

Moreover, the military rosters first devised for the war were continued (*sogo* 束伍)[553] and identification tags for men of legal age (*hop'ae* 號牌) were revived under the reign of King Kwanghae'gun in 1610. These policies were continued by King Injo after 1626. The rosters were used in order to identify draftees in case of conflict and the tags were used to better document the citizenry for identification during times of conscription. However, there seems to have been great errors in the use of the rosters and the tags that could have enabled the state to better control their subjects had they been intelligently introduced.

The fall of King Kwanghae'gun is usually blamed on his mishandling of the foreign crises that bedeviled the region midway through his reign. In 1616 the Jurchens declared a new state in northeast Asia: the Later Jin. Since the Imjin War, Chosŏn had managed to avoid any major clashes with the northern populations and continued to trade a great amount of clothing, cloth, paper, and salt with Nurhaci's people.[554] In addition, the wars of unification in the north brought a steady stream of refugees south to the kingdom. After 1616, the Ming wanted to go to war with the Jurchens, but King Kwanghae'gun's policy of playing the two powers off against each other was met with resistance at court. He was being challenged to openly side with the Ming.[555]

The war in 1619 was a disaster for both Ming and Chosŏn troops. The Ming gathered their forces and demanded that Chosŏn also join them in the battle as it was their duty both as

[553] For a discussion of the military rosters and the kind of data they can provide, see James B. Lewis et al., 'Toward an Anthropometric History of Chosŏn Dynasty Korea, Sixteenth to Eighteenth Century', *The Journal of the Historical Society*, 13:3 (2013.09): 239-270.
[554] Kye (2006), 188; and *Kwanghae'gun ilgi*: 11:06 B.
[555] Kye (2006), 173.

a vassal state and as a recipient of Ming troops during the Imjin War.[556] King Kwanghae'gun was supportive of the idea to attack the militarily stronger Later Jin, but was forced by his court to send thirteen thousand troops to assist the Ming.[557] There are theories that Kwanghae'gun made a secret pact with the Later Jin, but whether he did or not, only four thousand of his troops were spared on the field of battle.[558] Following the battle, the Manchus continually headed south into Korean territory, destroyed the Ming refugee camp in 1622, and came well within Chosŏn territory (approximately 50 miles).[559]

Seung B. Kye's explanation is that the court and the king saw the international environment and Ming expedition in very different ways.[560] The anti-Manchu forces did not have experience during the Imjin War[561] and most were skilled at dealing with the Ming and not at actual fighting. This lack of military experience was due to the predisposition of Sŏnjo's court to honour bureaucrats.[562] Kwanghae'gun succeeded in pleasing no one and therefore isolated himself politically. There were constant problems between himself and the various Border Agency (*Pibyonsa* 備邊司) officials . The court became ever more divided over the policies of the king and polarised into the anti-Manchu and the Reconciliation parties,[563] which would later become the War and Peace factions during the Second Manchu Invasions. As both the mortal and immortal elements of Chosŏn identity relied on recognition by the Ming court, especially following the end of the Imjin War, the fact that the Kwanghae'gun did not set about creating a new self-reliant identity that might have enabled him to control the anti-Jurchen policies was a grievous error. As the court saw the king try to balance an untenable position, the underlying philosophies, histories, laws, and bases of state

[556] Kim, *Voice* (2013), 120.
[557] Kim, *Voice* (2013), 120-121.
[558] Kim, *Voice* (2013), 124-125.
[559] Kye (2006), 210.
[560] Kye (2006), 229-230.
[561] Kye (2006), 236-237.
[562] Kye (2006), 239.
[563] Kye (2006), 192.

order came under threat, and the king's opponents decided that the immortal elements of the state were more important than the mortal lord who oversaw their maintenance.[564]

4.4 King Injo and The First Manchu Invasion: *Sillok*

The premise for King Injo's claim to the throne in 1623 was the need to protect the Royal Ancestral Shrines and Altars of Soil and Grain.[565] As with the previous kings of Korea, he had to root his rule in both mortal and immortal bonds of the state. Injo's mortal bonds relied on his loyalty and faith to the Ming, and his immortal bonds relied on his protection of shrines and state. Scholars, including Han Myŏnggi and Seung B. Kye, claim that Chosŏn became very pro-Ming after 1623. However, the Koreans never showed any real willingness to engage the Jurchens on the battlefield, and an opportunity never arose to help the Ming defeat the Later Jin.[566] The international sphere was relatively calm until 1627, and Injo continued the publication projects, military rosters, and *hop'ae* 號牌 registrations system that were explained as providing stability for the country. It was argued that not maintaining the registration system would cause the workings of the state (*kuksa* 國事) to suffer.[567] However, the internal situation in Chosŏn was less than desirable for the new monarch. In 1624, Yi Kwal and others rebelled against Injo and seized the capital with forces numbering over 10,000. A new prince was put on the throne, but the rebellion was short lived after Yi Kwal was murdered. Still, the court was shaken by the fact that the capital was taken by a large armed force, and perhaps for this reason, no real effort was made towards creating a large standing army that could have faced the invasion that would eventually come from the north.

[564] In the end, Kye and Han rely on the notion of a special relationship and cultural reverence of the Ming for the reasons for Kwanghae'gun's overthrow, but this is debatable.
[565] *Injo wangjo sillok*: 01:01 a.
[566] Kye (2006), 286-288.
[567] *Injo wangjo sillok*: 15:02 b (1627.01.06).

Sometime in the first month of 1627, the armies of the Later Jin gathered and set out towards the northern border of Chosŏn. Although there is speculation that elements of an uprising in Korea fled to Hong Taiji and told him about the threat of Chosŏn, this does not appear to be the primary reason for the invasion. Rather the enthronement of the new Jurchen leader, Hong Taiji, went unrecognized by the court in Hansŏng, and Hong Taiji needed to make the southern country recognize his rule, partially for international relations, and partially for his own recognition as a new ruler at home.

The first reports of the Later Jin invading Chosŏn are recorded by the court four days after the initial crossing. Referred to as the 'enemy' (*chŏk* 賊), there was no real discussion about any grander notions of the Ming in the *sillok*. The embarrassment of the invasion and the peace settlement may have led historians to limit the coverage of the court's relationship with the Ming. But the entries in the *sillok* mostly focus on the reasons for the enemy's invasion. These included the capture of the Ming commander Mo or the total conquest of Chosŏn. The policies put forward at court were to flee to the islands or to the south. Nevertheless, the court appeared ready to proceed with peace talks immediately.[568] Then the enemy called for peace negotiations for 'no good reason' and supposedly 'listening to words [of peace by the Later Jin]' caused pain to the Korean envoys.[569] This is, however, but a cover for the relief that Chosŏn felt after hearing that they would not be conquered outright.

Prayers took place at the Royal Shrines and Altars, and transfer of the ancestral tablets was done before any move of the king from the capital.[570] The courtiers buried the ancestral tablets in a safe place, as was done in the Imjin year, perhaps indicating their continued importance as the center of immortal identity in the state.[571] At the same time, there was also

[568] *Injo wangjo sillok*: 15:5 b-7 a (1627.01.17).
[569] *Injo wangjo sillok*: 15:8 b (1627.01.18).
[570] *Injo wangjo sillok*: 15:8 a-b (1627.01.18).
[571] *Injo wangjo sillok*: 15:9 a (1627.01.18); *Injo wangjo sillok*: 15:09 B (1627.01.19).

a lot of debate surrounding the *hop'ae* 號牌 registration system and hope that the new system could somehow aid the state in war. 'The reason that we instituted the *hop'ae* system was originally for the safety of our people, but this disturbance is extremely serious for our people'.[572]

The government attempted to legitimize its surrender to the Later Jin without losing its connections to the Ming Empire. There were two courses of action set out before King Injo. One, the course of action seemingly most favoured, was to create peace with the Ho 胡. The Chosŏn court continued to pretend that the 'barbarians' were not actually a real country, and never assigned them the signifier *kuk* given to enemies with perceived governments such as Japan. Still, they treated the enemy as a foreign country and said that 'As the Chinese have already approved of the peace [with the enemy], how can we alone not accept it?'[573] Perhaps there were voices at court that opposed the peace with the Manchus, but the appearance of pro-war opinions were probably added to the records to prove that Chosŏn was still loyal to the Ming. Even the memory of the Imjin War was used to persuade the king that he could overcome the enemy, by giving examples of ministers Yu Sŏngnyong and Yi Sanhae.[574] Still, a peace was settled with the Manchus, and only then did they begin to refer to the 'enemy' by their proper title (Jin) on 1628.01.24.[575]

The socio-political identity of the pre-Imjin War era had largely survived thanks to the intervention of the Chinese army. But following the end of the conflict, a number of new identities emerged in the country that honoured foreigners and Koreans alike. However, the war and the experiences of the war became new identifications for the court and country. Stories and histories of various people's individual sacrifice were written, and the book

[572] *Injo wangjo sillok*: 15:9 a (1627.01.18); 15: 11 b (1627.01.20).
[573] *Injo wangjo sillok*: 15:14 a (1627.01.22).
[574] *Injo wangjo sillok*: 15:15 b (1627.01.23).
[575] *Injo wangjo sillok*: 15:16 b.

projects of the last few decades were restarted. All of these new socio-political elements were still connected to the old ideas of the state, monarch, culture, and histories that had existed before the war and were only a recapitulation of many of the same ideals.

After the retreat of the Japanese, the emergence of the Later Jin in 1616 created an increasingly strenuous environment for the Korean king. After losing eight thousand soldiers in 1618, Kwanghae'gun was overthrown and replaced by a man who vowed to maintain the mortal and immortal sanctity of the state. But the First Manchu Invasion shattered any notion that Chosŏn could escape as a mere bystander during the wars between the Ming and what was to become the Qing.

4.5 The Second Manchu Invasion

The First Manchu Invasion of 1627 was concluded by a peace treaty in which both Chosŏn and the Later Jin agreed not to interfere in each other's domains. However, the symbols of Chosŏn's international order were forcibly altered. The most symbolically important change was Chosŏn's forced abandonment of the Ming reign title. Relations continued to be tense between Chosŏn and the Later Jin, as the anti-Jin War Faction (*ch'ŏkhwap'a* 斥和派) still retained power at the Chosŏn court. The relations between the two courts remained tenuous over the decade and once again broke down at the end of 1636. Chosŏn was alleged to have insulted the newly enthroned Qing Emperor by not sending a congratulatory envoy. In the twelfth month of 1636, Hong Taiji invaded Korea with around one hundred thousand troops and quickly made his way to Seoul. In two months, Qing forces had completely overrun Chosŏn's defenses, and Injo had retreated to a fortress on Namhan mountain (*namhan sansŏng* 南漢山城). After two months of resistance, King Injo exited the castle wearing the blue garb of a commoner and humiliatingly bowed nine times as he approached the Qing Emperor. The war concluded with King Injo and his new faction utterly

defeated, the Crown Prince returning with the Qing army as a hostage to their capital, and Chosŏn becoming an official vassal of the Qing Empire.

Although the Second Manchu invasion only lasted a short time, the Manchu attacks are said to have 'left profound scars on the national psyche [of Chosŏn].'[576] Amidst the spectre and reality of a foreign 'barbarian' conquest, and the collapse of the international 'civilized' order, Chosŏn political identity is often said to have acquired a new sense of purpose as the last bastion of (Confucian) civilization. Although the physical damage was by no means comparable to the Japanese invasions,

> …the northwest region of Korea through which the Manchus had passed was ravaged by plunder and killing, and the smoldering enmity this aroused was fanned by Korea's feelings of cultural superiority to give rise to an intense hostility towards the Ch'ing [Qing].[577]

JaHyun Kim Haboush claims that the Japanese invasions 'overturned fundamental assumptions concerning national security' and argues that during the Second Manchu Invasion, 'the premise concerning the world order of which Koreans felt they were a part [collapsed]'[578] and produced a 'sense of doom,' which necessitated a reconstruction of their 'epistemological map.'[579] But, it is still unclear if the threat posed by the Japanese and the political shifts that took place during the Second Manchu Invasion created a new form of national identity or modified a variety of identity components that were already present.

4.6 The Second Manchu Invasion: *Sillok*

In the beginning of the eleventh month of 1636, a man of Han 漢 is reported to have arrived at the border and said that 'the bandit enemy has come out of his lair and moves to invade the West… they are feeding their horses in preparation to go East towards the land of

[576] Haboush (1999), 87.
[577] Carter J. Eckert, et al. *Korea Old and New: A History* (Seoul: Ilchohak Publishers, 1990), 153.
[578] Haboush (1999), 51.
[579] Haboush (1999), 68.

Koryŏ 高麗 [Chosŏn 朝鮮].' The court replied that 'As the Ming is a country like a mother and father to Chosŏn, and the thieving enemy is an enemy of the Ming, it is hard for us to forget that the Emperor did his utmost to protect us in the Imjin year.' [580] Here the official reason to fight and maintain an alliance with the Ming was perhaps inserted at just the right point to make their impending capitulation sound like a completely unexpected event. The *sillok* writers tried to conform to the socio-political identity of the contemporary era. In 1636, the Ming was officially the centre of the world, and the newly inaugurated Qing were the barbarians, thieves, and tribesmen from the north (Ho 胡). Officially, they did not even constitute a state.

The Border Guard Office (*Pipyŏnsa* 備邊司) reported that Chosŏn preparations had been extremely poor since the first invasion by the enemy in 1627 and that Korea would be unprepared for another invasion.[581] The Qing armies later flooded into the north of the country and appeared to be unstoppable. The court raced around to protect itself and its shrines. After the invasion began, it was reported that the shrine tablets of the Royal Shrines and Altars were taken to Kanghwa Island for safety.[582] The king had also prepared to make his way to Kanghwa before his route was blocked by the Qing army, but King Injo continued to have faith that, as long as he had the Royal Shrines and Altars and the faith of the people, an opportunity would arise for them to continue the fight.[583] The court then came under siege on Mount Namsan and any actual defence and thoughts of a counter-attack were quickly abandoned. Peace talks started in earnest, even though the *sillok* made it seem that the government was preparing to fight the enemy. The reality was that the government was only using the *sillok* to make an already sealed fate appear hopeful. Chosŏn had to surrender to the

[580] *Injo wangjo sillok*: 33:30 a (1636.11.01).
[581] *Injo wangjo sillok*: 33:33 a (1636.11.15).
[582] *Injo wangjo sillok*: 33:41 a (1636.12.14).
[583] *Injo wangjo sillok*: 34:01 b (1637.01.02).

Qing. By the end of the first month of 1637, the government stopped using its delaying tactics and began to engage with the enemy as a sovereign country.[584] The Koreans gave up calling the Jurchen mere 'barbarians' and started to call them the Qing Empire around the end of the first month.[585] This was a phenomenal shift in policy and philosophy, and this was the most important bilateral event for Chosŏn from that time to the nineteenth century.

The final capitulation to the Qing came as members of the government became resigned to calling the barbarians a 'country' (*kuk* 國) and referring to the country as the Later Jin or the Qing.[586] The debate over what to call the new empire to the north resulted in a validation of the new power and the subjugation of Chosŏn. The debate at court and the delaying tactics used with Hong Taiji's envoys actually concerned internal politics and cabinet reshuffling alongside the mental struggling with the idea that a non-Chinese people could appropriate the Chinese world order. Some in the government could not believe that the so-called Qing could actually 'put pressure on the Song' and that the Mongols could swallow up the Song.[587] But Chosŏn knew that its military could not match that of the enemy and submitted itself to the feet of its new emperor.[588]

4.7 The Second Manchu Invasion: Diaries

The main primary sources for this chapter are diaries: *Kangdo ilgi* 江都日記, written by Ŏ Hanmyŏng 魚漢明, a naval commander charged with sending supplies and people to Kanghwa Island 江華島; *Namhan Ilgi* 南漢日記 written by Nam Kŭp 南磔, an official working at the Royal Shrines and Altars, who served as a soldier defending the king; *Namhan kiryak* 南韓紀略, by Kim Sanghŏn 金尙憲, an official in the government and ardent

[584] *Injo wangjo sillok*: 34:02 b (1637.01.03).
[585] *Injo wangjo sillok*: 34:21 b-22 b.
[586] *Injo wangjo sillok*: 33:37 a (1636.11.24).
[587] *Injo wangjo sillok*: 33:38 a-39 a (1636.11.26).
[588] *Injo wangjo sillok*: 33:39 b-41 a (1636.12.06).

supporter of the war faction; and lastly, *Pyŏngjarok* 丙子錄 by Na Man'gap 羅萬甲 and *Sansŏng ilgi* 山城日記, without an ascribed author. The *Pyŏngjarok* and the *Sansŏng ilgi* will be evaluated as a single document, since the *Sansŏng ilgi* appears to be a revised and translated (*han'gŭl*) copy of the *Pyŏngjarok*. Although these books present a variety of different opinions concerning political identity and are useful in ascertaining the structure of Chosŏn national identity, they were all written by officials from the *yangban* class working for the government. Their authorship limits direct access to information from a variety of social classes in Chosŏn. Despite this limitation, these five diaries offer a glimpse of the divisions that plagued the government, provide insights into how the authors constructed their own political identities, and comment on how the non-*yangban* common people responded to nationalistic vocabulary.

4.7.1 Ŏ Hanmyŏng: *Kangdo ilgi*

Before we enter the political cauldron in the fortress on Mount Namsan where the king had fled, let us take a look at the organisers trying to mount a resistance on Kanghwa Island. Ŏ Hanmyŏng oversaw the shipment of people and supplies to Kanghwa Island. Away from the centre of power and inter-factional strife, Ŏ makes no mention of the ideals of a larger cultural connection with the Ming, nor with political symbols or common time associated with Chosŏn. Ŏ made clear in his writing that he was a supporter of the king's sovereignty and safety and used the words *kuk* 國 and *kukka* 國家 to motivate people to fight the Qing. Ŏ wrote,

> Are you alone not the people of our country (*kuk* 國)? [Our] country (*kuk* 國) faces a great disaster, and since the royal convoy shall arrive here soon, what is the logic that you do not think of crossing (to Kanghwa Island), is this not your duty?[589]

[589] Ŏ Hanmyŏng, *Kangdo Ilgi* (1636.12.14).

On the same day, Ŏ made reference to the *kukka*,

> Now, as his majesty (*kukka* 國家) faces misfortune, and since the barbarians have suddenly arrived, the palace's honored are about to head here. The country's officials have not yet come here and, before [they] inquire, where can we find an army to lead the ships?

Although people ignored Ŏ's pleas to defend the king, Ŏ repeatedly used images of the state and the king as the binding core of political identity. His use of *kuk* 國 and *kukka* 國家 to refer to the king is very similar to Im Sŏnpaek and other authors who were not officials in government during the Japanese invasions. This is a strong indication that the further away a particular person was from the centre of power, the more often they would invoke the person of the king instead of other political identifiers (such as the Royal Shrines or the age of the state). Mortal concepts (the living King) rather than immortal concepts (such as ritual sites and historic polities) became the focus of lower officials' and non-officials' identities during the conflict. It appears that the high officials viewed the king as an expendable part of government, while those further away pictured him as an essential centre of the state. However, as a writer conscious of the survivability of his diary, Ŏ's personal purpose in stating such loyalties was probably more to convince future generations of his pious, loyal nature and that all his decisions taken during the war had been taken in good faith.

4.7.2 Nam Kŭp: Namhan ilgi

In *Namhan ilgi*, we come into close contact with the divisions of the court. We are presented with a Chosŏn completely unprepared for war, and even at the onset of hostilities, victory never seemed to have been a realistic option. After the king's failure to reach Kanghwa Island, which had been the gathering place for resources before the start of hostilities, the king's convoy changed course for the Namhan mountain fortress. Almost immediately upon arrival, Nam Kŭp mentions that peace talks were initiated with the Qing. Having few resources, King Injo is said to have proclaimed, 'Even though [we] have refused

peace in this isolated castle, inside [we] are in a situation of no hope as there is no relief army [even] with the power of an ant.'[590]

Although Nam Kŭp did not identify himself with any one faction, he presented the Peace Faction (*chuhwap'a* 主和派) as rationalists who realized the severity of the situation, and for our purposes, we can associate him with the Peace Faction. In fact, Nam was not interested in supposed loyalties to the greater Ming, or in many of the concepts discussed in this study. The Royal Shrines and the Altars of Soil and Grain were hardly mentioned by Nam, nor were time periods associated with either the mortal or immortal aspects of the state, and nor were examples of negative ethnicity. It appears that pragmatic decision-making for the state (and for his own life) were paramount. Nam wrote,

> For the most part, our country is fundamentally different from the Song (Ming).[591] Due to the fact that the Song is a land desired by the barbarians, and as our pact with the barbarians was like iron or rock, there was no reason to change it. However, because our country is a land ignored by the barbarians, if we had merely not opposed [them], I certainly believe with all my heart that they would not have attacked. Even though we could not say that the strategy that brought peace in the chŏngmyo year (1627) was a good strategy, and even as there were good diplomatic missions coming and going, and as we did not have plans for self-strengthening, was it not arrogant work to rashly end friendly relations and think it was a good, profitable plan? Furthermore, according to the note carried by the barbarian envoy, [it read], "Since I (Hong Taiji) have risen to the seat of emperorship, I cannot but announce this to my brother country." But since there was not a quick response in which the subject said that he would obey, those who made this policy for our country [of not congratulating Hong Taiji, did so because] they expected criticism from the Ming based on obligations and moral righteousness. Are these none other than those who turn their backs and talk non-sense?[592]

Political expediency demanded surrender, and the trappings of abstraction have fallen away, but it is uncommon for a diarist from the Chosŏn dynasty to have communicated his personal feelings so clearly without veiling his thoughts in state symbols. Even though Nam

[590] Nam Kŭp, *Namhan ilgi*, (1636.12.18).
[591] The use of the term Song to refer to China may have carried an allusion to the Song Dynasty as threated by the peoples north of their border. The curious thing is that this term was used by the Peace Faction and not the War Faction, and the implication may be that they saw themselves as proposing appeasement in lieu of war.
[592] Nam Kŭp, *Namhan ilgi* (*hugi* 後記).

did not use state symbolism to express his own feelings, many of the conversations that he recorded exhibited political symbolism for the purpose of unifying opinion and identification. Examples of the political symbolism deployed include ideas of an independent state, temporal identification with Chosŏn, and cultural identification with the Ming Empire.

The Royal Shrines and Altars are examples of the independent political identity of the Chosŏn state. Although the Royal Shrines and Altars were used to worship the royal ancestral lineage and the gods of grain and land, together they produced an independent identity by: 1) supporting the form of government, 2) supporting the king's right to rule, and 3) providing a centre of state-wide identification. Nam recorded these uses when King Injo sent a letter to the Qing, which stated,

> … if the great country (the Qing) willingly overlooks our mistake, this will open a path upon which we can reflect [upon our actions] and maintain the Shrines and Altars while honoring the great country. Then the lord (King Injo) and subjects of this small country will take this [pardon] to heart, be deeply moved, and the successive generations of our descendants will never forget this.[593]

The Shrines and Altars came to represent the current form of the Chosŏn state, even though they are not referred to as the state directly (i.e., by a term such as *kuk* 國). As in the Japanese invasions four decades earlier, the ancestral tablets and altars not only provided legitimacy for the king but also strengthened a sense of freedom from external polities.

The Shrines and Altars were used throughout the diary to refer to the state, and their loss would have been tantamount to the destruction of the state itself. Crown Prince Sohyŏn stated that he would leave the castle and become a captive of the Qing in order to 'maintain the Royal Shrines and Altars.'[594] In addition, King Injo referred to the Shrines and Altars when Kanghwa Island fell to the Qing armies. The fall of the island signaled the end of any organized resistance, as Kanghwa was the gathering place for the army, supplies, and

[593] Nam, (1636.12.13).
[594] Nam, (1636.12.22).

government officials. King Injo stated after the fall of the island that, 'As the Shrines and Altars already lie in ruin, there is truly nothing that I can do.'[595] Although the ancestral tablets were literally destroyed when the Qing invaded the island, the king is referring both to their physical destruction and to the end of state resistance to the invading Qing.

Although the Shrines and Altars were immortal components of state identity, the king and his family remained the mortal centre of the country. However, the words king and country are hard to differentiate. During the Japanese invasions, the words *kuk* 國 and *kukka* 國家 were used to describe the state, the government, and the king himself, although the precise meaning of the words often depended on the context. Nam Kŭp's *Namhan ilgi* records Im Sŏnpaek 任善伯, when speaking to fellow soldiers, as saying, 'The country *kukka* 國家 hangs on this battle, and you may not shirk from your duties.'[596] Nam records Kang Jinhŭn proclaiming to his soldiers that, 'You have received the good graces of your country *kuk* 國, so how dare you behave like this?'[597] Even in an address to the king, Nam reports that Pak Changwŏn wrote, 'I will commit suicide on the same day with my wife lady Song in order to compensate for the country's blessings (*kukŭn* 國恩).'[598] Regardless of my translation, *kuk* 國 remains ambiguous.

As in the Japanese invasions in 1592, the word *kuk* 國 and its variants in diaries from the 1630s contain overlapping political meanings. Although translated as country in the preceding examples, king and court could just as easily be substituted depending on the speaker's and listener's perspectives. For example, Im most likely used *kukka* 國家 to indicate the state apparatus (as he was himself a general), but those listening to his speech

[595] Nam, (1636.12.27).
[596] Nam, (*Kanghwado sajŏk*).
[597] Nam, (*Kanghwado sajŏk*).
[598] Nam, (*Kanghwado sunchŏlja sajŏk*).

might have interpreted *kuk* 國 as meaning the king, as they were subjects of the king and were not necessarily interested in the government apparatus.

Temporal identification with the Chosŏn state and political identification with the Ming Empire were also used to create political identity. For example, Nam wrote that a member of the War Faction spoke to King Injo saying,

> It has been three hundred years since the Chosŏn kings have received the seal [to rule] from the [Ming] Emperor, if we indeed have to hand over the seal, it should be to the Ming. If they (Qing) ask us to attack the Ming Empire, then his majesty should certainly argue that "the Ming Empire and the Chosŏn Kingdom have a special relationship, like a father and son, and the Qing certainly know of this ..."[599]

In this example, the War Faction were attempting to craft an international Chosŏn identity based on the country's relationship with the Ming Empire, while referring to the age of the Chosŏn dynasty. During the Japanese invasions, the age of Chosŏn was utilized in order to motivate people to fight for the country, and the age of the dynasty represented the independence of Chosŏn's political identity. However, in this example, Chosŏn political and temporal identity was dependent on the Ming, and this benefited the War Faction. In short, many of the signifiers that had been deployed to mobilise commoners were now being used to position factions at court.

4.7.3 Kim Sanghŏn: *Namhan kiryak*

In contrast to Nam Kŭp's support of the Peace Faction. *Namhan kiryak* by Kim Sanghŏn was written to legitimize the actions of the War Faction in the Namhan mountain fortress to future generations. Without hesitation, Kim placed the blame for the surrender squarely on the shoulders of the Peace Faction. As a member of the War Faction himself, the demand to surrender would entail the deaths of his faction's members, and so he advocated, 'that which has taken place (the invasion) was inevitable, and our current strategy must

[599] Nam, *Namhan ilgi* (29.12.1636).

certainly be to fight to the end.'[600] Kim used the diary to discredit his opponent Choi Myŏnggil, the leader of the Peace Faction and chief delegate to the peace talks, on numerous occasions by giving examples of his supposed harsh and cruel attitude.

Although the purpose in writing his journal was to praise the efforts made by his faction, Kim mentions and uses common political elements on several occasions to support the War Faction's decision-making. In response to a member of the Peace Faction's call that Prince Sohyŏn must be sent to the Qing camp, 'for the benefit of the Royal Shrines and Altars,'[601] Kim replied that,

> If there is no master of the Shrines and Altars, how can it be for their benefit? How is it that you can advocate turning over the Crown Prince to the enemy? […] If you do not retract this proposal, loyal subjects and righteous gentlemen will take up arms![602]

As in the *Namhan ilgi*, the Royal Shrines and Altars referred to the independent state or government of Chosŏn. These ritual sites became political symbols for the parties fighting over whether to negotiate terms or to prosecute the war. The War Faction stressed that political independence is maintained by the Crown Prince residing in Korea to worship at the sites, a focus on the mortal nation, while the Peace Faction were ready to maintain the state by giving the prince to the Qing, arguing for an immortal nation not dependent on mortal rulers.

In addition to the references to an independent state, Kim's *Namhan kiryak* also mentioned historical time frames on two occasions when supporting the War Faction. Although the statements by War Faction members recorded by Nam Kŭp created a temporal identity reliant on the Ming, this was not the case for Kim Sanghŏn. In response to the peace negotiations, Kim stated,

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[600] Kim Sanghŏn, *Namhan Kiryak* (1636.12.17).
[601] Kim Sanghŏn, (1636.12.19).
[602] Kim Sanghŏn, (1636.12.19).

> Since our Eastern Realm (*tongbang* 東方) has been a civilized country for two hundred years,[603] the hearts of our own loyal subjects and righteous gentlemen can certainly never stand for this type of work (that is, negotiating peace with the Qing).[604]

The two hundred years refers to the age of the Chosŏn state by that time. Kim also mentions temporal connections to earlier kingdoms on the Korean peninsula, and explained that, as the resistance to the Qing was collapsing,

> …because we are without a stratagem, we presented offerings and prayed at the village shrine (*sŏnghwangmyo* 城隍廟), and at the shrine to the founders of Paekche (Paekche *sijomyo* 百濟始祖廟)…[605]

Political identity connected to earlier political entities is cited by modern theorists of nationalism as a component of modern national identity, and Kim provides a clear example of Chosŏn's own historical time frame (two hundred years) in order to promote unity. Moreover, Kim also mentioned that he and other officials prayed to the founders of the Paekche kingdom 百濟 in a symbolic move to, perhaps, provide a longer historical framework and a connection with an ancient common ancestry and identity on the Korean peninsula. Kim refers to a general historical identity in the first passage: Eastern Realm. This single word alludes to the entire Korean peninsula and to all the past civilizations that have existed on it. By mentioning the concept of Eastern Realm, Kim was attempting to provide a basis for his views using history and past political identity.

Although the state, the royal family, the age of the Chosŏn dynasty, and the historical age of Korean identity are mentioned by Kim Sanghŏn as common symbols of political identity, the primary purpose of the diary was to address the alleged wrongs committed by the Peace Faction. These symbols were deployed for partisan effect. Kim intended his diary to

[603] The age of the Chosŏn dynasty has also been recorded as three hundred years, but it is unknown if this was a mere rhetorical flourish, a deliberate mistake, or a scribal error. Further investigation is required to understand why different time periods are mentioned.
[604] Kim Sanghŏn, (1636.12.19).
[605] Kim Sanghŏn, (1636.12.21).

show that his faction's members were the true 'nationals,' who defended the sanctity of King Injo, the Crown Prince, state symbols, and the history of the country in general. Kim continually portrayed the Peace Faction as devious, and blamed them as the 'ones who led to our surrender.'[606] Even though the negative portrayal of the Peace Faction is to be expected, Kim was the only writer among the four diarists who adamantly claimed that the defenders in Namhan mountain fortress could have lasted through the siege and won the war.

4.7.4 Na Man'gap: *Pyŏngjarok*

Although the *Namhan kiryak* incorporates symbols that indicate knowledge of a state and identity similar in many ways to modern national identity, the majority of the diary focuses on factional identification. For this reason, the *Namhan kiryak*, and similar diaries that focused on factional competition, have been overlooked for their content containing national symbolism.[607] However, the most popular diary of the Second Manchu invasion, which has been said to reveal a nationalistic consciousness[608] is an imitation. *Sansŏng ilgi*, originally claimed to have been written by a palace woman, is in fact a redacted copy of Na Man'gap's *Pyŏngjarok*. Although some modern authors and studies of *Sansŏng ilgi* claim that the authorship is still unknown, this is not the case.[609] The contents of both journals are almost exactly the same, except for the exclusion of Na Man'gap's name in the *Sansŏng ilgi*. Because of this, the contents of both diaries will be analyzed as if they were from the same diary, while the purpose of the two diaries will be analyzed separately.

Sŏ Chongnam, the modern historian, has described *Sansŏng ilgi* as a diary that was created to 'elevate loyalty to the king and the people's consciousness concerning historical

[606] Kim Sanghŏn, 1637.02.01.
[607] See Sin Hae-jin and Yun Chaeyŏng introductory remarks to their modern Korean translations.
[608] Sŏ Chongnam, "Sansŏng ilgi e nat'anan minjoksŏng" in *Tongbanghak*, (2000) vol. 6, 121-141: 138.
[609] This has also been verified by a number of other researchers, including Sŏ Chongnam.

consciousness.'[610] Furthermore, he argues that the diary was made with the intention of '[awakening] the people (*minjok* 民族)' after a national humiliation (*kukchi* 國恥) in which the reader can 'see a national (racial) consciousness (*minjok ŭisik* 民族意識).'[611] Despite these claims, there is little evidence to substantiate the existence of a national (or racial) consciousness in these diaries. Both diaries continue to support the War Faction, and were used as literary incendiary devices against Choi Myŏng-gil and the Peace Faction. But rather than citing a national identity to awaken the Chosŏn people, Na's major concern was to support his faction by using symbols of loyalty and piety to King Injo and the Ming Empire.

Both diaries reported that, 'everyone was willing to fight […] and the king was proceeding to stop the Peace Faction.'[612] In spite of this, Na acknowledged that 'the soldiers were losing the will to fight,' and 'without a relief army there was nothing we could do [but surrender].'[613] Although Na was a member of the War Faction, he acknowledged that, 'the King was from long ago against peace, but since we have arrived at the country's current state of affairs, the king must certainly sue for peace.'[614] Instead of supporting resistance at all costs, Na recognized the actual state of affairs by the end of the conflict. This is quite different from the position of Kim Sanghŏn, who never acknowledged the prospect of defeat.

While Na's War Faction remained predominant, there was no mention of political symbolism focused on Chosŏn (such as the Royal Shrines and Altars), nor time periods relating to polities on the Korean peninsula. Rather, Na focuses primarily on supporting King Injo and the Ming Empire. Na wrote, while quoting Chong Kong'i, 'how can I think of my myself and not die for the king?'[615] But these direct quotes in support of the king are few and

[610] Sŏ Chongnam, "Sansŏng ilgi e nat'anan minjoksŏng" in *Tongbanghak*, (2000) vol. 6, 121-141: 138.
[611] Sŏ Chongnam, "Sansŏng ilgi wa p'yŏngja ŭi pigyo" in *Hanguk kugŏ kyoyuk hakhoe*, (1988) 221-245: 223.
[612] Anonymous, *Sansŏng Ilgi*, translated by Kim Kwangsun, (Paju: Sŏhaemunjip, 2007), 27.
[613] Anonymous, *Sansong ilgi* 53-55.
[614] Anonymous, *Sansong ilgi* 73.
[615] Anonymous, *Sansong ilgi* 83.

far between. The diary, for the most part, documented the actions of individuals at the mountain fortress.

Sansŏng ilgi and *Pyŏngjarok* do differ in several places regarding their content. In *Pyŏngjarok*, there is additional information attached to the main diary. In these sections, Na praised the works undertaken by his War Faction companions. Na used a letter by a War Faction supporter to illustrate identity with the Ming. The letter, by Hong Ikhan, stated, 'The great Ming, from many years ago loved and protected Chosŏn through its blessings. But now we will lose this deep and great mercy.'[616] Na used these examples of War-Faction rhetoric to illustrate their fidelity and loyalty. In the main text, General Kim Ryuga is quoted as saying, 'Since our two countries [Chosŏn and Qing] have become father and son, I don't want to hear anything else about [loyalty to the Ming]. After this point, when we strike the Ming, we will do so as we are ordered.'[617] This perspective was quoted to show the antithesis of the War Faction's stated identity.

Apart from these examples, there are a few lines that address the suffering of the Crown Prince, the humiliation of the king, and the destruction throughout the Chosŏn kingdom. However, it does not appear that Na was intending to create a national response or create a sense of negative ethnicity. The distinct lack of political identifiers pointing to Chosŏn's common political culture and historical time indicate as much. *Sansŏng ilgi* cannot, then, be called a diary designed to elevate the Chosŏn people's 'national awareness'. This is even less the case in *Pyŏngjarok*, where Na speaks more highly of the enemy than of his own countrymen. Na wrote, 'even though these people (the Qing) are like dogs and pigs, they are far superior to the masses of our own people.'[618] Such sentiments would certainly not have inspired an increase in the racial consciousness of the Chosŏn people.

[616] Na Mangap, *Pyŏngjarok* (1637.03.07).
[617] Anonymous, *Sansong ilgi*, 97.
[618] Na Mangap, *Pyŏngjarok* (1637.03.07).

There is no information as to why *Pyŏngjarok* was translated into *ŏnmun* 諺文, nor why Na Man'gap's name was struck from the contents of the diary. Because of the transposition into the Korean vernacular, researchers argue that it was diary written by a court lady or as a book to be read by the masses.[619] Both of these claims are unsubstantiated, and there is no textual evidence that the diaries were intended to be used in such a manner. Rather, Na was providing moral support to his faction by offering a history of the events that led to the war's eventual conclusion, perhaps hoping to affect and alter political perceptions in the decades following the defeat.

4.8 Summary of the Second Manchu Invasion

Using diaries from the Second Manchu invasion of 1636-1637, statements about a distinct population, political iconography, historical time, and common identification can be located. These are similar to the identities present in the Pre-Imjin to Post-Imjin eras. However, with King Injo's capitulation to the Manchu hordes, socio-political identity became more diversified and elements of it were utilized for a number of different purposes. Some perspectives were very supportive of war, and others extremely critical of the king. Each writer used socio-political identifiers to support their own thoughts and needs. Although there were a multitude of competing interpretations of socio-political identity at any one time, defeat experienced in the Second Manchu Invasion made those divisions more pronounced than ever before.

The invasion tore down the immortal pillars of King Injo's reign (that is, the Royal Shrine tablets were burned) when the Manchus destroyed Kanghwa Island, the Altars fell fell into the hands of the enemy when the Manchus took the capital and forced the king to submit to the Qing Empire.

[619] Kim Sayŏp, *Kukmun haksa* (Seoul: Chŏngumsa, 1953), 437.

The War Faction and the Peace Faction may have seemingly wanted different outcomes to the conflict and pointed to the Royal Shrines and Altars as symbols of what they wished to preserve, but they were fighting for their own lives rather than for the future of the state. The humiliation in 1637 and the veneration of the Ming became new elements among the many on Chosŏn's socio-political palette. Both can be traced back to reverence for the Ming intervention in the Imjin War and before that to the general praise of the Ming Empire. Unlike the Imjin War, the mortal king suffered the ultimate humiliation in the presence of the enemy; his immortal symbols and ties to Chinese civilization reduced to ashes.

5. CONCLUSION

Early in 2016, a posthumous book by the late Professor JaHyun Kim Haboush entitled *The Great East Asian War and the Birth of the Korean Nation*[620] was published. The book is a collection of Haboush's theories on the Imjin War that fundamentally argues that the original discourse of the Korean nation was born in the fires of the war due, in part, to negative-ethnicity resulting from the violence of the conflict.[621] Her book surveys the evolution of groups, language, and symbols during the Imjin War that created the concept of Korean national identity and largely relies on the theoretical parameters of Anderson and Hobsbawm to define the emergence of the nation in Chosŏn. Her book, however, does not offer novel insights in defining the nation or socio-political identity in the past, and consolidates her arguments from several books and articles published during her lifetime into this single volume. She is not alone in her approach to socio-political identities and many other scholars continue to rely upon the frameworks of theorists to reinterpret the parameters of identity without actually addressing the parameters themselves.

Strong socio-political identity is rarely born out of a single 'negative' event. Rather, it is built up over decades and centuries by a government and the society. A single event might be seen as creating a 'nation', but that event is never born in a complete void with no past and no history from which the new identity is forged. Chosŏn had its own two-hundred year history to rely upon, along with the comfort of knowing about the states in the Eastern Realm

[620] JaHyun Kim Haboush, *The Great East Asian War and the Birth of the Korean Nation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016).
[621] JaHyun Kim Haboush (2016), 3-6.

going back to a time before Koryŏ to Silla and Paekche, as well as the pride in feeling a part of a larger Confucian community. These elements of identity, along with many other components all co-existed, and they existed before the Imjin War broke out. Haboush hardly looked at the identity of the state and people before the Imjin War, and she gives it no attention in her new book.

The Imjin War and Manchu Invasions offer an autopsy of the Chosŏn state. The audit of war allows one to peer inside any society, and all the hidden elements that normally go unmentioned can seep to the surface when the tidy exterior is torn away. The wars did not initiate a fundamental change and create the 'Korean nation', but they did expose characteristics that lay buried under seemingly more important customs and conventions that dominated peacetime. With all pretense gone, the only things that remained were individual conversations over the complex and competitive social heritage with its mortal and immortal elements. This is why the wars are so fascinating, and why the wars are still so important to us at the present day.

My original focus for this thesis was to address the Imjin War and the Second Manchu Invasion to show that strong socio-political ties existed during that time and describe how they were recognised and interpreted. But rarely during wartime does one have the luxury to create an entirely new vocabulary and history to suit contemporary needs. The investigation of the history leading up to the war convinced me that a common sense of identity had existed in Chosŏn for many years before the wars had ever begun. The pre-Imjin War era laid the foundations of identity that continued forward into the Imjin War, through the Manchu Invasions, and probably for long afterwards. The decades before 1592 turned out to already hold the majority of definitions needed to understand Korean political discourse over the next fifty years. In the Imjin War and the Manchu Invasions, the definitions of the state, the king, the people, customs and culture, and the foreign world were transmitted from

earlier periods. The bases of these concepts from before the wars defined how they were interpreted and understood in the discourses of socio-political identity during the wars themselves. Even though they were enhanced during King Kwanghae'gun's reign, their origins stem from Sŏnjo's early reign with the rise of a new *Bildung*.

Relying on Gadamer's framework to merge the past and present into a fusion of horizons, I have tried to define the basic elements of the state, the monarch, the people, customs and cultures, and the foreign world to be understood by Chosŏn-era definitions, rather than by our own. The theoretical framework I developed for this thesis, the mortal and immortal elements of the state, describe the dual nature of most countries in which the ruler both relies on his own inherent right to rule (mortal) and the greater spiritual and historical elements to enhance his right to the throne (immortal). These concepts overlap in several locations (such as the Royal Shrines), but both are fundamentally necessary, and they are still used by modern nation-states. In addition, there were other concepts that have drawn less attention, but were still essential. For example, there were two lifespans for the state: the cultural and historic immortal continuity and the king's dynastic lineage time that ran alongside the other. But in comparison to the Imjin War, the concern with time was much less apparent in the Manchu Invasions.

Elements of the government were always trying to redefine the boundaries of the mortal and the immortal, and it was the king's job to make sure that the immortal elements remained under his control. King Sŏnjo was just able to do this, thanks to the Chinese army, but King Injo could not as his right to rule and connection to the immortal instruments of state were slowly eroded and finally taken from him altogether. The wars strengthened, changed, redefined, and exposed these elements of socio-political identity to a much greater extent than ever before. Being exposed from the mid-sixteenth to the mid-seventeenth centuries, the symbolic concepts I have examined show that Chosŏn endured a slow loss of

sovereignty, with each successive king losing more power over their state's immortal (and cultural) symbols.

In pre-modern Korea, there was no single concept that referred to a 'nation', but rather a set of overlapping identifiers that we currently interpret as being the 'nation'. There were groups using competing ideas for their own internal power and influence at all times. But during the Imjin War, proponents deployed them to fight foreigners and during the Manchu Invasions then deployed them to fight political rivals.

People responded to the invasions in a multitude of ways, but they all used the cultural symbols laid down in the past for their own purposes of identification. The political structure and histories used by the various authors were already established by the time of the Imjin War,[622] but the invasion allowed for an efflorescence and new application of these words and meanings. Although these ideas can be studied outside the context of the Imjin War and Manchu Invasions, the conflicts compelled the government and population at large to re-imagine, and re-connect with, the images of the state that had been strengthened over King Sŏnjo's reign. These symbols had not played such a powerful role before the wars began, but they were there before the conflicts nonetheless. As the conflicts developed, what was truly important increasingly came to the fore.

[622] Kim Pusik's *Samguk sagi*, Iryŏn's *Samguk yusa*, and even Kwŏn Munhae's *taedong unbu kunok* refer to the historical and legendary dates of the peninsula as a separate region.

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