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**Between Identity and Difference: Othering, Bordering,
and the Self-Fashioning of the Reading Public
in Late Chosŏn Travel Writing**

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Abstract

This dissertation explores Chosŏn perceptions of self, China, and the wider world during the first two centuries of Chosŏn-Qing relations, as expressed in *yŏnhaengnok*, Chosŏn travelers' accounts of China that proliferated during this same period. I approach *yŏnhaengnok* as an unofficial counterpart and counterweight to official discourses on Chosŏn and its Others, inasmuch as the production and consumption of *yŏnhaengnok* involved a widening cross-section of Chosŏn society, the reading public, and provided an alternative avenue for disseminating knowledge, constructing identities, and exercising influence.

The bifurcated status of *yŏnhaengnok* in contemporary scholarship—marginalized as outsider sources on Qing China while privileged as firsthand sources on late Chosŏn intellectuals and intellectual life—reflects a common, overriding concern among historians and literary scholars with the reliability and usefulness of *yŏnhaengnok* as documentary sources. The dominant scholarly practice of mining *yŏnhaengnok* for biographical and ideological information about the authors, though productive in its own right, has overshadowed the need to also treat *yŏnhaengnok* as objects of study in themselves. Here, I seek to demonstrate how attention to the evolving parameters and function of the *yŏnhaengnok*, as a genre and form of discourse, can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of late Chosŏn identity formation and maintenance.

The greater part of this dissertation examines where and how Chosŏn travelers employed the strategies of othering and bordering to represent their encounters in contrasting and hierarchical terms. I attempt to identify the particular subjectivities invoked in such negotiations between identity and difference by combining close

readings with broader investigations into the social, intellectual, and literary milieus to which the authors and their readers belonged (or aspired to belong). Finally, I argue that the *yŏnhaengnok*'s self-referentiality and popularity as a platform for self-fashioning, particularly in the nineteenth century, indicate a stronger interaction between *yŏnhaengnok* production and reception than has been posited in previous scholarship.

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Introduction

Ch'oe Pu 崔溥 (1454-1504) had barely settled into his post as Commissioner of Slave Registers in Cheju when a family slave came bearing the news of Ch'oe's father's death. Ch'oe set sail on the third day of the intercalary first month, 1488, to return to his paternal home in Ch'olla Province, but his ship fell prey to a violent storm and then to pirates, eventually forcing Ch'oe and his crew to make an inland detour through China. They traveled from the Chinese coastal province of Zhejiang up the Grand Canal to Beijing, and from there they proceeded east to the Sino-Korean border at the Yalu river. By the time Ch'oe finally set foot on mainland Chosŏn, he would have been more than five months late to his father's funeral—but, if not for such bad luck, he would not have written the *P'yohaerok* 漂海錄 (Record of drifting across the sea), arguably the most sensational and famous of early Chosŏn travel accounts.

Ch'oe originally wrote the *P'yohaerok* under the title *Chungjo kyŏnmun ilgi* 中朝見聞日記 (Daily Record of Things Seen and Heard in the Chinese Empire) to submit as a report to King Sŏngjong upon his return from China.¹ Ch'oe had seen a part of China that most Chosŏn travelers, in taking an established land route to Beijing, did not get to see, and the unique vantage point of his eyewitness account was not lost on his readers. His *Chungjo kyŏnmun ilgi* was retitled *P'yohaerok* and underwent multiple printings in the sixteenth century: in 1511, Royal Secretary Yi Sein 李世仁 appealed for its official publication, emphasizing the informative value of its contents,² and in 1569, Ch'oe Pu's grandson Yu Hŭich'un 柳希春 had it printed

¹ *Sŏngjong sillok* 217:12a (1488/06/04); Kim T'aejun, *Han'guk ūi yŏhaeng munhak*, p. 107.

² *Chungjong sillok* 13:33b-34a (1511/03/14).

privately.³ The *P'yohaerok* was also read in Japan, having made its way there during the Imjin War, and was known to Edo readers as the *Tōdo kōteiki* 唐土行程記 and, alternatively, as the *Tsūzoku hyōkairoku* 通俗漂海錄.⁴ The circumstances of the *P'yohaerok*'s composition and its subsequent reception history may seem extraordinary, but Ch'oe Pu himself, as an office-holding *yangban* male, was not unlike the typical travel writer of his day. The only crucial difference was that he had been something of an accidental tourist, more concerned about getting home to perform his filial duties than acting in any diplomatic capacity, whereas most others, as exemplified by Kwŏn Kŭn 權近 (1352-1409), Yi Sŏkhyŏng 李石亨 (1415-1477), and Sŏng Hyŏn 成俔(1439-1504), had gone to Ming China as official envoys dispatched by the Chosŏn court.

Even well into the eighteenth century, long after the Ming's demise, early Chosŏn travelers' accounts of Ming China continued to receive favorable attention from the Chosŏn court as reliable sources of information and were considered for official publication from time to time as a means of enlightening and boosting the morale of the populace.⁵ Cho Hŏn's 趙憲 *Choch'ŏn ilgi* 朝天日記 (1574), for example, was printed under the auspices of King Yŏngjo in 1734, on account of its not only containing "detailed descriptions of Chinese court rituals and the travel route to Beijing," but also having miraculously survived the "double devastation" of the Imjin War and Manchu invasions.⁶ In contrast, embassy travel accounts of Qing China, which would have contained more up-to-date and topically relevant

³ Kim T'aejun, *Han'guk ūi yŏhaeng munhak*, p. 107.

⁴ Pak Wŏnho, "Ch'oe Pu P'yohaerok pŏnyŏk sulp'yŏng," pp. 369-370.

⁵ For example, references to the travel poetry and prose of Wŏlsa Yi Chŏnggu (1564-1635), who made four embassy trips to Ming China, can be found in the following: *Kwanghaegun ilgi* 158:7a (1620/11/17), *Sukchong sillok* 65:19a (1720/06/08), *Sŭngjŏngwŏn ilgi* 1318:106a (1771/06/20).

⁶ *Yŏngjo sillok* 38:29a (1734/06/21).

information, did not enjoy the same positive evaluation or receive nearly as much attention in state discourse.⁷ *Yŏnhaengnok* 燕行錄 (lit., record of a journey to Beijing), as these late Chosŏn travel accounts are now commonly known, were in a sense byproducts of Chosŏn Korea's capitulation to the Manchus in 1637 and subsequent coercion into tributary relations with the Manchu Qing. As the Qing's legitimacy was highly questionable to Chosŏn ruling elites given the Manchus' non-Han, "barbarian" origins, so, too, was the value of officially endorsing *yŏnhaengnok*: why express any interest in *yŏnhaengnok*, when doing so could be construed as support for an illegitimate, barbarian regime? At least, this is one view implicit in the dismissive (or, more likely, discreet) silence of the Chosŏn court on the production and consumption of *yŏnhaengnok*, whereas the *yŏnhaengnok* themselves tell a rather different story.

Outside the discursive arena of the Chosŏn court, Qing China, as a travel destination and object of geographical and ethnographic knowledge, attracted unusually strong and sustained interest from Chosŏn writers and readers. Known to us today are two hundred ninety-four *yŏnhaengnok* texts, spanning the entire duration of Chosŏn-Qing tributary relations, from 1637 to 1894, and comprising more than double the number of extant travel texts about Ming China from the preceding two and a half centuries.⁸ Some *yŏnhaengnok* have survived not just in private literary collections (*sajip*) but also as standalone manuscripts and as part of edited volumes, whose multiple copies, different editions, and translations into vernacular Korean

⁷ One of the very few exceptions to this tendency was Grand Prince Inp'yŏng's travel account of 1656, the *Yŏndo kihaeng*; King Yŏnjo requested to see it and commissioned its printing in 1773. *Yŏngjo sillok* 121:18b (1773/12/02).

⁸ Im Kijung, *Chŭngbo 'p'an yŏnhaengnok yŏn'gu*, pp. 29-30.

attest to their circulation to a wide, and widening, readership—or, as I am inclined to call it, the reading public.⁹

The proliferation of *yŏnhaengnok* in the absence of state support would not have been possible if not for the spread of literacy and the social diversification of literary culture in late Chosŏn Korea, which gained new momentum in the seventeenth century through the growth of private academies for elites (*sŏwŏn*), elementary schools open to commoners (*sŏdang*), book-lending businesses, and transcription practices among women.¹⁰ Whereas the producers of *yŏnhaengnok* could only be those who had firsthand experience of Qing China and the requisite literary knowledge to write convincingly about it, the readers, arbiters, transmitters, and appropriators of *yŏnhaengnok* were neither confined to such a narrowly defined demographic group nor, in the vast majority of cases, subject to state regulation. Against this backdrop, Qing China—supposedly foreign yet imminently effable, readable, knowable—thrived as a dialectical Other in personal and popular constructions of the Chosŏn self. Put another way, the hundreds of *yŏnhaengnok* at our disposal may be said to represent an unofficial discourse enacted by travel-writing and reading participants, whereby a wider section of late Chosŏn society than

⁹ My use of the term “reading public” refers to the increased production and consumption of literature in the private sector from the seventeenth century onwards, as observed by JaHyun Kim Haboush in “Dead Bodies in the Postwar Discourse of Identity in Seventeenth-Century Korea,” pp. 433-434; it is also analogous to Saeyong Park’s use of the term “public sphere” in “Memory, Counternarrative, and the Body Politic in Post-Imjin War Chosŏn Korea,” pp. 154-155, to refer to the wide participation of late Chosŏn sociopolitical elites and non-elites in cultural and ideological production.

¹⁰ On the rise of *sowŏn*, see Yŏng-ho Ch’oe, “Private Academies and the State in Late Chosŏn Korea,” in JaHyun Kim Haboush and Martina Deuchler, eds., *Culture and the State in Late Chosŏn Korea* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 15-45. On private literary production and publishing, see Michael Kim, “Literary Production, Circulating Libraries, and Private Publishing: The Popular Reception of Vernacular Fiction Texts in the Late Chosŏn Dynasty,” *Journal of Korean Studies* 9.1 (Fall 2004): pp. 1-31.

the ruling “five percent” took part in the construction and dissemination of knowledge, values, and identities.¹¹

Physically, *yŏnhaengnok* constitute a significant textual corpus; this much is obvious. Their significance as a sociocultural practice and phenomenon, on the other hand, cannot be accounted for simply on the basis of their quantity. As an initial foray into this underexplored line of inquiry, the present dissertation investigates how the production and consumption of *yŏnhaengnok* interacted with and informed late Chosŏn perceptions of self, China, and the wider world over the first two centuries of Chosŏn-Qing relations. Methodologically, I hope to demonstrate the heuristic value of studying the *yŏnhaengnok* corpus as a generic and discursive whole, insofar as such an approach encourages attending to the intertextual links between *yŏnhaengnok* texts, foregrounding questions of reception, and shifting our focus from the mimetic content to the constitutive function of textual representations.

As I discuss in detail later in this Introduction, scholarly interest in *yŏnhaengnok* has grown steadily over the past few decades, but there has been little effort towards identifying the generic parameters, uses, and value of *yŏnhaengnok* from the standpoint of their historical producers and consumers. The general tendency has been to view *yŏnhaengnok* as documentary sources rather than as worthy objects of study in themselves, falling somewhere between eyewitness reportage and autobiography with respect to the types of information they contain. Most scholarly treatments of *yŏnhaengnok*, therefore, have been author-centered and chronologically selective, geared towards explaining the impact of *travel*, not travel

¹¹ Ruling yangban (*chibae yangban*) only made up an estimated five percent of the total population in Chosŏn Korea during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They were a minority even among yangban, which goes to show the unreliability of office-holding as a marker of yangban status. See Kim, *Voice from the North*, pp. 11-12.

writing, on specific eighteenth-century Chosŏn individuals and the literati circles in which they moved.

To be sure, the subjective nature of *yŏnhaengnok*, as with all forms of travel writing, raises valid questions about their reliability and usefulness as historical sources, but I take issue with how such considerations, more often than not, have limited the scope of our scholarly engagement with *yŏnhaengnok*. The typical response of both historians and literary scholars has been to treat *yŏnhaengnok* as unproblematic sources of biographical and ideological information about the authors while making relatively sparing, secondary use of them as sources on Qing China. Here, the operative assumption is that the historical person behind a *yŏnhaengnok* text—his personality, ideas, and formative experiences—can be extracted with more ease and accuracy than anything “new” about China that Chinese sources fail to elucidate. Not only does this assumption take an oversimplified view of self-representation in *yŏnhaengnok*, but it also serves to confine our historicizing of a *yŏnhaengnok* text to the historical moment of its composition. What remains to be addressed is the cultural work performed by *yŏnhaengnok*, individually and collectively, beyond (or irrespective of) their authors’ original intentions and across longer periods than a single lifetime.

Admittedly, the concentration of scholarly attention on eighteenth-century *yŏnhaengnok* does have some basis in the well-attested observation that the eighteenth century was the most innovative and formative period for the *yŏnhaengnok* genre. However, I would suggest that this seemingly unbroken continuity between “past” and “present” reception of *yŏnhaengnok* is largely coincidental. Much of the current scholarly attention directed at eighteenth-century *yŏnhaengnok* stems from an interest in the authors as subjects and agents of

intellectual history, which in turn may be seen as an outgrowth of, or reaction to, uniquely twentieth-century historiographical concerns with establishing the protomodernity of precolonial Korea. Needless to say, a reader in the early nineteenth century would have approached these same texts differently and put them to different uses. What made *yŏnhaengnok* worth reading and writing, and what can they tell us about the broader culture of reading and writing about travel?

As a means of vicarious travel and source of knowledge about the outside world for the reading public, the *yŏnhaengnok* may have differed little from the *choch'ŏnnok* 朝天錄 (lit., record of an audience with the Son of Heaven), its early Chosŏn counterpart, but the most frequently cited authors within the *yŏnhaengnok* corpus do invite contrasts with the typical fifteenth-century travel writer discussed earlier.¹² Nogajae Kim Ch'angŏp 老稼齋 金昌業 (1658-1721), Tamhŏn Hong Taeyong 湛軒 洪大容 (1731-1783), and Yŏnam Pak Chiwŏn 燕巖 朴趾源 (1737-1805), the three celebrated masters of the *yŏnhaengnok*, did not travel to Qing China as official envoys, but rather in the nominal capacity of *chaje kun'gwan* 子弟軍官, or military aides, being related by blood to one of the three most senior official members of the embassy—the *chŏngsa* 正使 (chief envoy), *pusa* 副使 (deputy envoy), or *sŏjanggwan* 書狀官 (secretary).

Back at home, too, Kim, Hong, and Pak personified a certain in-betweenness as educated, talented, and socially aware *yangban* men without much of a political career to speak of. Kim Ch'angŏp was one of the “Six Ch'angs” (*yuk-Ch'ang*), sons

¹² It should be noted that the generic categories “choch'ŏnnok” and “yŏnhaengnok” are modern constructs first proposed by Im Kijung, based on the frequent occurrence of the term *choch'ŏn* in the titles of early Chosŏn travel accounts and *yŏnhaeng* in the titles of late Chosŏn travel accounts of China. Im Kijung later broadened his definition of “yŏnhaengnok” to denote all premodern Korean travel accounts of China (see Im Kijung, *Chŭngbop'an yŏnhaengnok yŏn'gu*, p. 9), but here I have chosen to limit my application of the term to late Chosŏn texts for ease of comparison between the early and late Chosŏn periods.

of Chief State Councillor Kim Suhang 金壽恒 (1629-1689) who were all renowned for their erudition and literary prowess; unlike his three older brothers who rose to some of the highest positions in central government, Kim Ch'angöŏp eschewed politics in favor of a life devoted to writing and painting. Hong Taeyong came from a similarly well-connected political family but, having failed the civil service examinations multiple times, took up a series of lackluster appointments from the belated age of forty-three. Pak Chiwön entered civil service at the even later age of forty-nine, after spending the first half of his adult life as a private scholar and leading member of an intellectual coterie that has come to be known in modern parlance as the “Yönam group.”¹³

Thus, instead of taking the conventional route to success and fame, Kim Ch'angöŏp, Hong Taeyong, and Pak Chiwön seem to have blazed their own trails and demonstrated how else to engage with the world, fashion a memorable existence, and exercise influence—but in what sense and to what effect, exactly? To bridge the gap between their pre-twentieth-century reputation as travel writers *par excellence* and their subsequent mythologization as prematurely modern, progressive thinkers, it becomes necessary to trace the development, reception, and impact of the *yönyaengnok* genre and locate the celebrated authors' places within these trajectories. The official silence of the Chosön court on these matters, however, only allows us to ascertain the demoted status of the *yönyaengnok* in relation to the *choch'önnok*. The remainder of our task takes us into rather murky territory, methodologically speaking, but also serves as an opportunity to draw broader connections between different modes of writing within the Chosön textual tradition and to question binaries that

¹³ Most members of the Yönam group, Pak Chiwön included, advocated learning from Qing material culture and Western science, earning them the label *Pukhakp'a* (School of Northern Learning). Hong Taeyong, Pak Chega, Yi Töngmu, and Yu Tükkong are the most studied *Pukhak* scholars after Pak Chiwön.

have conventionally informed our discussions of premodern Korean literature.

Below, I treat Pak Chiwŏn's *Yŏrha ilgi* as a case in point.

Yŏnhaengnok* and the State: The Case of Pak Chiwŏn's *Yŏrha ilgi

The conspicuous absence of *yŏnhaengnok* from late Chosŏn official discourse supports what has been identified as a “relatively benign government policy” on privately produced literature throughout the late Chosŏn period.¹⁴ Although the state's noninterference would have been an enabling condition for the proliferation of *yŏnhaengnok*, it does not bring us any closer to identifying the motivational forces driving this phenomenon. Furthermore, as a form of travel writing occasioned by official diplomatic travel and whose predecessor, the *choch'ŏnnok*, continued to enjoy state sanction, the *yŏnhaengnok* represents a particularly complex case, one which runs counter to any absolute distinction between high and low, public and private, dominant and marginal literary practices. Likewise, there is little evidence to suggest that the state's “benignness” was necessarily out of an ignorance of or insensitivity to the *yŏnhaengnok*'s subversive potential; much to the contrary, in the one recorded instance we have of a *yŏnhaengnok* coming under royal scrutiny, King Chŏngjo (r. 1776-1800) is said to have taken issue with Pak Chiwŏn's *Yŏrha ilgi* because of its corrupting influence on the country's incumbent and aspiring scholar-officials.

Pak Chiwŏn's legendary run-in with Chŏngjo, believed to have occurred in 1793 as part of Chŏngjo's *munch'e panjŏng* 文體反正 (rectification of literary styles) campaign, is only substantiated by unofficial sources compiled in the 1820s—Pak's

¹⁴ Haboush, “Dead Bodies in the Postwar Discourse of Identity in Seventeenth-Century Korea,” p. 434.

epistolary collection and the *Kwajǒngnok* 過庭錄, a memoir dedicated to Pak by his son Pak Chongch'ae 朴宗采 (1780-1835)—and as such calls for some methodological caution. At the very least, though, it allows us some insight into Pak Chiwǒn's unofficial reputation, the specific grounds on which his *yǒnhaengnok* was deemed adverse to the state, and the negative associations that may have persisted alongside positive ones in late Chosǒn attitudes towards *yǒnhaengnok*.

The immense popularity of Pak Chiwǒn's *Yǒrha ilgi* at the time of Chǒngjo's *munch'e panjǒng* campaign can be partly surmised from the fact that manuscript copies of the *Yǒrha ilgi* have survived to the present day in the greatest numbers, estimated to be somewhere in the dozens, and include both the original *hanmun* and translated *han'gŭl* versions.¹⁵ Chǒngjo, however, identified the *Yǒrha ilgi* as a root cause of the degradation of literary standards among political and educated elites, making it out to be nothing less than a threat to the country's politico-cultural foundations. On royal orders, Nam Kongch'ŏl 南公轍, a Kyujanggak (Royal Library) official, sent Pak Chiwǒn a letter of reprimand quoting Chǒngjo directly:

If I trace current literary trends back to their sources, in no instance do I find that this Pak fellow is not to blame. I myself have read the *Yǒrha ilgi* most thoroughly, so how dare anyone fool me into thinking otherwise? This man is the biggest fish to have escaped through our nets. As it was only after the *Yǒrha ilgi* circulated far and wide that literary styles became what they are today, it is only fitting that the person responsible be called to account.¹⁶

The source of controversy surrounding Pak's work was the use of miscellaneous sketches—Chǒngjo referred to it by turns as the *sosŏl* 小說 (C. *xiaoshuo*), *p'aegwan* 稗官 (C. *baiguan*), and *sop'um* 小品 (C. *xiaopin*) form of writing—in at least two

¹⁵ A more precise figure has yet to be determined. See No Kyǒnghŭi, “‘Yǒnhwi’ ūi yibon kōmt'o rūl t'onghan Chosǒn hu'gi yǒnhaengnok ūi yut'ong kwa chōnsŭng,” *Kyujanggak* 41 (2012): pp. 37-62.

¹⁶ Pak, “Tap Nam Chikkak sŏ,” *Yōnam chip* 2:12a: 近日文風之如此, 原其本則莫非朴某之罪也。熱河日記, 予既熟覽焉? 敢欺隱此, 是漏網之大者。熱河記行于世後, 文體如此, 自當使結者解之。

instances to critique Chosŏn society. These two overtly fictional, satirical narratives, *Hŏsaeng chŏn* (Biography of Master Hŏ) and *Hojil* (The Tiger's Admonition), both cast a critical eye on the self-interestedness of the *yangban* class; notably, in the former, the Chosŏn state's failure to launch a northern expedition against the Manchus is attributed to factionalism and corruption in the civil recruitment system.

And yet, compared to the grave consequences Sŏnggyun'gwan (Royal Confucian Academy) students faced if their compositions resembled "the *p'aegwan*'s miscellany even in the slightest,"¹⁷ Pak Chiwŏn was let off surprisingly lightly: he was ordered to submit a self-critical confession written in the "pure and correct" ancient style (K. *komun*, C. *guwen*) to avoid a heftier penalty and even be considered for a government post.¹⁸ Chŏngjo's choice to present Pak with a stick and a carrot, instead of subjecting him to the same public humiliation suffered by Sŏnggyun'gwan student Yi Ok 李鈺¹⁹ and Nam Kongch'ŏl,²⁰ can be better understood in light of the official praise Pak is said to have received for his *Kwanong soch'o* 課農小抄 (Short Excerpts on Farming) several years later. In this later work, Pak drew on existing manuals and treatises to propose the adoption of new farming tools and techniques throughout the country.²¹ Pak made no attempt to veil his criticisms of the *yangban* class here, either, as he argued for the redistribution of land and limits on landholding to combat socioeconomic inequalities; yet he had not employed the *sosŏl* style to

¹⁷ Such students were disqualified from sitting the next, final stage of civil service examinations, which effectively barred them from public office. *Chŏngjo sillok* 36:17b (1792/10/19).

¹⁸ "Tap Nam Chikkaksŏ," *Yŏnam chip* 2:12a: 速著一部純正之文, 卽卽上送, 以贖熱河記之罪。則雖南行文任, 豈有可惜者乎? 不然則當有重罪。

¹⁹ Yi Ok was temporarily suspended from regular activities at the Sŏnggyun'gwan and was made to compose fifty pieces of four-six (K. *saryuk*, C. *siliu*) prose instead, and only then was allowed to apply to sit the final civil service examination. *Chŏngjo sillok* 36:17b (1792/10/19).

²⁰ Nam Kongch'ŏl was charged with making direct references to miscellanies in official communications. He was barred from the Royal Lectures (*kyŏngyŏn*) until he submitted a confession. *Chŏngjo sillok* 36:17b-18a (1792/10/19).

²¹ Song Chuyŏng, "Yŏnam Pak Chiwŏn ūi kyŏngje sasang," pp. 31-52; Palais, *Confucian Statecraft and Korean Institutions*, pp. 371-372.

express his vision, which, if we go by Pak Chongch'ae's explanation, was what made the *Kwanong soch'o* an unproblematic example of “well-informed writing” (*kyöngnyun ūi munja*) and “erudition with practical applications” (*shiryong ūi hangmun*) for Chöngjo and his high officials.²²

If we take Pak Chongch'ae's recollections at face value, Chöngjo's objection to Pak Chiwön's stylistic choices in the *Yörha ilgi* may have been just that—and not necessarily indicative of Chöngjo's stance on the social criticisms expressed in the *Yörha ilgi*, his opinion of *yönhaengnok* more generally, or his estimation of Pak Chiwön the individual. What Pak Chongch'ae impresses most keenly upon his readers is the silver lining to the *Yörha ilgi* incident: Chöngjo was able to detect in the *Yörha ilgi* the workings of a brilliant mind, which just needed channeling to more serious and practicable ends. This strikes me as a plausible enough interpretation of Chöngjo's interest in Pak Chiwön, but it also bears the marks of Pak Chongch'ae's own reluctance to acknowledge the *Yörha ilgi* as his father's main claim to fame. Here invoked is the noncanonical, marginal status of the *sosöl* and other similarly hybrid prose forms that give primary expression to personal observations, humorous anecdotes, popular beliefs, and hearsay; from an elitist Confucian standpoint, the lack of moral rigor, ahistoricity, and triviality attributable to these forms are extended to the *Yörha ilgi* to imply the latter's questionable literary and pragmatic value.

It is worth noting, on the other hand, that the affinity of travel writing and *sosöl* writing had been observed well before Chöngjo's time—and not always in a disparaging way, either. For example, in his miscellany *P'aegwan chapki* 稗官雜記, Ö Sukkwön (fl. 1525-1554) lists the *P'yohaerok* under the *sosöl* category alongside

²² Cited in Kang Hyesön, “Chöngjo ūi munch'e pip'an chaeron,” p. 209; Song Chuyöng, “Yönam Pak Chiwön ūi kyöngje sasang,” p. 31.

such seemingly diverse works as Yi Illo's *P'ahan chip* 補閑集 (Jottings to break up idleness), Sŏ Kŏjŏng's *Tongin sihwa* 東人詩話 (Remarks on poetry by a man from the east), Kim Sisŭp's *Kŭmo sinhwa* 金鼈新話 (New stories of Mount Golden Turtle), and Nam Hyoon's *Yuksin chŏn* 六臣傳 (Lives of six ministers).²³ In the passage concerned, however, Ō prefaces his enumeration of works from the Koryŏ and early Chosŏn periods with the observation that “the Eastern country [i.e. Korea] has few *sosŏl*”: a statement that reads more like criticism than praise.

Ō could not have held such a low opinion of the *sosŏl*, having, after all, embraced it as his literary vehicle and identified himself titularly as a *p'aegwan*, or petty official.²⁴ If anything, we can detect a tacit promotion of the *sosŏl* through its explicit identification with authors of special political and/or literary renown, which, in turn, serves to elevate Ō's own work and literary status. However unconventional Ō's position on *sosŏl* may have been even for his time, his attempt to delineate a discrete *sosŏl*-writing tradition in which to situate his writing was in itself a common literary gesture, observable especially in the more established poetic and historiographical genres that qualified as *mun* 文 (C. *wen*), or Literature with a capital “L,” in Chosŏn written culture. As we will see, within the *yŏnhaengnok* corpus, too, direct and indirect references to antecedents recur with increasing frequency, which may hold one key to understanding how the *yŏnhaengnok* came to acquire a distinct

²³ *Taedong yasŭng* Vol. 4, “P'aegwan chapki 4,” pp. 774-775: “東國少小說，唯高麗李大諫仁老破閑集，崔拙翁滋補閑集，李益齋齊賢櫟翁稗說，本朝姜仁齋希顏養花小錄，徐四佳居正太平閑話筆苑雜記，東人詩話，姜晉山希孟村談解頤，金東峯時習金鼈新話，李青坡劇談，成虛白堂倪慵齋叢話，南秋江孝溫六臣傳，秋江冷語，曹梅溪偉梅溪叢話，崔校理溥漂海記，鄭海平眉壽閑中啓齒，金沖庵淨濟州風土記，曹適庵仲謏聞鎖錄，行于世。” An English translation of the passage can be found in Peter H. Lee, *A Korean Storyteller's Miscellany: The P'aegwan chapki of Ō Sukkwŏn* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), pp. 225-226.

²⁴ Ō Sukkwŏn's sociopolitical situation in real life would have also warranted his status as a *p'aegwan*, in that he was an illegitimate son and served primarily as an interpreter, a second-rate profession by *yangban* standards with limited opportunities for bureaucratic advancement.

generic identity and social significance that would ensure its perpetuation into the late nineteenth century.

The production and consumption of *yŏnhaengnok* showed no signs of slowing during Chŏngjo's *munch'e panjŏng* campaign or for almost a century thereafter. Even senior members of embassies, who typically held high positions in the central bureaucracy, were evidently not averse to composing *yŏnhaengnok* of their own and revealing therein an intimate familiarity with earlier *yŏnhaengnok* texts, which stands in stark contrast to the complete silence of *Sillok* entries and other official records for the post-Chŏngjo period on the subject of *yŏnhaengnok*. Despite the obvious connection between embassy travel and the production of *yŏnhaengnok*, these official records make no mention of what writing activities embassy members could or did pursue outside of their formal duties, whether out of a resigned indifference or calculated discretion. Whatever the underlying sentiment or rationale, such silence indicates that *yŏnhaengnok* were deemed ill-suited to furthering state interests—but not so dangerous as to warrant censorship or so culturally heterodox as to detract from the *yŏnhaengnok*'s broad appeal among political elites and non-elites alike.

Clearly, there were strong enough incentives in play that made *yŏnhaengnok* worth the effort (if not also the risk) of writing, reading, and circulating in unofficial capacities and through private networks; the nature of these incentives may have changed over time as well, but this remains at best a speculation unless we devote it our focused attention. In the interest of outlining a context more immediate to the concerns of *yŏnhaengnok* producers and consumers, perhaps we ought to begin by exploring what travel—the other operative word in “travel writing”—meant to late Chosŏn Koreans.

Changing Perceptions of Travel and the Rise of the *Yŏnhaengnok*

In the early stages of my research, I was convinced that by examining multiple *yŏnhaengnok* texts alongside one another, I would discover some aspect of Chosŏn-Qing relations that more conventional, widely used historical sources tend to gloss over or omit altogether. I took cues from how a number of historians and literary scholars in the past fifteen or so years have drawn on *yŏnhaengnok* to construct microhistories of Chosŏn encounters with Qing material culture, Western science, and Catholicism; I was also inspired by Gari Ledyard's effort to bring *yŏnhaengnok* to the attention of Sinologists more than forty years ago, which had proved mostly futile at the time.²⁵ I had no doubt in my mind that *yŏnhaengnok* made valuable artifacts, but they also made difficult and problematic historical sources, as I soon came to discover. Reading one *yŏnhaengnok* after another only served to confirm that the authors had traveled more or less the same route at the same times of year, seen more or less the same things, and interacted with the locals in more or less the same manner; moving into the nineteenth century, there seemed to be just as much if not more emphasis on ticking off items on a collectively imagined to-do list than on reporting what was novel and previously unheard of.

Eventually, the questions that came to intrigue me had less to do with the historical facts we might glean from *yŏnhaengnok* than with the "truths" invoked, negotiated, and reproduced by *yŏnhaengnok* authors to make certain claims about identity and difference. Based on what conceptions of the self, as defined by culture, ethnicity, class, gender, or other characteristic, did *yŏnhaengnok* authors construct and reproduce otherness, and what were their means of legitimation? Is there a

²⁵ Ledyard, "Korean Travelers in China over Four Hundred Years, 1488-1887." *Occasional Papers on Korea* 2 (1974): pp. 1-42.

dominant worldview or episteme that becomes manifest across *yŏnhaengnok* texts, and if so, how does it compare to the beliefs and values typically espoused in official discourse? Questions such as these can only be meaningfully explored when we adopt a diachronic, corpus-based approach to *yŏnhaengnok* and attempt analyses at the textual, intertextual, and contextual levels.

As mentioned in the previous section, Chosŏn embassy travelers were under no official obligation to produce *yŏnhaengnok*; the fact that so many of them did so anyway points to certain impulses, commitments, and author-reader interactions that have somehow failed to attract much attention in Korean- and English-language scholarship of *yŏnhaengnok*. Consequently, some of my first clues to identifying the motivations for writing and reading *yŏnhaengnok* were to be found in studies of other primary texts also produced in the context of embassy travel. In particular, Paek Chinu's fascinating study of eighteenth-century farewell prefaces (K. *songsŏ*, C. *songxu*) alerted me to a possible correlation between changing perceptions of travel and the proliferation of *yŏnhaengnok*.²⁶

Before departing for Qing China, as part of their ceremonial send-off, envoys were presented with a farewell preface by a respected writer containing words of encouragement and advice. Paek takes special interest in farewell prefaces written by Namin faction members because of their relatively varied content and form, when compared with the more overtly and consistently Ming loyalist farewell prefaces written by Noron faction members.²⁷ As the Namin faction was politically marginalized for the greater part of the eighteenth century and its members were seldom selected as envoys, Paek treats their farewell prefaces as a reflection of

²⁶ Paek Chinu, "Yŏnhaeng songsŏ rŭl t'onghae pon 18-segi Nam'in-gye mun'in tŭrŭi ūisik segye," *Hanja hanmun yŏn'gu* 7 (2011): pp. 207-238.

²⁷ Paek Chinu, "Yŏnhaeng songsŏ," pp. 210-211.

alternative views held within the political community; for our purposes, they may also provide some indication of how the wider reading public, most of whom would have been likewise unable to travel abroad, perceived Qing China and the act of traveling there.

Paek notes a gradual change in the content and tone of these farewell prefaces over the course of the eighteenth century: from untampered expressions of anti-Qing sentiment to encouraging advice on how to make the most of the impending journey. Sin Yuhan 申維翰 (1681-1752), writing in 1725, warns Yi Chut'ae 李柱泰 (1674-1730) of the moral perils of traveling to a China ruled by barbarians:

China has produced tens of thousands of books, and of these, we have made the Four Books and Six Classics our compulsory reading, the Duke of Zhou our role model, Confucius and Mencius our moral compass, and Neo-Confucianism our guide. As such, we are essentially Chinese. . . . At present, there are hundreds of millions of people in China, but they do not read the Four Books and Six Classics and have loosened their hat strings in favor of barbarian dress. They wear shortened clothing and with glaring eyes wield their swords and knives for a living. In short, the Chinese are not Chinese.²⁸

In contrast, the mid-eighteenth century saw more farewell prefaces like the one attributed to Yi Yonghyu 李用休 (1708-1782), below, treating travel as a privilege and unique stimulus not to be passed up:

Let us suppose that you were not made an envoy. Over the same duration as the trip, you would probably be assigned to this post and that post, reporting to this office one day and that office the next. . . . As you wouldn't ever have to set foot outside of Seoul, even if you added up all the distances you covered riding around the city, the total wouldn't be more than several hundred, maybe a thousand, *li*. Once you reach Beijing, you will have the chance to observe people from all over the world. To behold such marvelous and unusual sights, wouldn't that stir your senses and your mind just as the *Wanghui-tu* [Tang Illustrations of Audiences with Kings] had done in former times?²⁹

²⁸ Cited in Paek Chin'u, "Yönhaeng songsö," p. 221.

²⁹ Cited in Paek Chin'u, "Yönhaeng songsö," pp. 225-226.

And then towards the end of the eighteenth century, the enlightening and transformative power of travel became a focal point:

You are leaving this small corner of the world to traverse the vastness that is China. Therefore, everywhere you set foot and in every object you behold, you will be encountering the essence of the Way, will you not? I would like for you to recognize the narrowness of your mind upon beholding the endless desert of Liaodong, recognize the limits of your literary talent upon beholding the ceaseless tide of the Yellow Sea, and recognize the weaknesses of your writerly craft upon beholding the sword-like peaks of Yiwulu Mountain. May you find inspiration in the palaces and towers to think and build big, and may you draw on the sound of Beijing's elegies to impart a clear timbre to your verse. . . . I, too, have walked the desert of Liaodong and gazed at the Yellow Sea . . . I felt transformed to the very core of my being. But when I returned and examined my verse and prose, I was still but my old self. I hope you achieve what I failed to do. This is my most ardent wish.³⁰

In the above farewell preface by Ch'ae Chegong 蔡濟恭 (1720-1799), what could have been viewed as a diplomatic chore is presented as an opportunity to broaden one's horizons, acquire new philosophical insight, and become a better writer. Like Yi Yonghyu, Ch'ae invokes the ideal of self-cultivation to instill in his addressee a rather more personal sense of mission.

Whereas Paek discerns in these later examples a departure from the unequivocally anti-Qing stance of most late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century farewell prefaces, I would question the extent to which the changing representations of travel indicate a positive reappraisal of the Manchu Qing. Both Yi Yonghyu's characterization of Beijing as a site of spectacle and Chae Chegong's emphasis on China's impressive geographical features work more to obscure the reality of Manchu rule than to validate it; they draw attention to the enduring scenic

³⁰ Cited in Paek Chin'u, "Yönhaeng songsö," pp. 228-229.

aspects of China, which the addressee is encouraged to enjoy in his capacity as a tourist rather than as a diplomat. While this still represents a transition from denying the Chineseness of Qing China, the change seems to have been more subtle and informed by a privatized understanding of the benefits of traveling there. The implication of such emphasis on the personal journey is also that the traveler should have something to show for himself following his trip, and the *yŏnhaengnok* may have been considered an ideal medium for doing just that.

If we turn to the motivations for writing *yŏnhaengnok* as expressed by the authors themselves, we can detect not only a strong documentary impulse but also a concern for one's projected image. Grand Prince Inp'yŏng, who traveled to Qing China four times in the 1650s, writes in his preface to the *Yŏndo kihaeng*:

The last time I made this journey, I encountered many unforeseen events and did not manage to record any of the things I saw and heard. How will anyone in the distant future be privy to these evocative scenes of the present [if nothing is written down]? This time, I have tried to spare a moment even on the busiest of days to note the weather and other happenings of interest, in addition to describing the embassy's activities in chronological detail and commenting on the natural landscape, travel itinerary, local customs, and notable sights. May the reader look kindly upon my efforts.³¹

Prince Inp'yŏng's determination to leave a record for posterity is coupled with the desire to be judged and remembered favorably. His topical choices imply an educated, but not necessarily political, readership that would ideally be curious about the official, touristic, and practical aspects of embassy travel and sympathetic to the breadth and detail of his coverage. Inp'yŏng's referring to the realities around him as "evocative scenes" (*chŏnggyŏng*) is strikingly literary, perhaps more fitting of a travel poem (*kihaengsi*) or essay on leisurely travel (*yugi*), which suggests that the

³¹ Inp'yŏng Taegun Yi Yo, *Yŏndo kihaeng*, in *Songgye chip* 5:5b-6a: 曾前往返, 適多事故, 耳聞目擊, 一未紀述. 年代既久, 則此間情景, 其誰能知. 以故行邁暇隙, 撥忙起懶, 紀陰晴之外, 又將使事本末, 逐條並列, 山川程途, 風俗景物, 率以備焉. 觀者其憐之矣乎.

vividness and cultural resonance of his representations mattered to him just as much as their factual accuracy.

Voicing similar desires and commitments but with a twist, Yi Imyŏng 李頤命 (1658-1722) explains the relative brevity of his *yŏnhaengnok* of 1720:

Kim Taeyu [Kim Ch'angŏp's courtesy name] once said that it was a pity my *yŏnhaengnok* of 1704 was so brief. I was intent on keeping a more detailed record of this next trip, but whilst on the road I happened to take a look at what Kiji had been writing. His recordkeeping was so thorough that I felt relieved of a burden. I wrote on just a few of the days and left it at that.³²

Yi Imyŏng claims that what his son Yi Kiji had written was so complete that there was little more he could add, but still, implicit in his statement is a lingering sense of obligation and self-consciousness that may have compelled him to write something, though not everything.

What Yi Imyŏng does not mention is that Kim Ch'angŏp had gone on to set a new bar for *yŏnhaengnok* writing with his *Yŏnhaeng ilgi* of 1712, which may have added to Yi's mixed feelings about writing a second *yŏnhaengnok*. Yi was evidently not alone. In what Sŏ Yumun 徐有聞 (1762-1822) has to say about Kim Ch'angŏp and his work several decades later, Kim's extensive sightseeing and recordkeeping are presented as a testament to his extraordinary courage, worldliness, and intellect:

The Chief Envoy had brought a copy of *Nogajae ilgi* with him, so I borrowed and read one book at a time on the way [here to Beijing]. I managed to read everything to the end today. I doubt anyone has seen as much as Kim Ch'angŏp did along the *yŏnhaeng* route. I am amazed by how he stayed overnight at Jueshan Temple all on his own and all the more so by how he spent days searching for the Qian Mountains. Also, he deeply regretted not seeing Lugou Bridge and the Western Hills. If he knew what few places envoys manage to visit nowadays, not to mention how neglectful I myself have been on this

³² Yi Imyŏng, *Yŏnhaeng chapchi*, in *Sojae chip* 11:40b-41a:

金大有嘗云我甲申燕行錄太草草，可恨，今行欲詳錄，道中見器也。記行甚悉，故錄數日而止，以省一勞。

trip, he would mock our utter narrow-mindedness as one for the ages.³³

Kim Ch'angö̃p achieved wide renown as a pioneer of the *yŏnhaengnok* and, in a sense, of Qing China as well. Kim himself had not preached a particular way to travel, but the popular reception of his *Yŏnhaeng ilgi*, apparently unaffected by his nonexistent political career, earned him the reputation of the model traveler: tirelessly inquisitive and wholeheartedly touristic, opening readers' eyes to a Qing China more vivid and textured than the stuff of popular belief and hearsay. His example would have been especially resonant for other similarly non-office-holding literati traveling as military aides, motivating them to capitalize on their lack of formal duties to experience more and write more; from the early eighteenth century onwards, we see military aides making up a larger proportion of the *yŏnhaengnok* authorship and building a reputation for themselves as trendsetters in both travel and travel writing habits.³⁴

Yet readers at home, too, were just as eager to gain access to the same cultural exposures and status-enhancing benefits. Kim Kyöngsŏn 金景善 (1788-1853), writing in 1832, describes the diligence with which people read *yŏnhaengnok*:

Most travelers to Beijing have written about their journey, but among them Kim Ch'angö̃p, Hong Taeyong, and Pak Chiwŏn are without a doubt the best known . . . As they have each produced an exemplary work with its own particular merits, I don't see how anyone following in their footsteps can expect to surpass them. However, they were

³³ Sŏ Yumun, *Muo Yŏnhaengnok*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip* Vol. 64, p. 82: 상사가 행중의 《노가재일기》를 가져왔거늘, 내가 길에서부터 한 권씩 빌려 보았는데, 못 다 본 것을 어제 오늘 다 보니, 북경 길에 구경을 끝까지 다함은 타인에 미칠 바 아닌 듯한지라, 그 각산사(覺山寺)에서 혼자 밤을 지내고 천산을 찾아 여러 날 애쓰던 것이 더욱 기이하되, 노구교(蘆溝橋)와 서산(西山)을 구경하지 못함을 깊이 한(恨)하는 바일러라 일컬었으니, 사신이 되어서는 비록 구경을 이같이 하고자 하나 얻지 못할 일이어니와, 나는 근년의 사행(使行) 보던 바도 또한 못 본 곳이 많으니, 노가재로 하여금 천재(千載)의 줄(拙)한 사람임을 웃으리다.

³⁴ In a letter addressed to his brother-in-law Yi Chungjon, Pak Chiwŏn, too, claims to have thought of Kim Ch'angö̃p as a role model and source of inspiration when setting out on his journey; see "Tap Yi Chungjon sŏ" in *Yŏnamjip* 2.31b.

composed at different times and elaborate on different things, making it impossible not to read one without consulting the other two; even after comparing one passage here to another there, the reader struggles to identify the essential points. This has been a common complaint among readers.³⁵

Certainly, there would have been the recreational side to reading *yŏnhaengnok*, but what the above passage makes clear is that pleasure was not the only objective.

Yŏnhaengnok were looked to for “essential” facts and truths about Qing China, and when one *yŏnhaengnok* failed to provide all the answers, readers consulted multiple *yŏnhaengnok*. The quest to “know” Qing China seems to have taken on a *de rigueur* urgency, serving both as an intellectual outlet and as a means to social recognition, a marker of cosmopolitan gentility.³⁶ To use business terms, then, Kim had done his market research and found a possible niche for himself. His *Yŏnwŏn chikchi* purports to be a one-stop source on both Qing China and the *yŏnhaengnok* masterpieces, and indeed, from start to finish, it combines personal observations and findings with long, annotated excerpts from the *Yŏnhaeng ilgi*, *Tamhŏn yŏn’gi*, and *Yŏrha ilgi*.

Unfortunately for Kim Kyŏngsŏn, however, his *Yŏnwŏn chikchi* does not seem to have attracted quite the same readership levels as its better-known predecessors and may have even fueled interest in them further. On the other hand, there is perhaps no clearer example than Kim’s deliberate crafting of the *Yŏnwŏn chikchi* into a guidebook-cum-anthology to illustrate the *yŏnhaengnok*’s development into an autonomous genre and discrete field of discursive activity. Not only were

³⁵ Kim Kyŏngsŏn, *Yŏnwŏn chikchii*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip* Vol. 70, p. 246: 適燕者多紀其行，而三家最著，稼齋金氏，湛軒洪氏，燕巖朴氏也 . . . 皆自成一家，而各擅其長，繼此而欲紀其行者，又何以加焉，但其沿革之差舛，而記載隨而燕郢，蹈襲之互避，而詳略間或逕庭，苟非遍搜旁摺，以相參互而折衷之，則鮮能得其要領，覽者多以是病之。

³⁶ The early nineteenth century also saw a revival of readerly interest in the *Gaoli tujing*, Xu Jing’s (1091-1153) account of the Xuanhe embassy to Koryŏ in 1123, which seems to indicate a general vogue for literature related to travel and identity among the Chosŏn reading public. On the reception of the *Gaoli tujing* in late Chosŏn Korea, see Chang Namwŏn, “P’ilsabon *Koryŏ tokyŏng ūi yup’o wa ūiŭi*,” *Han’guk munhwa yŏn’gu* 17 (2009), pp. 189-218.

more readers of *yŏnhaengnok* becoming authors of *yŏnhaengnok* themselves, but *yŏnhaengnok* writing was also becoming an increasingly self-conscious, self-referential exercise, informed by readerly knowledge of the *yŏnhaengnok* genre just as much as, and perhaps sometimes more than, direct observation and experience.

In sum, it would be ill-judged to underestimate the privilege and exclusivity associated with foreign travel, which appears to have taken precedence over any negative preconceptions about Qing China in unofficial understandings of the value and uses of *yŏnhaengnok*. To reiterate Ledyard's observation, the "only two ways for a Korean to see China" during the Chosŏn period were as a castaway or as a member of a diplomatic embassy;³⁷ the novelty of foreign travel would have been further reinforced by the tendency of *yŏnhaengnok* authors, in having been specially appointed or authorized to travel, to represent their journey as a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Moreover, the presumption that China under Qing rule would be different and culturally inferior to the China of former times, while making the *yŏnhaengnok* a sensitive and unseemly topic for official discourse, arguably had the opposite effect on the reading public, whose demand to know just how different the Manchus were and how China was changing provided an added impetus for *yŏnhaengnok* production.

Marion Eggert's observation that the late Chosŏn period saw an unprecedented "narrativization of travel records" lends support to the above interpretation,³⁸ insofar as the preference for prose over verse implies the need to describe, explain, and interpret anew the journey to Beijing. However, I would caution against supposing that as more *yŏnhaengnok* were produced and entered

³⁷ Ledyard, "Korean Travelers in China over Four Hundred Years, 1488-1887," pp. 2-3.

³⁸ Eggert, "A Borderline Case: Korean Travelers' Views of the Chinese Border," p. 68.

circulation, public knowledge about Qing China and the wider world grew ever more expansive and diverse. The increasing self-referentiality of *yŏnhaengnok*, noted earlier, suggests that the practices of writing and reading *yŏnhaengnok* came to operate on a shared set of meanings, rules, and expectations, in which case we may also need to consider the possibility of growing insularity, a narrowing of expressive and interpretive scope that may have accompanied the emergence of *yŏnhaengnok*-specific conventions and constructions.

Alternatively, what if the mere display of information came to suffice as a generic marker, allowing authors to situate themselves within the *yŏnhaengnok* genre simply by reproducing existing knowledge rather than adding to it? Such considerations should dissuade us from treating *yŏnhaengnok* simply as independent eyewitness accounts or as unmediated reflections of the authors' respective personalities and intellects. A review of the existing scholarship on *yŏnhaengnok*, however, reveals both these tendencies in considerable abundance.

The *Yŏnhaengnok* in Korean Studies

South Korean scholarship of *yŏnhaengnok* may have begun in earnest in the early 1960s with the publication of the *Yŏnhaengnok sŏnjip*, a collection of four early Chosŏn and twenty-six late Chosŏn travel texts compiled by the Daedong Institute of Korean Studies, but has earlier roots in the intellectual rediscovery of Pak Chiwŏn and his "novels," including those contained in the *Yŏrha ilgi*, in 1930s colonial Korea. Denuciations of Korea's recent dynastic past, a routine feature of both Korean nationalist and Japanese colonialist historiography up to the 1920s, gave way in the 1930s to historiographical reappraisals, a surge of interest in Chosŏn-period literature, and the reinterpretation of certain late Chosŏn cultural developments as

indigenous precursors to modernity. This change in the intellectual climate arose partly from the reappraisal of tradition by Korean academics who sought to distance themselves from the colonialists' modernizing rationale; the other contributing factor was that the Korean intellectual community had diversified, encompassing a new generation of Japan-educated scholars and writers who contributed to the field of *Chosŏnhak* (Korean studies) from a wider range of theoretical and political perspectives.³⁹

A major output of the 1930s renaissance in the study of Chosŏn history and literature was the redefinition of “*Sirhak*” (Practical Learning) as a distinctly Korean innovation in Confucian thought, with which Pak Chiwŏn, alongside Yu Hyŏngwŏn (1622-1673), Yi Ik (1681-1763), Hong Taeyong, Pak Chega (b. 1750), and Chŏng Yagyong (1762-1836), came to be closely associated. Equally noteworthy is Kim T'aejun's (1905-1950) *Chosŏn sosŏlsa* (History of Korean fiction), serialized in the *Tonga ilbo* in 1933 and republished in supplemented form in 1939, which was the first systematic account of traditional Korean narratives spanning all of recorded history irrespective of their language of composition. Here, Kim identified Pak Chiwŏn as a “talented writer” (*munjangga*) and “novelist” (*sosŏlga*) whose prose works deserved to be treated as “modern novels” (*kŭndae sosŏl*), given their complete and realistic portrayal of a feudal society in decline.⁴⁰ Kim's emphasis on realism as a defining characteristic of Pak Chiwŏn's prose narratives reflects a strong inclination to find Korean equivalents for the stages of literary development in the Western progress to modernity, going so far as to conflate “*sosŏl*” in the traditional sense with modern Western concepts of fiction. Crucially, in not drawing such a clear

³⁹ Keongil Kim, “Intellectual Context of Korean Studies in Colonial Korea,” pp. 61-63.

⁴⁰ Cited in Kim Nami, “20-segi ch'o chungban 'Yŏnam' e taehan t'amgu wa Chosŏnhak ūi chi'p'yŏng,” p. 320.

distinction between realistic representation and factual representation, Kim may have opened up the possibility of treating the *Yŏrha ilgi* as a direct reflection of both Pak Chiwŏn's interiority and his historical environment.

The year 1937 marked the two-hundredth anniversary of Pak Chiwŏn's birth. Hong Kimun (1903-1992), linguist and editor of the *Chosŏn ilbo*, wrote a commemorative article praising Pak's realistic foresight as a reformist thinker and patriotic self-confidence as a writer; Hong's only regret was that Pak had not broken free of Ming loyalist ideology.⁴¹ In subsequent years, characterizations of Pak Chiwŏn as a realist, reformist, and patriot were synthesized into overwhelmingly positive evaluations of Pak's historical significance. In his 1941 analysis of the *Yŏrha ilgi*, Kim Sŏkhyŏng (1915-1996) deemed Pak Chiwŏn an early advocate of mercantilism and harbinger of post-feudalism; Kim Sŏngch'il (1913-1951) went one step further in his 1949 study of the *Yŏrha ilgi* to suggest that Pak Chiwŏn had apprehended the ideals of capitalist civil society and communicated them through his "revolutionary" writings.⁴² These two readings of the *Yŏrha ilgi* not only represent a radical reevaluation of the traditional *sosŏl*, but they are also among the earliest examples of using *yŏnhaengnok* for biographical and historical reconstruction under the overlapping headings of *Sirhak* and protomodernity.

In South Korea, the period from the late 1950s to the early 1990s has been designated the "first phase" of *yŏnhaengnok* scholarship, which saw the building of an accessible *yŏnhaengnok* corpus and a concentration of scholarly interest in the travel prose and poetry of Pak Chiwŏn, Hong Taeyong, Pak Chega, Yi Tŏngmu, and Yu Tŭkkong, *Sirhak* scholars who came to be further classified as the *Pukhakp'a*

⁴¹ Song Hyŏkki, "Yŏnam munhak ūi palgyŏn kwa sirhak ūi chichŏksangsangnyŏk," pp. 471-472.

⁴² Kim Nami, "20-segi ch'o chungban 'Yŏnam' e taehan t'amgu wa Chosŏnhak ūi chi'p'yŏng," pp. 322-325.

(School of Northern Learning) for their advocacy of importing Qing material culture and Western science.⁴³ The period also saw the disciplinary subdivision of Korean studies, resulting in the near total confinement of *yŏnhaengnok* scholarship to the domain of *hanmunhak* (Sino-Korean literature) specialists.⁴⁴ This is not to suggest that *yŏnhaengnok* were only subjected to literary criticism; much to the contrary, *hanmunhak* scholars were by far the most actively engaged in both literary and historicist studies of *yŏnhaengnok*, in turn reinforcing the *hanmunhak* discipline's sensitivity to (if not preoccupation with) the authorial intent, extra-literary implications, and historiographical value of *hanmun* literary texts.⁴⁵

Despite a growing awareness that *yŏnhaengnok* could be useful to the study of Sino-Korean relations,⁴⁶ the “Sirhak boom” that prevailed in South Korean academia from the late 1950s through the 1980s served to establish *yŏnhaengnok* as primary sources on late Chosŏn intellectuals and intellectual history—and not much else.⁴⁷ Professional historians writing about Chosŏn-Qing relations put the most stock in official records such as the *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* (Veritable records of the Chosŏn dynasty), *Sŭngjŏngwŏn ilgi* (Daily records of the Royal Secretariat), *T'ongmun'gwan*

⁴³ Jin Bingmin, “Yŏnhaengnok yŏn'gusa e taehan t'ongsijŏk koch'al,” pp. 395-396.

⁴⁴ Notable studies from this period include: Ch'ŏn Kwanu, “Hong Taeyong ūi sirhak sasang,” *Mulli taehakpo* 6.2 (1958); Yi Kawŏn, *Yŏnam sosŏl yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Ŭryu munhwasa, 1965); Yi Usŏng, “Sirhakhp'a ūi munhak kwa sahoegwan,” *Han'guk sasang taegye* (1973), pp. 141-159; Yu Kiryong, “Tanhŏn Hong Taeyong ūi sasang kwa munhakkwan,” *Ōmunhak* (1976), pp. 125-142; Yi Kawŏn, “Cho-Ch'ŏng munhakchŏk kyohwan: churo Yu Tŭkkong kwa Ch'ŏngsa wa ūi kwan'gye,” *Han'guk hanmunhak yŏn'gu* 5 (1980), pp. 221-227; Kim T'aejun, *Hong Taeyong kwa ku'ui sidae* (Seoul: Ilchisa, 1982); Yu Ponghak, “Pukhak sasang ūi hyŏngsŏng kwa kŭ sŏnggyŏk – Tanhŏn Hong Taeyong kwa Yŏnam Pak Chiwŏn ūl chungsim ũro,” *Han'guk saron* 8 (1982): pp. 183-246; So Chaeyŏng, “Ŭlbyŏng yŏnhaengnok ūi han yŏn'gu,” *Sungsil ōmun* 1 (1984): pp. 5-33; Yun Kihong, “Yi Tŏngmu, Pak Chega ūi munhak sasang,” *Yŏlsang kojŏn yŏn'gu* 2 (1989), pp. 27-112.

⁴⁵ *Hanmunhak* scholar Ch'oe Sinho criticizes the discipline's historical complicity with ethnic nationalism and excessive orientation towards reconstructing a history of ideas, which in his view has stunted the development of the discipline's own epistemes and methodologies. See Ch'oe Sinho, “Hanmunhak” in *Han'guk minjok taebaek kwa sajŏn*, 1998 [<http://encykorea.aks.ac.kr>].

⁴⁶ For example, in his explanatory preface to the 1974 edition of the *Yŏnhaengnok sŏnjip*, Hwang Wŏn'gu stresses the potential of *yŏnhaengnok* to open up new lines of inquiry into Chosŏn Korea's diplomatic and cultural interactions with China.

⁴⁷ For a review of the existing literature on *sirhak*, see Kim T'ae'yŏng, “Sirhak yŏn'gu ūi ōje wa o'nŭl,” *Han'guksa simin kangjwa* 48 (2011), pp. 1-19.

chi (Records of the Office of Interpreters), *Tongmun hwigo* (Compendium of diplomatic documents), *Pibyōnsa tūngnok* (Records of the Border Defense Council) and *Man'gi yoram* (Handbook of government affairs); in the very rare instance they drew on a *yōnhaengnok*, they did so for supplementary anecdotal evidence or for descriptive details that would add vividness and interest to their subject matter.⁴⁸ In this respect, Hae-jong Chun, whose article in *The Chinese World Order* I discuss in detail in the next chapter, was an anomaly for his time: his use of multiple *yōnhaengnok* for qualitative and quantitative information on Chosŏn-Qing tributary trade was unprecedented, but the topic and findings of his research proved incompatible with the nationalist and pro-capitalist leanings of his South Korean contemporaries and immediate successors.

Meanwhile, outside of South Korea, *yōnhaengnok* received the attention of a handful of European and Anglo-American scholars. In 1970, Dieter Eikemeier published a book-length study of the political ideas expressed in the *Yōrha ilgi*, titled *Elemente im politischen Denken des Yon'am Pak Chiwon (1737-1805): Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der kulturellen Beziehungen zwischen China und Korea* (Elements in the political thought of Yōnam Pak Chiwŏn (1737-1805): a contribution to the history of cultural exchange between China and Korea). Rather than examine the *Yōrha ilgi* in its entirety, Eikemeier focused on Pak Chiwŏn's brush talks with Qing scholar Wang Minhao, treating the two men's discussions of autocratic rule and the Qing's legitimacy as windows onto their political and philosophical worlds. In the final analysis, Eikemeier concluded that Pak Chiwŏn had indeed been a patriotic yet scientifically oriented thinker whose methods of inquiry were arguably as empirically

⁴⁸ See, for example, Kang Man'gil's reference to the *Yōrha ilgi* in "Kaesŏng sangin yŏn'gu," *Han'guksa yŏn'gu* 8 (1972), p. 11.

rigorous as those of the West, but also that the absence of systematic exposition in the brush talks may be taken to reflect significant East-West differences in logic and rhetoric.⁴⁹

Richard Rutt reworked and published James Gale's partial English translation of Kim Ch'angö's *Yonhaeng ilgi* in 1974, and in that same year, Gari Ledyard introduced the *Yonhaengnok sönjip* to Anglophone audiences, insisting on the collection's "great value for the study of Chinese history."⁵⁰ Ledyard wrote another article on *yonhaengnok* in 1982, this time focusing on Hong Taeyong and discussing his *Tamhön yön'gi* in biographical and historical context. As a detailed introduction to the figure of Hong Taeyong, the *Tamhön yön'gi*'s contents, and discrepancies between extant editions, this later article may strike present readers as more descriptive than analytical, but its relative novelty and informative value in the Anglophone context are worth acknowledging.

The second phase of *yonhaengnok* scholarship (early 1990s to present) has benefited from increasing scholarly dialogue across disciplinary and national borders, as well as from a greater availability of *yonhaengnok* texts in print and digital formats. There has been a growing body of historical research on late Chosön foreign relations utilizing *yonhaengnok* as documentary sources, as exemplified by the works of Ch'oe Soja, Ku Pömjin, Yi Ch'ölsöng, Kim Sönggün, Qiu Ruizhong, Chen Shangsheng, Wang Zhenzhong, Fuma Susumu, and Marion Eggert.⁵¹ For South Korean and

⁴⁹ For a more detailed summary of Eikemeier's book in English, see Young Kun Kim, Review of *Elemente im politischen Denken des Yon'am Pak Chiwon (1737-1805)* by Dieter Eikemeier, *The Journal of Asian Studies* 35.1 (Nov. 1975), pp. 154-155. In his review, Kim rightly points out the informal and convivial setting in which the brush talks would have taken place; treating brush talks as no different than treatises or personal manifestos would be historically inaccurate and methodologically flawed.

⁵⁰ Ledyard, "Korean Travelers in China over Four hundred Years, 1488-1887," p. 1.

⁵¹ Ch'oe Soja, "Chosön hu'gi chinbojök chisig'in tül üi Chungguk pangmun kwa kyoyu," *Myöng Ch'öng sa yön'gu* 23 (2005): pp. 1-32; Ku Pömjin, "Chosön üi Kölllyung ch'ilsun chinha t'üksa wa Yörha ilgi," *Inmun nonch'ong* 70 (2013): pp. 3-60; Yi Ch'ölsöng, *Chosön hugi tae Ch'öng muyöksa yön'gu* (Seoul: Kukhak charyowön, 2000); Kim Sönggün, *Cho-Ch'öng we'gyo kwan'gye pyönhwa*

Chinese scholars, the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between the Republic of Korea and the People's Republic of China in 1992 marked an important turning point, creating new opportunities for knowledge exchange and opening up lines of inquiry that were previously infeasible due to insufficient source materials and inhospitable political conditions.⁵² With the lifting of restrictions on travel to mainland China, for example, *hanmunhak* scholars such as So Chaeyŏng, Kim T'aejun, and Cho Kyuik took an active interest in the *yŏnhaeng* route, which they were able to travel and study firsthand,⁵³ while the topics of cross-cultural friendship and intellectual exchange, maybe in having acquired a contemporary relevance, has received steady attention from *hanmunhak* scholars and historians over the past decade.⁵⁴

In 2001, Im Kijung's longstanding efforts in *yŏnhaengnok* excavation and compilation reached a milestone in the form of the 100-volume *Yŏnhaengnok*

yŏn'gu (Seoul: Han'guk haksul chŏngbo, 2010); Qiu Ruizhong, "『昭顯沈陽日記』與明清決戰 – 『燕行錄』的史料价值之二 [The *Simyang ilgi* and the decisive battle between the Ming and Qing – the value of *yŏnhaengnok* as historical source material, part two]," *Chunggugŏ munhak nonjip* 32 (2005): pp. 447-464; Chen Shangsheng, "明清時代的朝鮮使節與中國記聞 – 兼論‘朝天錄’與‘燕行錄’的資料價值 [Chosŏn embassies during the Ming and Qing and Chinese unofficial records – the value of both *choch'ŏnnok* and *yŏnhaengnok* as historical source material]," *Haijiaoshi yanjiu* 2 (2001): pp. 38-55; Wang Zhenzhong, "Chosŏn *yŏnhaeng* sasin kwa 18 segi Pukkyŏng Yurich'ang," in *18, 19 segi Tong Asia ūi munhwa kŏjŏm Pukkyŏng Yurich'ang* (Seoul: Minsogwŏn, 2013), pp.125-165; Fuma Susumu, *Yŏnhaengsa wa t'ongsinsa* (Trans. Ha Chŏngsik, Seoul: Sinsŏwŏn, 2008); "Marion Eggert, "A Borderline Case: Korean Travelers' Views of the Chinese Border," in Sabine Dabringhaus and Roderich Ptak, eds. *China and Her Neighbours: Borders, Visions of the Other, Foreign Policy 10th to 19th Century* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1997), pp. 49-78.

⁵² Jin Bingmin, "Yŏnhaengnok *yŏn'gusa* e taehan t'ongsijŏk koch'al," p. 396.

⁵³ See So Chaeyŏng, Kim T'aejun, Cho Kyuik, Kim Hyŏnmi, Kim Hyomin, and Kim Irhwan, *Yŏnhaeng nojŏng, kŭ konan kwa kkaedarŭm ūi kil* (Seoul: Pagjŏng, 2004).

⁵⁴ For example, Chu Sŭngt'aek, "Kang Wi ūi *yŏnhaengsi* e nat'anan Han-Chung chisigin ūi kyoru yangsang," *Han'guk munhwa yŏn'gu* 11 (2006): pp. 7-43; Sin Ikch'ŏl, "Yŏnhaengnok ūl t'onghae pon 18-segi chŏnban Han-Chung sŏjŏk kyoryu ūi yangsang," *T'aedong kojŏn yŏn'gu* 25 (2009): 227-264; Pu Yusŏp, "Yŏnhaengnok ūl t'onghae pon Kangong nyŏn kan Chungguk sojŏk yuip e taehayŏ," *Uri hanmunkhoe* 22 (2010): 269-308; Kwŏn Chŏngwŏn, "Chŏktok ūl t'onghan Ch'ongdae Hagin kwa ūi haksul kyoryu: Yi Tŏngmu wa Pak Chega rŭl chungsim ūro," *Tongyang hanmunhak yŏn'gu* 32 (2011): 103-128; Hŏ Kyŏngjin, "Hŏnsongnok ūl t'onghae pon Kang Siyŏng kwa Ch'ŏngjo munsa tŭrŭi munhwa kyoryu," *Yŏlsang kojŏn yŏn'gu* 33 (2011): pp. 35-63; Xu Yi, "18 segi Cho-Ch'ŏng munin kyoryu changso nollyak," *Hanmun hakpo* 30 (2014): pp. 397-453.

chŏnjip,⁵⁵ and around this same time, the Institute for the Translation of Korean Classics digitized the texts originally published in the *Yŏnhaengnok sŏnjip* and made them available on the Database of Korean Classics. It is unclear just how much the improved access to *yŏnhaengnok* texts has stimulated interest in *yŏnhaengnok* outside of East Asia, however, given the relatively few references to *yŏnhaengnok*, much less studies about them, in contemporary Western scholarship on Chosŏn Korea and Qing China.⁵⁶ That said, if there is a common thread running through the majority of scholarly treatments of *yŏnhaengnok*, regardless of the language and place of publication, it is the tendency to draw selectively on individual *yŏnhaengnok* based on extra-literary criteria and in pursuit of extra-literary lines of inquiry. As a result, we have at our disposal an impressive body of knowledge about individual travelers and their respective historical circumstances, however narrowly or broadly conceived, whereas we have yet to achieve a similarly nuanced understanding of the *yŏnhaengnok* as an evolving genre, its relation to other discursive treatments of Qing China, and its possible role in engendering popular views and habits that are not always readily detectable in official sources.

To be sure, there are obvious difficulties in making more than tentative comments on the *yŏnhaengnok* corpus as a whole, but at the very least, diachronic analyses of *yŏnhaengnok* on a selected topic or theme should become more commonplace now that we have searchable databases to shortcut the research process. At present, the only book-length studies using large samples of

⁵⁵ Im Kijung's *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip*, containing facsimile reproductions of 371 travel texts, was published in 2001.

⁵⁶ In English-language scholarship, it is still not uncommon for *yŏnhaengnok* texts to be cited from secondary sources. See, for example, Christopher A. Reed, "Dukes and Nobles Above, Scholars Below: Beijing's Old Booksellers' District Liulichang, 1769-1941—and Its Influence on 20th-Century Shanghai's Book Trade," *East Asian Publishing and Society* 5.1 (2015): pp. 74-128, where *yŏnhaengnok* excerpts are reproduced from a Japanese-language article.

yŏnhaengnok are Im Kijung's *Yŏnhaengnok yŏn'gu* (A study of *yŏnhaengnok*)⁵⁷ and Kim Hyŏnmi's *18-segi yŏnhaengnok ūi chŏn'gae wa t'ŭksŏng* (The development and key characteristics of eighteenth-century *yŏnhaengnok*).⁵⁸ Im Kijung offers a model for *yŏnhaengnok* scholarship on an eclectic range of topics: poems exchanged between Chosŏn travelers and Chinese locals from the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries; theatrical, musical, and magic performances attended by Chosŏn embassies; traditional dress codes by country, period, and official rank; and the mutual perceptions of Chosŏn Koreans and Qing Manchus. Through such broad coverage, Im may have sought to demonstrate the usefulness of *yŏnhaengnok* to a wide scholarly audience, whereas his conscious effort to work with a sample of at least twenty-five primary texts represents a clear departure from the norm of author-centered case studies that has prevailed in *yŏnhaengnok* scholarship.

Kim Hyŏnmi's study, the other rare example of diachronic, corpus-based research, draws on an impressive total of forty-four *yŏnhaengnok* texts to reconstruct the evolution of the *yŏnhaengnok* in the eighteenth century. Kim justifies her choice to focus only on *yŏnhaengnok* written in *hanmun* prose based on the observation that *hanmun* prose was the most preferred medium for *yŏnhaengnok* writing in the eighteenth century.⁵⁹ Her methodology purports to be "literary" first and foremost, having taken inspiration from Susan Bassnett's treatment of early modern European travel accounts as literary products rather than as documentary sources;⁶⁰ thus, it consists of identifying the dominant formal and thematic features of early-, mid-, and

⁵⁷ Im Kijung, *Yŏnhaengnok yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Iljisa, 2002).

⁵⁸ Kim Hyŏnmi, *18-segi yŏnhaengnok ūi chŏn'gae wa t'ŭksŏng* (Seoul: Hyeon, 2007).

⁵⁹ Kim Hyŏnmi, *18-segi yŏnhaengnok ūi chŏn'gae wa t'ŭksŏng*, p. 26; Marion Eggert, "A Borderline Case," pp. 67-68.

⁶⁰ Kim Hyŏnmi, *18-segi yŏnhaengnok ūi chŏn'gae wa t'ŭksŏng*, pp. 27-28.

late-eighteenth century *yŏnhaengnok* and interpreting them against the backdrop of contemporaneous changes in the political and intellectual climate of Chosŏn Korea.

Kim's book, as the most comprehensive treatment to date of the eighteenth-century *yŏnhaengnok*'s generic conventions and historical background, may appear to leave no stone unturned, but her consistent privileging of extra-literary contexts over literary ones in discussions of *yŏnhaengnok* production does strike an uneasy balance with her tendency to discuss issues of reception and impact only in literary, primarily authorial, terms: how one author drew on earlier works to fashion his work, which in turn served as a model for subsequent authors, and so on. In other words, there is a tacit subordination of the literary to the political, intellectual, and ideological realms of social life, implying a largely deterministic view of *yŏnhaengnok* as products, and not so much as productive agents, of their times.⁶¹

Such quibbles as these are perhaps inevitable, considering the specificity of Kim's research motivations and objectives. As Kim herself explains in the concluding chapter, her research began with "the question of what might best exemplify the ideological and literary developments of the eighteenth century, the so-called era of 'autonomous modernity'"; having identified the *yŏnhaengnok* as just such an example, she made it her task to explain how the genre evolved to eventually become the ideal vehicle for the *Pukhakp'a*'s progressive ideas and literary experimentalism.⁶² There was a clear end point, then, to the trajectory Kim intended to delineate, in light of which her treatment of the early eighteenth century as the starting point of her analysis can seem all the more artificial and arbitrary.

⁶¹ Kim's repeated characterization of the *yŏnhaengnok* as a "literary product" (*munhakchŏk sŏnggwamul*) or "form of literary expression" (*munhakchŏk p'yohyŏnmul*)

⁶² Kim Hyŏnmi, *18-segi yŏnhaengnok ūi chŏn'gae wa t'ŭksŏng*, p. 287.

Here again, as in most of the earlier works mentioned in this literature review, the historical significance accorded to Pak Chiwŏn and his *Pukhak* compatriots has managed to set the agenda of *yŏnhaengnok* scholarship. On the other hand, Kim Hyŏnmi's attempt to engage in a more general, cross-cultural discussion of travel writing, while amounting to little more than the occasional borrowing of Western concepts, is much less typical and points to new critical possibilities that I have taken seriously and try to do some justice in this dissertation. As I explain in the following section, most of the critical terms I employ in my close readings of *yŏnhaengnok* are those which have enjoyed wide currency in studies of travel writing to date. I am aware that most of these studies concern European and American travel writing, and their role in bringing to light the complicity of travel accounts in imperial projects is not something I wish to replicate.⁶³ Rather, through my use of Western critical vocabulary to study a non-Western subject, I hope to test the limits of travel writing theory when taken outside of its usual postcolonial scholarly context.

Critical Terms, Methods, and Aims

I have chosen to use the term “late Chosŏn travel writing” instead of “*yŏnhaengnok*” in the title of this dissertation for two reasons: firstly, to reflect my analytical focus on the mediations entailed in the process of representing cross-cultural encounters and, secondly, to highlight the larger global context of travel writing in which *yŏnhaengnok* deserve to be studied and discussed. In thinking of

⁶³ The study of travel writing itself is a relatively new field, initially motivated by the theories and methods put forth in Edward Said's *Orientalism*. The vast majority of scholarly discussions to date, therefore, concern Western travelers, colonial pasts and/or postcolonial presents, all of which invoke fundamentally unequal and antagonistic power relations. More recent theorists, such as Susan Bassnett and Debbie Lisle, have formulated ideas that would appear less bound by the East/West and colonizer/colonized binaries, but the application of such ideas has still remained largely within the same Eurocentric realm.

yŏnhaengnok as travel writing in the active, verbal sense, I privilege the relationship between author and reader as the source of meaning and meaningfulness: what any author does with respect to content and form presumes a reader with certain expectations, prior knowledge, and limits of comprehension, and it is this tacit interdependence that takes on a heightened role in texts seeking to represent peoples and places geographically or conceptually distant from the authors' and implied readers' own.

To explain the mediatedness of travel writing, James Duncan and Derek Gregory draw parallels with translation:

Just as textual translation cannot capture all of the symbolic connotations of the alliterative sounds of words, the translation of one place into the cultural idiom of another loses some of the symbolic loading of the place for its inhabitants and replaces it with other symbolic values. This means that translation entails both losses and gains, and as descriptions move from one place to another so they circulate in what we have called a 'space in-between.' This space of translation is neither neutral nor innocent: it is shot through with relations of power and of desire.⁶⁴

Duncan and Gregory extend this analogy to characterize travel writing as producing either a "domesticating" or a "foreignizing" effect on how the reader apprehends the represented object.⁶⁵ A travel description could employ culturally familiar terms and imagery, thereby "bringing the author home," or it could recreate the experience of alienness and alienation, thereby "sending the reader abroad."⁶⁶ In both instances, there is an element of negotiation and compromise—between perception and interpretation, self-expression and intelligibility—that the concept of authorial intent alone cannot encompass and may even work to obscure. In the case of *yŏnhaengnok*, the phenomenon of readers becoming authors themselves not only makes this

⁶⁴ Duncan and Gregory, "Introduction," *Writes of Passage: Reading Travel Writing*, pp. 4-5.

⁶⁵ Duncan and Gregory, "Introduction," p. 5.

⁶⁶ Duncan and Gregory, "Introduction," p. 5.

dynamic more explicit, but also compels us to consider the *yŏnhaengnok* genre itself as a framing context on which *yŏnhaengnok* texts relied for meaning.

It is worth noting, however, that the terms “foreignizing” and “domesticating” themselves are value-laden and have had specific uses in the field of translation studies. As part of the “cultural turn” in translation theory and analysis during the 1980s and 1990s, the domesticating method came to be associated with the imperial ethnocentrism of the West;⁶⁷ meanwhile, in the field of postcolonial studies, the concept of “othering” took on a comparable significance and has been used to problematize Western representations of the non-West. At first glance, “domesticating” and “othering” can seem semantically contradictory and ideologically incompatible, but this discrepancy arises from the different foci and units of analysis adopted by translation and postcolonial theorists: critics of the domesticating method take issue with the dominance accorded to the target language and culture in and through textual translation, whereas the concept of othering refers to the construction of alterity in and through representations and discourses more broadly. In the context of Western imperialism, then, domesticating gestures reflect and perpetuate assumptions of Western hegemony while othering gestures lend support to the assumed inferiority and subordination of the non-West.

For our purposes, the concept of othering holds an immediate appeal, owing to its demonstrated transferability across space and time,⁶⁸ whereas the concepts of domesticating and foreignizing risk losing much of their explanatory power when

⁶⁷ Lawrence Venuti, in *The Translator's Invisibility* (London: Routledge, 1995), was first to argue against the domesticating method on ethical grounds, calling it a form of “ethnocentrism, racism, cultural narcissism, and imperialism” (p. 20).

⁶⁸ The verb “othering” was first used in Gayatri Spivak’s 1985 article, “The Rani of Sirmur: An Essay in Reading the Archives,” to highlight the constructedness of the Third World woman. Since then, the term has been widely used to analyze cultural representations and collective identity formation across various disciplines, including literary studies, area studies, international relations, and political science.

divorced from the contexts of linguistic translation and imperial travel. The choice of most *yŏnhaengnok* authors to write in *hanmun*, for example, cannot be taken to reflect either a domesticating tendency or a foreignizing one, unless we can somehow establish a reliable distinction between Chosŏn and Qing uses of the Sinitic script. The sociopolitical, cultural, and rhetorical meanings that Chosŏn Koreans attached to *hanmun* resist generalization even at the best of times, and here is no exception.⁶⁹

Likewise, apart from a brief period following the Ming-Qing transition when the idea of a “northern expedition” (*pukpŏl*) may have been pursued in earnest, the presumption of difference in late Chosŏn perceptions of Qing China—no matter how condescending, resentful, or ill-informed—rarely went hand in hand with the desire for actual political or cultural domination. What we do sometimes encounter in *yŏnhaengnok* is the symbolic reclaiming of former Koguryŏ territory, enacted through the authors’ historical musings and descriptions of an unchanging natural landscape just beyond the Chosŏn border, and this is perhaps one of the few instances where the postcolonial conception of “domesticating” would not be out of place. Such are the particularities of the Chosŏn case that the travel-writing-as-translation analogy may help us to appreciate, but also against which the analogy reveals its limitations.

In this dissertation, I draw primarily on the concepts of “othering,” “bordering,” and “self-fashioning” to analyze the patterns of self-identification and differentiation that emerge across *yŏnhaengnok* texts and to explore their implications for understanding the *yŏnhaengnok* as a written genre, discursive practice, and agent of cultural production (as opposed to, simply, a cultural product). The insights thus

⁶⁹ For a helpful discussion of canonicity and national identity with respect to *hanmun* literature, see Gregory N. Evon, “Chinese Contexts, Korean Realities: The Politics of Literary Genre in Late Chosŏn Korea (1725-186),” *East Asian History* 32/33 (2008): pp. 57-82.

gained, in turn, will allow us to draw some distinction between the experience and representation of travel and better delineate the role of the latter in late Chosŏn identity formation and maintenance.

To structure my analyses, I have found it helpful to treat representations of places separately from those of peoples and cultures. This is despite the considerable semantic overlap between “othering” and “bordering,” as exemplified by the statement Pak Chiwŏn attributes to his personal attendant, Changbok, in the *Yŏrha ilgi*: “China is a barbaric country.”⁷⁰ If an act of othering gives expression to ideas of difference and hierarchy in ethnocultural terms, an act of bordering may be said to do so in spatial terms. More precisely, I refer to Henk van Houtum and Ton van Naerssen’s critical definition:

Bordering processes do not begin or stop at demarcation lines in space. Borders do not represent a fixed point in space or time, rather they symbolize a social practice of spatial differentiation. Semantically, the word “borders” unjustly assumes that places are fixed in space and time, and should rather be understood in terms of bordering, as an ongoing strategic effort to make a difference in space among movements of people, money, or products. In democratic societies borders are not “made from above,” rather they represent an implicit, often taken-for-granted, agreement among the majority of people.⁷¹

Although Van Houtum and Van Naerssen attribute the social construction and reproduction of borders to democratic societies, their conception of bordering as an “ongoing strategic effort” resonates with both the literary substance and discursive function of the *yŏnhaengnok*. As a representation of a journey, the *yŏnhaengnok* recreates the traveler’s shifting surroundings and his simultaneously shifting positionality; as a form of discourse, the *yŏnhaengnok* works to produce meaningful

⁷⁰ Pak Chiwŏn, *Yŏrha ilgi*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip* Vol. 53, p. 280: 顧謂張福曰，使汝往生中國何如，對曰，中國胡也。

⁷¹ Van Houtum and Van Naerssen, “Bordering,” p. 126.

geographies in constant negotiation with the shared assumptions, concerns, and interests of the *yŏnhaengnok* interpretive community.

This last point about the interaction between *yŏnhaengnok* production and reception brings me to the final key concept in my analyses of *yŏnhaengnok*: self-fashioning. Coined by Stephen Greenblatt in his 1980 study of English Renaissance literature and elite culture, the term “self-fashioning” refers to the construction and performance of one’s selfhood in dialectical relation with dominant sociopolitical structures and aesthetic norms. Greenblatt’s new historicist reading of Thomas More, William Tyndale, Thomas Wyatt, Edmund Spenser, Christopher Marlowe, and William Shakespeare challenges these literary figures’ conventional characterization as creative geniuses, in linking their seemingly autonomous, individualistic literary personae to institutions and practices within the broader culture of sixteenth-century English elites that had made the very notion of the individual intelligible and communicable.

Based on a comparison of acts of self-fashioning within literary texts and those found in contemporaneous extra-literary contexts, Greenblatt makes three interrelated observations: “that self-fashioning occurs at the point of encounter between an authority and an alien, that what is produced in this encounter partakes of both the authority and the alien that is marked for attack, and hence that any achieved identity always contains within itself the signs of its own subversion or loss.”⁷² In other words, Greenblatt conceives of self-fashioning as a relational activity, entailing deference to a higher power or ideology (e.g. God, the Bible, the Catholic Church, Tudor orthodoxy), with which the self identifies, and rejection of something perceived as hostile and antithetical to the self (e.g. heresy, sexual wantonness,

⁷² Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, p. 9.

savagery); as such, self-fashioning always implies the loss of true personal autonomy at least to some degree.

As should be obvious now, there are some substantial resonances between Greenblatt's work and what I seek to achieve in this dissertation. At the most superficial level, Greenblatt's Renaissance literary figures are my Kim Ch'angö, Hong Taeyong, and Pak Chiwön, whose perceived personalities and historical significance have tended to intrude upon and dictate *yöhaengnok* scholarship. More importantly, I share with Greenblatt certain methodological assumptions regarding what might constitute the ideal approach to interpreting and using literary sources.

Greenblatt sums up his position as follows:

Literature functions within this system [of cultural meanings] in three interlocking ways: as a manifestation of the concrete behavior of its particular author, as itself the expression of the codes by which behavior is shaped, and as a reflection upon those codes. The interpretive practice that I have attempted to exemplify in the essays that follow must concern itself with all three of these functions. If interpretation limits itself to the behavior of the author, it becomes literary biography (in either a conventionally historical or psychoanalytic mode) and risks losing a sense of the larger networks of meaning in which both the author and his works participate. If, alternatively, literature is viewed exclusively as the expression of social rules and instructions, it risks being absorbed entirely into an ideological superstructure. . . . Finally, if literature is seen only as a detached reflection upon the prevailing behavioral codes, a view from a safe distance, we drastically diminish our grasp of art's concrete functions in relation to individuals and to institutions, both of which shrink into an obligatory "historical background" that adds little to our understanding. . . . Self-fashioning then becomes a subject only for sociology, literature for literary criticism.⁷³

I agree with Greenblatt on the need to consider different levels of context if we are to adequately grasp the situatedness and significance of a literary text; especially, in light of the tendencies exhibited in *yöhaengnok* scholarship, I share his concerns about

⁷³ Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, pp. 3-4.

the proneness of literary criticism to amounting to no more than a biographical exercise or a commentary on the historical world outside of the text.

I would point out, however, that I diverge from Greenblatt in at least two significant ways. Firstly, whereas Greenblatt concerns himself primarily with the self-fashioning of authors in relation to their lived environment, I am also interested in the intertextual self-fashioning of authors as readers of *yŏnhaengnok*, and secondly, in keeping with my working conception of the *yŏnhaengnok* as a discrete genre and form of discourse, I make a conscious effort to keep case studies of individual *yŏnhaengnok* authors to a minimum.

Introduction to the Chapters

Chapter One, “Sinocentrism and Its Discontents,” reviews the existing Korean and English-language literature on Chosŏn-Qing relations, focusing on how the task of characterizing Chosŏn Korea’s tributary position and explaining its relevance to late Chosŏn identity formation has been taken up over the course of the twentieth century and in more recent years. I go on to suggest how conceptualizing the *yŏnhaengnok* as a genre and form of discourse may allow us to develop an alternative perspective from which to consider the place of “China” in late Chosŏn worldviews. Chapter Two, “Naming the Other and Other Others,” puts the previous chapter’s argument into practice by conducting a diachronic analysis of ethnic naming and stereotyping in the Chosŏn official discourse on foreign relations and in the unofficial discourse constituted by *yŏnhaengnok*. I highlight the latter’s relative non-use of the pejorative ethnonym “ho” to refer to the Qing Manchus; using this distinctive feature as a starting point, I attempt to further characterize the *yŏnhaengnok* in terms of its generic conventions and discursive effects.

Subsequent chapters focus on specific topics around which *yŏnhaengnok* constructed and reproduced knowledge of peoples and places. Chapter Three, “The Other Sex,” takes as its point of departure the exclusively male composition of Chosŏn embassies. Drawing on relevant theories of travel writing, I explore the ways in which *yŏnhaengnok* authors relied on gender to frame their ethnographic inquiries and constructions of otherness. Chapter Four, “The Ŭiju-Fenghuang Border Region as Ritualized Space,” engages with and builds on Marion Eggert’s study of changes in Chosŏn travelers’ perceptions of crossing the Sino-Korean border. Chapter Five, “Books and Mirrors,” traces the assimilation and crystallization of Liulichang, Beijing’s book and antique sellers’ district, in the late Chosŏn geographical imagination. Official records show that Liulichang was a place of strategic importance to the Chosŏn court in the late eighteenth century; what we can gather from *yŏnhaengnok*, on the other hand, is that Liulichang was as much an imagined space for self-fashioning as it was a physical place frequented by late Chosŏn travelers.

Chapter One

Sinocentrism and Its Discontents: Chosŏn-Qing Relations in Twentieth- and Twenty-First Century Historiography

Some fifty years ago, in September 1965, scholars from several countries convened at Endicott House in Dedham, Massachusetts, to discuss and lay the groundwork for what would take shape as a milestone publication in the study of East Asian diplomatic history: *The Chinese World Order*.⁷⁴ A common interest in China and expertise in a particular aspect of Sino-foreign relations had brought each of the participants to the conference, but steering at the helm was John K. Fairbank, whose research efforts in the preceding two decades had been geared towards understanding nineteenth-century China's response to the West in light of the constitutive beliefs, norms, and practices of "traditional Chinese" foreign policy. His conceptualization of imperial China's foreign relations as a "tributary system" was attracting considerable attention in his native United States, so the time would have been ripe for such an international collaborative enterprise: Fairbank would present his then latest elaborations and the other contributors would test their applicability to specific cases. The conference is said to have enabled "the making of many comparisons" and "agreement on many definitions of terms,"⁷⁵ but for our purposes, one point of consensus among the participants deserves particular attention: the characterization of Chosŏn Korea as a "model tributary."

The publication and wide readership of *The Chinese World Order* breathed new life into the idea, as iterated by Fairbank, that "Korea provided the primary

⁷⁴ Fairbank, ed., *The Chinese World Order*, p. vi.

⁷⁵ Fairbank, ed., *The Chinese World Order*, p. vi.

example, almost the ideal model, of tributary relations,”⁷⁶ in needing only “cultural and ideological means” to be drawn into the Chinese imperial sphere of influence.⁷⁷ From the standpoint of Korean historiography, similar iterations had had their heyday in Korean nationalist and Japanese colonial discourses of the early half of the twentieth century; in this period of post-Korean War nation building and postcolonial critique, most South Korean historians had become wary of such characterizations that served to paint pre-colonial Korea as wholly dependent on China and incapable of forging its own path to modern nationhood.

Be that as it may, we should perhaps not be so quick to dismiss Hae-jong Chun’s paper in *The Chinese World Order*, on which Fairbank had based his famous assertion, as a simple rehashing of outmoded insights for an unsuspecting Anglophone audience. In “Sino-Korean Tributary Relations in the Ch’ing Period,” Chun not only attempts to put to rest a theory that was then in vogue with his South Korean contemporaries, but also offers a more nuanced take than Fairbank does on what I will henceforth refer to as the “model tributary thesis.” Such considerations have seldom figured in critical appraisals of his work, however, and Chun is perhaps better known today for simultaneously putting Chosŏn diplomatic history on the scholarly map and perpetuating a stereotype of sorts about Chosŏn Korea.⁷⁸

My concern with the possibly misguided reception of Chun’s work relates to my wider interest in how the task of describing the Chosŏn-Qing relationship and

⁷⁶ Fairbank, “A Preliminary Framework,” in *The Chinese World Order*, p. 16

⁷⁷ Fairbank, “A Preliminary Framework,” p. 13

⁷⁸ Stereotype or not, the model tributary hypothesis does have some basis in “fact”—for example, in the frequency of Chosŏn tribute missions to the Ming and Qing courts, in the use of Chosŏn Korea as an example of correct tributary protocol in Qing ritual texts, and in the remarkable longevity of the Chosŏn dynasty. All these phenomena would suggest some form of bandwagoning with China, and so the model tributary hypothesis has enjoyed a certain tenacity despite also inviting criticism. Chun is identified as having popularized the model tributary hypothesis in Ku Pŏmjŏn, “Tong Asia kukche chilso ui pyondong kwa Chosŏn Ch’ong kwan’gye,” p. 303, and Kirk Larsen, “Comforting Fictions,” p. 235.

explaining its relevance to late Chosŏn identity has been taken up throughout the twentieth century and in more recent years. The present chapter reviews the existing literature on this theme, focusing primarily on Korean and English-language historiography in the twentieth century. Given the increasingly tenuous boundaries between propaganda, academia, and journalism the further we go back in time, I use “historiography” in a broad sense to include in this review popular discourses during the early half of the twentieth century that drew on Korea’s historical participation in tributary relations to make statements about the premodern Korean character and condition. In so doing, I illustrate how the model tributary thesis and its earlier equivalents have fallen in and out of favor not only in response to a growing body of conflicting evidence, but also as a consequence of the pressures of modern nationalism and the recurring uneasiness with Sinocentrism in Korean studies.

“Sinocentrism”—whether understood as a belief in Chinese centrality and superiority that may have characterized the premodern Korean worldview, or as a historiographical perspective that foregrounds Chinese subjectivities, agency, and influence—has long been a contentious issue for historians of Chosŏn Korea, owing to its perceived incompatibility with the concept of an autonomous Chosŏn identity and with the writing of a “proper” history of Chosŏn diplomacy, politics, and culture. Towards the end of this chapter, I turn to the now dominant view that a distinctively Chosŏn version of Sinocentrism, *Chosŏn chungghwa chuŭi*, informed the self-perceptions and worldview of Chosŏn Koreans following the Ming-Qing transition. *Chosŏn chungghwa chuŭi* (hereafter shortened to *Chosŏn chungghwa*) refers to the discursive construction of an alternative imaginary to the Qing-centered world order on which basis late Chosŏn Koreans identified themselves as the only legitimate preservers and transmitters of Confucian civilization. Some historians have gone so

far as to conflate “civilization” and “nation” in their interpretation of this epistemic shift, treating both the persistence of Confucian orthodoxy and the growth of nativism in the political and intellectual culture of the late Chosŏn period as manifestations of an emergent nationalism.

Is *Chosŏn chunghwa* something that can be detected in *yŏnhaengnok*? Based on perceptible changes in the informative content of *yŏnhaengnok*, it has been suggested that *Chosŏn chunghwa* manifested as parochialism, having a constraining effect on knowledge production about Qing China and the wider world, but that this intellectual apathy gave way to curiosity and more expansive attitudes from the mid-eighteenth century onwards.⁷⁹ On the other hand, considerations of how *yŏnhaengnok* authors communicated their content can significantly complicate this picture, as we are confronted with multiple frames of reference, or “codes,” in any given text that resist integration into a single, coherent view of the world and self. In the final section of this chapter, I propose conceptualizing the *yŏnhaengnok* as a genre and form of discourse to better interrogate the links between travelers’ experiences, subjectivities, and representations.

***Sadae* as Sinocentrism and the De-centering of China**

As noted earlier, the model tributary thesis was not an altogether novel characterization of Chosŏn Korea, having comparable antecedents in early Korean nationalist and Japanese colonial historiography. In the Korean context, a radical reinterpretation of *sadae*, supplanting older interpretations in political and popular

⁷⁹ For example, see Jung, “Meeting the World through Eighteenth-Century Yŏnhaeng,” pp. 59-63; Roux, “The Catholic Experience of Chosŏn Envoys in Beijing,” pp 17-18; and Yi Ch’ŏlhŭi, “Yŏnhaeng yŏjŏng esŏ hyŏngsŏng toen t’alchunghwa ŭi tubŏnjjae kyŏngno,” *Taedong munhwa yŏn’gu* 90 (2015): pp. 7-32.

discourse by the late 1890s, was an important precedent. "Sadae," or "serving the great," was a term used throughout the Chosŏn period and earlier to refer to the policy of ritual subordination adopted by the tributary state towards the suzerain state. Michael Robinson has suggested that its connotation in traditional Chosŏn usage was "neutral,"⁸⁰ but I am inclined to disagree: the use of "sadae" must have carried certain historical and ideological implications, considering that it appears more prevalently in the *Sillok* records for the early half of the Chosŏn period, in reference to the Chosŏn court's diplomatic conduct towards Ming China, than for the latter half.⁸¹ My guess is that in late Chosŏn usage, "sadae" had rather positive connotations, implying a willing tributary and a legitimate suzerain (as in the then idealized Chosŏn-Ming relationship), but by the same token, the term's applicability to Chosŏn-Qing relations may have been perceived by Chosŏn elites as limited—that is, until the Japanese emerged victorious from the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895 and Chosŏn Korea found itself no longer a formal tributary of the Qing.

Recognizing the fragility of Chosŏn Korea's newfound "independence" in a world arena dominated by competing imperialist powers, reform-minded Chosŏn government officials and intellectuals came together in 1896 to form the *Tongnip Hyŏphoe* (Independence Club), an organization that sought to safeguard Chosŏn independence by strengthening the country from within. The Independence Club's activities included, among others: publishing the first ever Korean vernacular newspaper, the *Tongnip sinmun* (The Independent); holding public debates on policy matters; lobbying for increased political participation of the populace; and replacing

⁸⁰ Robinson, "Nationalism and the Korean Tradition, 1896-1920," p. 39.

⁸¹ The occurrence of "sadae" in the *Sillok* for the longest reigns during the early Chosŏn period (Sejong (1418-1450), Songjong (1469-1494), Chungjong (1506-1544), and Sŏnjo (1552-1608)) is up to several times more prevalent than in the longest reigns during the late Chosŏn period (Sukchong, Yŏngjo, Chŏngjo).

monuments of Korea's tributary past with those of a self-reliant future.⁸² In the Club's political discussions and newspaper editorials, China proved the bigger talking point than either Japan or Russia. In particular, *sadae* was conceptualized into a type of mentality (i.e., *sadae chuŭi*) and was used habitually as a pejorative shorthand for Korea's long history of diplomatic and cultural interactions with China.⁸³ Equated with toadyism, cultural dependence, and blind deference to Neo-Confucian ideals and institutions, *sadae* came to denote Sinocentrism in a most negative and far-reaching sense; it represented a shackled past from which Korea needed liberating first, if true "civilization" (*munmyŏng*) and "enlightenment" (*kaehwa*), the most sought-after ideals of the day, were to be realized.⁸⁴

Even if the Independence Club itself was very short-lived, formally disbanding in 1898, its promotion of national strengthening on multiple fronts—the political, academic, and ideological—and use of the newspaper as a dissemination vehicle laid the foundation for a burgeoning public sphere and the rise of ethnic nationalism in the years leading up to Korea's colonization by Japan. Most representative of the politico-intellectual climate of the time was the Patriotic Enlightenment Movement (*aeguk kyemong undong*), where the newly expanded and stigmatized conception of *sadae* continued to inform approaches to interpreting and evaluating Korea's historical past. With the signing of the Japan-Korea Protectorate Treaty of 1905, which did not bode well for Korea's sovereignty, it had become all the more imperative in the eyes of intellectuals and educators active in the Patriotic Enlightenment Movement to boost the morale and national consciousness of the Korean people; to such ends, these early nationalists turned once more to history and

⁸² Van Lieu, "The Nation, the People, and the Possibilities of the Post-National," pp. 49-50.

⁸³ Robinson, "Nationalism and the Korean Tradition, 1896-1920," p. 40; Schmid, *Korea Between Empires, 1895-1919*, pp. 60-61.

⁸⁴ Schmid, *Korea Between Empires, 1895-1919*, pp. 102-103.

sought to reconstruct a national past that would inspire in Koreans a sense of national identity and pride.

The writing of a Korean national history unfettered by the Confucian norms and dynastic concerns of earlier histories was pioneered by Sin Ch'aeho (1880-1936) and Pak Ŭnsik (1859-1926), whose own preoccupations were with arguing a strong case for the uniqueness of the Korean people and the importance of preserving it during such precarious times.⁸⁵ Rather than a wholesale rejection of all things traditional, therefore, what Sin and Pak initiated in the protectorate years was the search for quintessentially Korean (or defiantly Korean) historical figures and cultural forms that had held out against Chinese power and influence.⁸⁶ Koreanness was thus defined in contradistinction to Chineseness, through examples of resistance and difference, and was presented as something that had existed all along, even if often obscured in official historiography. This idea of an enduring, ethnically and spiritually distinct Korean people (*minjok*), in turn, would serve as the premise for arguments such as Pak Ŭnsik's: that as long as the collective spirit of the nation (*kukhon*) remained strong and present, the governing body of the nation (*kukpaek*) would soon be recovered from foreign control.⁸⁷ Likewise, historiographical efforts undertaken in the 1920s and 1930s by the likes of Ch'oe Namsŏn 崔南善 (1890-1957), An Hwak 安廓 (1886-1946), Chŏng Inbo 鄭寅普 (1892-1950), An Chaehong 安在鴻 (1891-1965), and Mun Ilp'yŏng 文一平 (1888-1939) traced the supposedly

⁸⁵ Robinson, *Korea's Twentieth-Century Odyssey*, pp. 27-28; Shin, *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea*, pp. 38-39

⁸⁶ Sin wrote biographies of the Koguryŏ general Ŭlchi Mundŏk and Chosŏn Admiral Yi Sunsin, highlighting their tenacity and patriotic spirit, so as to provide Korean youth with heroes to look up to and emulate. See Robinson, "National Identity and the Thought of Sin Ch'aeho," p. 134.

⁸⁷ Shin, *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea*, p. 38.

unbroken lineage of the Korean people back to ancient, even prehistoric, times and situated early Korea at the center of the East Asian cultural sphere.⁸⁸

The Patriotic Enlightenment Movement's project of fostering a strong national identity in the popular consciousness was also actively pursued in the linguistic domain, most notably by the linguist Chu Sigyŏng 周時經 (1876-1914), who promoted the adoption of *han 'gul* as the national script. To Chu, *han 'gŭl* was not only a uniquely Korean invention, but also a manifestation of Korea's "natural" distinctiveness and capacity for self-government. In an allusion to King Sejong's preface to the *Hunmin chŏngŭm*, but infused with his own circular kind of logic, he asserted:

On this planet, land is naturally divided and groups of people living in these areas make and use a language appropriate to the local sounds prevalent in this clime. Moreover, they make a script that fits the sounds of their language. In this way, the existence of a special language and script in one nation is certainly a sign that this country is naturally a self-governing nation.⁸⁹

Clearly, Chu saw nothing natural about the legitimacy and prestige accorded to classical Chinese throughout Korea's recorded history, but more crucially, what his attempt to naturalize Korea's claim to independence helps to illustrate is that the construction of a Korean national identity through historical revisionism was not confined to a particular discipline, medium, or sector. Furthermore, the historiographical rediscovery of uniquely Korean achievements, traditions, and symbols did not significantly alter the prevailing view of Korea's former tributary status as a national embarrassment, because it provided the necessary antithesis to the autonomy, progress, and modernity envisioned for Korea's future.

⁸⁸ Xu, *Reconstructing Ancient Korean History*, pp. 103-106; Shin, *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea*, pp. 51-54.

⁸⁹ Cited in Schmid, "Decentering the 'Middle Kingdom'," p. 92.

In a 1920 editorial piece titled “A Strike to the Head of the Ming Impersonator” (*Ka-Myōngin tusang e ilbong* 假明人 頭上에 一棒), Kwōn Tōkkyu 權憲奎 (1890-1950), a former student of Chu Sigyōng, launched a sensational attack on the Ming loyalism of late Chosōn ruling elites. According to Kwōn, these “slaves of Chinese ideology” who enshrined and worshipped Ming emperors had egregiously misplaced their allegiance:

Instead of applying the teachings of loyalty and filial piety to the benefit of their own land and people, they did so in the service of strangers to whom they had no relation whatsoever. Filthy cow skulls like these, even a dog would not care to eat.⁹⁰

Kwōn’s critique could be read as yet another, run-of-the-mill expression of the stigma attached to *sadae*-cum-Sinocentrism, but when it appeared in the *Tonga Ilbo* (East Asia Daily), one of the few available platforms for Korean nationalist discourse during the colonial period, it managed to cause an uproar within a certain segment of the newspaper’s readership. The *Tonga ilbo*’s formal response to the onslaught of written complaints, which was reprinted in three subsequent issues, reveals what exactly the readers had found so problematic: the editorial in question had only to do with one specific brand of Confucians, the newspaper explained, as opposed to Confucians or Confucianism in general.⁹¹ Kwōn’s attack on Ming loyalism had not been the sticking point, then, but rather his denunciation of Confucianism as a *Chinese* ideology, which ran counter to both the traditional view of Confucianism as a universal ethic and newer conceptions of Confucianism as a potential “national religion” for Koreans.⁹²

⁹⁰ Cited in U Kyōngsōp, “Chosōn chunghwa chuūi e taehan haksōlsajok kōmt’o,” p. 239.

⁹¹ Kūm Chang’ae, “Yi Pyōnghōn ūi pigongnon e taehan panbak kwa minjokjuūijōk yōksa insik,” p. 9, n.18.

⁹² To us, on the other hand, what should stand out is Kwōn’s implicit understanding of the qualitative difference between Chosōn-Ming and Chosōn-Qing relations. His criticism of Ming loyalists does not necessarily imply a complete alignment of intent and action in the Chosōn court’s dealings with the

In the early years of the Japanese occupation, the colonial government had sought to legitimize its rule by tapping into the Confucian institutions and values at the heart of traditional Korean politics and society; as Kiri Paramore notes, through their sponsorship of Confucian village schools, academies, and shrines, the Japanese colonialists were especially successful in gaining the support of major Korean Confucian organizations and rural elites.⁹³ Yet, not all pro-Confucian Koreans were supportive of the colonial regime: there were also those such as Chang Chiyŏn (1864-1921) and Kim Taegyŏng (1850-1927) who had been active in the Patriotic Enlightenment Movement and were uncompromisingly anti-colonial, and it was individuals like these who tended to take special umbrage at anti-Confucian polemics in the press and lash out publicly. In their rebuttals, they attributed the demise of the Chosŏn dynasty to a failure on the part of Chosŏn ruling elites to fully comprehend the Confucian Way and its application to changing circumstances; Confucianism itself had not diminished in relevance as an epistemic and moral resource for Koreans and represented a much needed counterweight to over-Westernization.⁹⁴ However much the general Korean populace may have tacitly sympathized with this view, Christianity already enjoyed a reputation within intellectual and activist circles as being most compatible with modernization and best representative of the colonial resistance, given its history of persecution in Chosŏn Korea and continued suppression by the Japanese government.⁹⁵ Consequently, actual efforts to found a

Qing; rather, the willing subservience associated with *sadae* is more clearly placed in the Chosŏn-Ming relationship and in the commemoration thereof during the late Chosŏn period. In this respect, Kwon's assessment comes closest to resembling Hae-jong Chun's in *The Chinese World Order*, a point I take up later in the next section.

⁹³ Paramore, *Japanese Confucianism: A Cultural History*, pp. 162-163.

⁹⁴ Kŭm Chang'ae, "Yi Pyŏnghŏn ui pigongnon e taehan panbak kwa minjokchuŭijŏk yŏksa insik," pp. 7-10.

⁹⁵ Grayson, "A Quarter-Millennium of Christianity in Korea," pp. 10-17; Cho Sungtaek, "The Historiography of Modern Korean Buddhism," pp. 57-58.

Confucian religion were few and quick to lose steam under accusations of being insufficiently modern and politically naïve.⁹⁶

On the other hand, it should be pointed out that the same nationalist school of historians who were by and large unapologetically anti-Confucian faced difficulties fully disassociating themselves from the colonizing project as well, having relied on the same concepts of heteronomy and stagnation as the Japanese colonialists to stigmatize much of Korea's dynastic past. This may be why, ironically enough, they embarked on yet another re-reading of Chosŏn history and were among the first to appropriate and popularize the term *Sirhak* in the 1930s. In his 1931 work *Chosŏn yŏksa*, Ch'oe Namsŏn identified a new intellectual trend in the late Chosŏn period that laid emphasis on evidence-based research and the practical welfare of the people, which he called *Sirhak*.⁹⁷ Choe's new use of the term, whose earlier meanings had been more ambiguous, soon gained wide acceptance among his scholarly compatriots, and by 1934, the concept of a *Sirhakp'a*, or "Sirhak school," was also posited in support of the theory that there had been an important intellectual turn towards practicality, accuracy, and national pride in the aftermath of the Imjin War and Manchu invasions.⁹⁸

In 1935, Mun Ilp'yŏng asserted that *Sirhak* was a "new style of Confucianism" that any scholar of Chosŏn intellectual history would be remiss to ignore.⁹⁹ Mun's appeal did not go unheard: studies of the *Sirhak* movement mushroomed in the 1950s and 1960s, as part of a general effort to correct the perceived distortions of Japanese colonialist historiography and present a more

⁹⁶ Eggert, "Pak Ũnsik: On Renewing Confucianism (Korea, 1909)," pp. 381-382; Kŭm Changt'ae, "Yi Pyŏnghŏn ũi pigongnon e taehan panbak kwa minjokjuŭijŏk yŏksa insik," pp. 26-27.

⁹⁷ Baker, "The Use and Abuse of the Sirhak Label," p. 190.

⁹⁸ Baker, "The Use and Abuse of the Sirhak Label," pp. 186-190.

⁹⁹ Baker, "The Use and Abuse of the Sirhak Label," pp. 190-191.

nuanced and progressive, albeit no less politically motivated, picture of premodern Korea. It was in such an atmosphere that Hae-jong Chun began writing about China and premodern Sino-Korean relations for audiences at home and abroad, from a self-consciously postcolonial yet somewhat unconventional perspective.

The Chinese World Order and the Semi-Accidental Legacy of Hae-jong Chun

Hae-jong Chun begins “Sino-Korean Tributary Relations in the Ch’ing Period” by explaining the basic premise of his paper:

Tributary relations with China had developed from the earliest stages of Korean history, and by the early Ch’ing period they were highly systematized. Korea was the model tributary, and during the Ch’ing era official Sino-Korean relations, mainly concerned with the sending and receiving of embassies and the conduct of trade between the two countries, provided an example of the relations expected or desired between China and other peripheral states.¹⁰⁰

Chun invokes the idea of a tributary system, but his application of it soon begins to show divergences from Fairbank’s. He goes on to explain that “although the *Ch’ing-Korean* system was largely an elaboration of the Ming system, this paper concentrates on the Ch’ing in order to present a detailed picture of how the system actually operated”;¹⁰¹ this implies that he considered Chosŏn-Qing tributary relations, rather than the sum of all tributary relations maintained by China, as systematic. Chun’s express interest in “official” Sino-Korean relations also imposes certain limits on the model tributary thesis: in referring solely to outward behavior, he brackets the question of the Chosŏn side’s ideational motivations and actual sentiments towards Qing China. In other words, “model tributary” in this context cannot be taken to mean that Chosŏn Korea had fully internalized tributary ideology and considered it a

¹⁰⁰ Chun, “Sino-Korean Tributary Relations in the Ch’ing Period,” p. 90.

¹⁰¹ Chun, “Sino-Korean Tributary Relations in the Ch’ing Period,” p. 90.

primary source of motivation, but rather that there was a certain predictability to Chosŏn-Qing interactions that the Qing deemed favorable and sought to achieve in its relations with other states. This distinction is important, because it sets the stage for Chun's final analysis of the various possible motivations for Chosŏn Korea's participation in tributary relations.

The first half of Chun's paper details how Chosŏn-Qing tributary relations were maintained in practice, and the second half focuses on the economic aspects, which Chun deems crucial "if we are to understand and evaluate the whole relationship."¹⁰² He explores "whether the tributary relationship was profitable" and "whether or how far the tributary system was maintained for economic purposes" from the standpoint of the Chosŏn and Qing rulers, in which case any profits earned from private and illegal trade become largely irrelevant.¹⁰³ Central to his inquiry are the issues of government spending and reciprocity between the Chosŏn and Qing courts—that is, how much one party would typically spend to uphold its side of the tributary relationship and to what extent the outgoings were matched or compensated by the other party. In Chun's estimation, the Chosŏn court was the bigger loser in a mutually costly arrangement. Using ample statistical data drawn from a range of Chosŏn and Qing materials, Chun demonstrates not only that the Chosŏn court consistently spent more and gave more than did the Qing, but also that any net financial gain to the Qing court would have been negligible at best, given the hefty costs of hosting Chosŏn embassies and sending its own embassies to Korea.

The considerable attention Chun devotes to the economic cost of tributary relations is explained in a later autobiographical essay, "The Path I Took to Study

¹⁰² Chun, "Sino-Korean Tributary Relations in the Ch'ing Period," p. 102.

¹⁰³ Chun, "Sino-Korean Tributary Relations in the Ch'ing Period," p. 102.

History” (*Na ūi yŏksa yŏn’gu ūi kil*). Chun explains that a description of Sino-Korean tributary relations in Claude Charles Dallet’s *History of the Korean Church* (*Histoire de l’Eglise de Corée*), first published in 1874, had given rise to the popular theory that the Chosŏn court had pursued tributary relations for economic reasons, for which he found no other supporting evidence; he was determined to put the theory to rest out of a sense of responsibility to his profession as a historian and to the intellectual future of his country, even if his intentions tended to be misconstrued by his contemporaries as unpatriotic and even Marxist.¹⁰⁴ In the final analysis of his paper in *The Chinese World Order*, he maintains that there could not have been a “sound economic reason” for maintaining tributary relations, but only a political one:

China only wanted Korea to remain gentle and ritualistic, not to say obedient, and Korea was so; so long as Korea sent tribute, received imperial patents concerning matters of adoption, marriage, and the like in the royal family and remained peaceful both at home and toward China, the Ch’ing did not interfere in Korea’s internal affairs.¹⁰⁵

Furthermore, Chun tries to clarify the connection between the tributary system and the flourishing of cultural activity in late Chosŏn Korea, suggesting that there was only a weak causal relation:

The cultural efflorescence of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in Korea, which the Koreans of that period enjoyed and of which twentieth-century Koreans are still proud, was much indebted to the scholars who had been in China as embassy members. Granting that this cultural development deserves to be appreciated, it was still the achievement of the Korean scholars, not of the tributary system itself. Instead, the system hindered a general cultural influx from China, and from other countries as well. If the two countries had left their borders open and had freely communicated with each other, Korea might have enjoyed Chinese culture much more widely, and thus Korea might also have become much more sinicized.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Chun Hae-Jong, “Na ūi yŏksa yŏn’gu ūi kil,” pp. 143-144.

¹⁰⁵ Chun, “Sino-Korean Tributary Relations in the Ch’ing Period,” p. 110.

¹⁰⁶ Chun, “Sino-Korean Tributary Relations in the Ch’ing Period,” p. 110.

In so saying, Chun diverges from Fairbank's claim that it had been part of the Qing design to attract Chosŏn Korea by cultural means, but leaves unclear whether the importation of Qing culture had been a major incentive for the Chosŏn court to participate in tributary relations. Based on his suggestion here that the Chosŏn court had played a part in limiting the Sinicization of Chosŏn Koreans and, some lines later, that "for the rulers and upper class of Korea, the tributary relationship with China helped to preserve their status and power," we can surmise that in Chun's view, the selective cultural borrowings and appropriations from Qing China functioned primarily in service of Chosŏn elite interests.

On methodological grounds, there is much to praise about Chun's work. The seemingly effortless familiarity with Korean and Chinese sources, the tireless compilations of data, and the careful extrapolations made therefrom all attest to his competence as a historian. On the other hand, the particular argument enabled by such rigorous research and analysis could not have elicited a very enthusiastic response in the intellectual climate that prevailed in South Korea in the 1960s. If anything, Chun's findings on tribute trade would have been perceived as inconvenient and, in a sense, counterproductive. As mentioned earlier, Chun was writing his paper at a time when a concerted effort among Korean historians was underway to overturn colonialist portrayals of pre-colonial Korea as a backward, stagnant country while avoiding the pitfalls of earlier nationalist historiography.¹⁰⁷ The search for evidence of progress and autonomy in Chosŏn prior to Japanese interference, which in the following decade would give rise to various internal development and "sprouts of capitalism" theories, had also carried over into the study

¹⁰⁷ For a detailed discussion of the stagnation theory in Korean historiography, see Owen Miller, "The Idea of Stagnation in Korean Historiography from Fukuda Tokuzo to the New Right," *Korean Histories* 2.1 (2010), pp. 3-12.

of Sino-Korean relations and set an overtly nationalist agenda.¹⁰⁸ At the top of this agenda was the task of reinterpreting *sadae* so as to endow Chosŏn with agency vis-à-vis the Ming and Qing. If it could be argued that the Chosŏn court had actively sought tributary relations for political and material benefits, then *sadae* would be completely stripped of its former associations with heteronomy and could be recast as an instrumentally rational activity.

Needless to say, Chun's work would have thrown a spanner in the works, undermining any vague or unsupported claims made previously about the economic advantages of being a tributary. Had Chun not put forth such a convincing argument, or done so on an international platform (a rare achievement for a Korean scholar at the time), his work could have attracted harsher critics. Instead, the very things Chun had marginalized from his discussion—private and illegal trade—went on to preoccupy scholarship on the economic dimension of Chosŏn-Qing relations. In other words, historiographical efforts to recast Chosŏn Korea as an active, autonomous subject, even in its economic interactions with China, took a new trajectory, serving to divert attention away from the unpleasant implications of tribute trade.

Throughout the 1970s, research into the interpreter- and merchant-led trade conducted on the coattails of Chosŏn tribute missions was taken up in earnest. In 1970, Yu Sŭngju 柳承宙 first drew attention to the mercantile character of Chosŏn embassy interpreters, who acted as middlemen in selling and procuring goods on behalf of the embassy and were also given private trading privileges in lieu of a salary.¹⁰⁹ From the late seventeenth century onwards, as more and more private

¹⁰⁸ Kye, "Chosŏn sidae Tong Asia chilsŏ wa hanjung kwan'gye," pp. 133-134.

¹⁰⁹ Yu Sŭngju, "Chosŏn hugi tae-Ch'ŏng muyŏk ūi chŏn'gae kwajŏng – 17-18 segi puyŏnyŏkkwan ūi muyŏk hwaltong ūl chungsim ūro," *Paeksan hakpo* 8 (1970): pp. 325-401.

merchants managed to bribe their way into traveling with the embassies all the way to Beijing, fierce competition ensued between the private merchants and interpreters; this, Yu proposed, had the overall *positive* effect of spurring the development of Korea's ginseng, mining, and transport sectors.

Continuing in a similar vein, Kang Man'gil 姜萬吉 wrote on the trade activities of Kaesŏng merchants prior to the signing of the Kanghwa Treaty and opening of ports in 1876, highlighting their capitalistic tendencies and intermediary role in the ginseng-silk-silver trade network that connected China, Korea, and Japan.¹¹⁰ By the eighteenth century, Kaesŏng merchants had cornered the market for wild ginseng, textiles, animal skins, and *kat* (horsehair hats traditionally worn by *yangban* men), which they sold throughout the country and, in collaboration with Ŭiju merchants, exported to China in exchange for winter fur hats, silk, needles, and horsehair. Meanwhile, the Kaesŏng merchants also worked with Tongnae merchants to sell Korean ginseng and Chinese silk to Japan, and much of the silver they imported from Japan was resold in their trade with China.

Part of the capital Kaesŏng merchants accumulated from these lucrative transactions went into the domestic cultivation of ginseng—in particular, a new “red ginseng” (*hongsam*) that would become a hot trade item and thereby allow Sino-Korean trade to continue when the supply of Japanese silver eventually declined.¹¹¹ In wielding control over the distribution and production of goods, then, Kaesŏng merchants quite arguably merited characterization as capitalists.¹¹² Kang's study provided only a brief sketch of the involvement of the Chosŏn government in this matrix, but that was somewhat besides the point; Kang had opened the possibility of

¹¹⁰ Kang Man'gil, “Kaesŏng sangin yŏn'gu,” *Hanguksa yŏn'gu* 8 (1972), pp. 613-636.

¹¹¹ Kang Man'gil, “Kaesŏng sangin yŏn'gu,” pp. 630-634.

¹¹² Kang Man'gil, “Kaesŏng sangin yŏn'gu,” p. 636.

arguing that at the regional and private levels, at least, late Chosŏn Koreans not only profited from contact with China but also sowed the first seeds of modernization before Korea experienced any significant outside interference.

Subsequently, O Sŏng 吳星 put out a number of works seeking to describe how the ginseng trade operated through official and unofficial channels. In so doing, he shed more light on the relationship between government intervention and the development of private trade in its legal and illegal forms. One thing to note, however, is that O took the rational, capitalistic orientation of ginseng traders to be a given rather than a point to be argued and established. In his earliest study, O noted the Chosŏn government's unsuccessful attempts during the post-Imjin years at limiting the sale of ginseng to licensed traders.¹¹³ Operating under a government-issued license meant complying with trade restrictions and paying taxes on the gains, which would have made capital accumulation difficult and thus would not have appealed to merchants; under such conditions, the ginseng black market could have only grown in scale and efficiency. Given that most of the merchants convicted of smuggling ginseng hailed from Songdo (Kaesŏng), Kwansŏ, Tongnae, and the capital, O proposed that there must have been well-established trafficking networks in these areas.¹¹⁴

As O had limited this study to the ginseng trade in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, he later expanded his research to address the introduction of *hongsam* in Chosŏn-Qing trade in the nineteenth century and the activities of private merchants dealing in timber, rice, and salt. However, when his next substantial study finally came off the press in 1989,¹¹⁵ the scholarly tide had turned away from

¹¹³ O Sŏng, "Chosŏn hugi 'samsang' e taehan il koch'al," *Hanguk hakpo* 5.4 (1979): pp. 60-87.

¹¹⁴ O Sŏng, "Chosŏn hugi 'samsang' e taehan il koch'al," pp. 80-81.

¹¹⁵ O Sŏng, *Chosŏn hugi sang'in yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1989).

the earlier preoccupation with tracing the origins of Korean capitalism. As one book reviewer pointed out, O's work was behind the times, failing to reflect the efforts undertaken in the *minjung* era of the 1980s to overcome the limitations of capitalist sprouts theories and to take advantage of newly discovered source material, such as magistrate records, private account books, and documents of sale.¹¹⁶ There was a new emphasis on the use of sources that fell outside the domain of official discourse, on data-driven analysis, and on a more specialized understanding of the different economic actors and distribution structures at work in the late Chosŏn economy, which, for a time, encouraged economic historians in South Korea to direct their gazes inward, to domestic trade and commerce, and concern themselves less with foreign trade.

Meanwhile, scholarship of Chosŏn-Qing relations began to center on King Hyojong's northern expedition policy (*pukpŏl*) and the *Pukhak* movement, exploring what the Manchu takeover meant for Chosŏn elites over the short and long terms.¹¹⁷ This marked shift in the 1980s from the economic to the political and cultural dimensions of Chosŏn-Qing relations invites parallels with the cultural-constructivist turn concurrently underway in scholarship of early modern Europe and America, whereby issues of identity, subjectivity, and agency increasingly took priority over materialist questions in historical inquiries. In the Korean context, the new wave of revisionist scholarship on late Chosŏn political culture engendered new assertions of Chosŏn autonomy and difference vis-à-vis Qing China.

Among Anglophone historians of Korea and China, on the other hand, Chun's paper in *The Chinese World Order* enjoyed wide acceptance well into the 2000s as

¹¹⁶ Kim Tongch'ŏl, "O Sŏng chŏ 'Chosŏn hugi sang'in yŏn'gu – 17-8 segi insam, mokchae, migok, yŏmsang ūi hwaltong ūl chungsim ūro'" *Yŏksa hakpo* 124 (1989): pp. 207-217.

¹¹⁷ Kye, "Chosŏn sidae Tong Asia chilsŏ wa Han-Chung kwan'gye," p. 160.

the most authoritative, comprehensive, and accessible overview of Chosŏn-Qing relations.¹¹⁸ As such, it has been routinely and often uncritically referenced in English-language studies dealing directly or indirectly with Sino-Korean relations; it has been quoted even in works seeking to dismantle Fairbank's tributary system and Sinicization theories, without ending up on the same receiving end of criticism and reevaluation.¹¹⁹ To be sure, this disparity in reception highlights the relative newness of Korean studies as a global discipline, as well as the fact that Fairbank's most vocal critics have been specialists of China and Inner Asia rather than Korea. Only in the past several years or so have we seen a growing number of Anglophone scholars take up Chosŏn diplomatic history as their primary subject; up until then, Chosŏn Korea's image as the most Sinicized and ritually impeccable tributary, as presented in Qing court records and re-presented in *The Chinese World Order*, was more likely to be taken at face value than actively questioned.

Not so incidentally, then, direct references and challenges to the model tributary thesis have also been more numerous in recent English-language scholarship than in concurrent Korean scholarship, precipitated by concerns over the longstanding neglect of the Chosŏn side of the story and the resulting dominance of "Sinocentric English language histories of tribute relations."¹²⁰ Sinocentrism, now identified as a historiographical faux pas, has motivated Anglophone historians to give equal or more weight to Chosŏn sources and to highlight contentious moments in Chosŏn-Qing relations where the "not-so-model" intents and actions of the Chosŏn

¹¹⁸ See, for example, Angela Schottenhammer, "Characteristics of Qing China's Maritime Trade Politics," in *Trading Networks in Early Modern East Asia* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010), p. 111, and Keith Pratt and Richard Rutt, *Korea: A Historical and Cultural Dictionary* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2013), p. 483. Hae-jong Chun is even hailed as "the leading Korean author on this subject [of Sino-Korean tributary relations]" in Donald R. Clark, "Sino-Korean Tributary Relations under the Ming," *The Cambridge History of China Vol. 8* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 989.

¹¹⁹ A prime example would be James L. Hevia's *Cherishing Men from Afar: Qing Guest Ritual and the Macartney Embassy of 1793* (Duke University Press, 1995); see, especially, p. 50.

¹²⁰ Schmid, "Tributary Relations and the Qing-Chosŏn Frontier on Mount Paektu," p. 131.

court become most apparent. As I discuss in the next section, this new counter-trend, characterized by an emphasis on Realpolitik and the treatment of *sadae* as instrumental to, rather than constitutive of, Chosŏn interests, has become discernible in English-language studies of Chosŏn-Ming relations as well, which indirectly attests to the extent of the model tributary thesis's influence on modern Anglophone conceptions of Chosŏn Korea vis-à-vis China.

Not So “Model” After All: Challenges to the Model Tributary Thesis

In his study of Chosŏn-Qing tensions over border demarcation, Andre Schmid takes direct issue with the disproportionate attention given to Qing sources in existing scholarly accounts of Chosŏn-Qing relations:

My strategy is to examine a particular moment in the conduct of tributary relations in a particular locality so as to problematize any attempt to understand tributary relations that is based solely on studies coming out of Beijing. By comparing the rival versions of these moments, as produced in Beijing and Seoul, respectively, it becomes clear that the historical record produced in Beijing functioned to fit Chosŏn into the category of loyal tribute while glossing over any instances—murder, recalcitrant behaviour, and the like—that may have ruffled the assumptions underlying the use of tributary ideology to support imperial legitimacy. It is upon these central Qing documents, I argue, that our understanding of tributary relations has largely been developed—a process that has oversimplified our understanding of the Qing's relations with this “ideal” tributary and has insinuated a type of Sinocentrism into our understanding of the relationship between Beijing and Seoul. The view from the south of the Yalu River offers a very different vision of empire. The ideal tributary was perhaps not so ideal after all.¹²¹

As a corrective to the Sinocentrism consciously or unconsciously inherited by Anglophone scholars, Schmid not only gives due consideration to Chosŏn sources, but also, in the interest of expediency, focuses on a historical moment where there

¹²¹ Schmid, “Tributary Relations and the Qing-Chosŏn Frontier on Mount Paektu,” pp. 127-128.

was a clear conflict of interests between the Chosŏn and Qing courts. Thus, he highlights a “dissonance between the tribute ideology and conduct” of the Chosŏn court, in its attempting to thwart the Qing mapping expedition of 1711 while never once veering from the language and protocol of tributary relations; he notes further that the compilers of the *Sukchong sillok*, far from finding such disingenuousness problematic, extolled the “creativity” of the Chosŏn officials who had successfully worked within the conventional parameters of Chosŏn’s tributary status to undermine the projects of the imperial center.¹²² At least this much Schmid’s study makes clear: the “Sinocentric image of a dependent and loyal vassal state that the Qing imperial records assiduously cultivated” was not quite how the Chosŏn state saw itself or wished to be seen by its own subjects.

Kirk Larsen, too, criticizes the ease with which the model tributary thesis have found acceptance among many scholars and finds especially problematic the assumption that Chosŏn Korea’s relationship with China was predicated upon something other than raw power relations.¹²³ Taking a harder, more realist line than Schmid, Larsen argues that the ideology and rituals of tribute amounted to no more than a “comforting fiction” that served to justify and render more palatable the obvious power asymmetry between the two states. In this respect, tributary relations were functionally no different than Westphalian-style relations: the Westphalian system of sovereign equality, too, was “a comforting fiction that masked the reality of imperialism” and would do little to protect Chosŏn Korea’s independence from stronger foreign powers in the late nineteenth century.¹²⁴ Larsen’s assessment that Chosŏn Korea had essentially swapped one comforting fiction for another fits in with

¹²² Schmid, “Tributary Relations and the Qing-Chosŏn Frontier on Mount Paektu,” p. 141.

¹²³ Larsen, “Comforting Fictions,” p. 234.

¹²⁴ Larsen, “Comforting Fictions,” pp. 233-235, pp. 247-251.

his overall insistence against the Fairbankian approach to Sino-foreign relations, which he refers to in hardly flattering terms as the “Orientalist presumption that the rules of behavior in the East are inscrutable and somehow different from those of the West.”¹²⁵

Both Schmid and Larsen situate their arguments in counter-relation to older Anglophone approaches to Chosŏn-Qing relations and take inspiration from the new research and revisionist analyses undertaken by the so-called “New Qing” historians. While differing in their respective emphases—Schmid on the Chosŏn court’s flexible deployment and manipulation of tributary norms to meet *ad hoc* needs, and Larsen on the Chosŏn state’s overall material weakness and susceptibility to coercion—they represent a concerted effort to overturn the characterization of Chosŏn Korea as a completely willing and ideationally motivated participant in tributary relations. Yet, by the same token, they invite comparison with the early twentieth-century and post-colonial Korean nationalist historians discussed earlier in this chapter. Bluntly put, are we witnessing an altogether new narrative in the making or, rather, a case of historiography repeating itself, only through a new linguistic medium?

It is not my intention to discount any of the obvious advances in our understanding of Chosŏn-Qing relations that Anglophone scholarship has enabled, but it does become apparent that the present controversy surrounding the model tributary thesis has created room for older arguments in Korean historiography to resurface and, with some minor modifications, acquire new relevance. Cha Hyewon, writing in English about the significance of Sinocentrism as a motivating factor in Chosŏn-Ming and Chosŏn-Qing relations, asserts:

[T]he main reason why many states, including Joseon, Liuqiu, and Annan agreed to pay tributes to Chinese empires lies in the economic,

¹²⁵ Larsen, “Comforting Fictions,” p. 242.

cultural, and political benefits they received in return. . . . That is, if there are no practical benefits, such as peace or economic profit, to be gained by a tributary state through such a diplomatic relationship, the ideology of the investiture-tribute system alone would not be sufficient to make it tenable.

If too much importance is placed on “Sinocentrism,” as the basis for tributary relations, and on the subordination of China’s neighboring countries, important historical implications or events of significance may be overlooked or misinterpreted. . . . Based solely on the exaggerated expressions that Joseon employed to honor China, it is hasty to interpret that Joseon actually respected and admired China.¹²⁶

Cha, like Schmid, cautions against taking Ming and Qing representations of Chosŏn Korea at face value and, like Larsen, gives precedence to coercion and self-interest over any ideology of “benevolent rule,” Chinese cultural supermacy, or Confucian universalism as the main drivers of suzerain-tributary interactions.¹²⁷ Upon comparing Chosŏn to other tributary states, she concludes that Chosŏn Korea was more of an exception than a representative model in terms of its ritual proficiency and cultural affinity with China, but that such ideational factors, deployed only in “lip service,” would not have imposed any significant constraints on the pursuit of self-interest by either the Chosŏn or the Chinese side.¹²⁸ Hence, as in the passage cited above, Cha invokes post-colonial representations of Chosŏn participation in tributary relations as being driven by opportunism—without much of an indication as to what pragmatic interests the Chosŏn court did pursue apart from the avoidance of conflict.

If not an intrinsic admiration for China, then the absence of conflict may have been in itself a sufficient incentive for the Chosŏn court to uphold its side of the tributary relationship, but a lingering dissatisfaction even with this explanation is discernible in Cha’s hinting at the agency exercised by the Chosŏn court to obtain

¹²⁶ Cha, “Was Joseon a Model or an Exception?” p. 54.

¹²⁷ Cha, “Was Joseon a Model or an Exception?” pp. 51-52.

¹²⁸ Cha, “Was Joseon a Model or an Exception?” p. 52.

“practical benefits” in the plural, whatever these might be. Ji-Young Lee, on the other hand, finds Chosŏn agency as Schmid has done in the instrumental manipulation of tributary norms. Based on an analysis of sixteen cases of investiture in Chosŏn-Ming relations, Lee argues that on account of the shared Confucian heritage between Chosŏn Korea and Ming China, investiture represented an important strategic resource for both parties in managing each other’s expectations and thereby obviating the need for brute force in maintaining or renegotiating an acceptable status quo.¹²⁹

De-centering China Again: *Chosŏn Chunghwa*

In Korean historical scholarship of the 1980s and 1990s, the model tributary thesis has been indirectly challenged by the proposition that it was through the lens of *Chosŏn chunghwa*, and not *chunghwa* in the traditional literal sense, that late Chosŏn Koreans viewed Sino-Confucian culture and their place in the world. The term *Chosŏn chunghwa* was first introduced in the early 1980s by Ch’oe Wansu, an art historian, to characterize a new trend in eighteenth-century Chosŏn landscape painting: the *chin’gyŏng* (true-view) style pioneered by Chŏng Sŏn in the 1730s, which entailed depicting actual landscapes and local scenes encountered on the peninsula as opposed to taking inspiration solely from the imagery of Chinese paintings. Ch’oe interpreted this turn to native subjects as occurring in tandem with the development of “Chosŏn sŏngnihak” (Chosŏn Neo-Confucianism) and as part of a more general trend towards cultural self-confidence and autonomy in eighteenth-century Chosŏn Korea. Finding the term “chunghwa” on its own inadequate and misleading, he proposed “Chosŏn chunghwa” (Chosŏn-centered or Chosŏnized

¹²⁹ Ji-Young Lee, “Diplomatic Ritual as a Power Resource,” pp. 315-330.

Sinocentrism) to denote the apparent self-identification of late Chosŏn Koreans as worthy arbiters of Sino-Confucian culture.¹³⁰

A few years later, the notion of *Chosŏn chunghwa* made its way into studies of late Chosŏn political history and set off a new wave of revisionism. In a study of late Chosŏn amendments to the list of sages and worthies enshrined in Munmyo (Shrine of Confucius), Chŏng Okcha drew on *Chosŏn chunghwa* to explain why the Chosŏn court had enacted changes to its enshrinement policy in 1682 and 1714, independently of Ming and Qing ritual prescripts. She attributed these particularities to the changed ideological outlook of the then dominant Sŏin faction:

Following the demise of the Ming, the Sŏin faction believed that the successor to Confucian civilization was no longer situated in the Central Plain [(K. *Chungwŏn*, C. *Zhongyuan*)], but rather in Chosŏn, the new center of East Asian civilization and culture. It was under this new banner of *Chosŏn chunghwa* where policy changes reflecting a closer adherence to Neo-Confucian standards found legitimation, and the amendments to the Munmyo enshrinement policy were no exception.¹³¹

Thus, in Chŏng's revisionist reading, what had previously been dismissed as the Chosŏn court's obsession with revering and emulating China received a positive makeover, now recast as a manifestation of Chosŏn cultural autonomy and self-confidence.

Subsequently, Chŏng Okcha has gone on to trace the development of *Chosŏn chunghwa* and explain it as a creative appropriation of *chonju* (lit., "revering the Zhou") ideology that helped Chosŏn Koreans overcome the trauma of the Imjin War and Manchu invasions. Her 1998 monograph, *Chosŏn hugi Chosŏn chunghwa sasang yon'gu* (A study of Chosŏn chunghwa thought in the late Chosŏn period), explores and reevaluates the ideological basis of late Chosŏn politico-cultural

¹³⁰ U Kyŏngsŏp, "Chosŏn chunghwa chu'ui e taehan haksŏlsajŏk kŏmt'o," pp. 239-240.

¹³¹ Chŏng Okcha, "Chosŏn hugi Munmyo sajŏn ūi yijŏng," p.160.

identity, examining in particular the politicization of ritual discourse (*yeron*) in the seventeenth century, the Chosŏn state's espousal of Ming loyalism in the eighteenth century, and the rise of anti-Western, "anti-heterodox" (*ch'ŏksa*) discourse in the nineteenth century. Chŏng argues that the common thread running through these phenomena was the belief that Chosŏn Korea had inherited from the Ming the role of upholding Sino-Confucian civilization as first perfectly embodied by the Zhou. The apparent Sinocentrism of the late Chosŏn worldview was no longer grounded in the conception of Chosŏn as *sojunghwa*, a smaller China, but rather in the self-affirming commitment to a Sino-Confucian cultural legacy that had been "Chosŏnized" (*Chosŏnhwa han chunghwa munhwa*) and claimed exclusively as Chosŏn's own.¹³² There was nothing vassal-like or unpatriotic, then, about the sense of mission with which late Chosŏn Koreans supported the Ming loyalist cause and insisted on Confucian orthodoxy.

Similarly, in her study of the seventeenth-century controversy over the mourning ritual for King Hyojong, JaHyun Kim Haboush asserts that the Manchu conquest of China was viewed by Chosŏn Koreans as "nothing less than a barbarian conquest of the civilized world," giving rise to the need for "a new episteme that would allow them to maintain their identity as a 'civilized' people."¹³³ She echoes Chŏng in identifying two prominent features of the Chosŏn response: "[o]ne was a Korean consciousness of a unique identity . . . shared by the entire scholarly and political community," and the other, "the domestication of structures of authority" whereby Chosŏn Koreans "no longer looked outside the country to confirm the status of the Korean polity or its culture."¹³⁴

¹³² Chŏng Okcha, *Chosŏn hugi Chosŏn Chungghwa yŏn'gu*, pp. 285-286.

¹³³ Haboush, "The Ritual Controversy and the Search for a New Identity," pp. 86-87.

¹³⁴ Haboush, "The Ritual Controversy and the Search for a New Identity," p. 87.

However, Haboush also points out that the Chosŏn officials and scholars participating in the ritual controversy, while unanimous in their perception of Chosŏn as the last bastion of civilized culture, disagreed on the implications of this newfound status. For example, Song Siyŏl believed in the primacy of culture over polity, on which grounds he stressed the urgency of Chosŏn Korea's role as the only living model of Confucian civilization and agent for universal rectitude in the world.¹³⁵ Hŏ Mok and Yun Hyu, on the other hand, did not discriminate between normative legitimacy and political expediency, reasoning that Chosŏn Korea's internal cohesion and stability took priority in such a disordered and chaotic world; their understanding of Chosŏn uniqueness proceeded from the conception of Chosŏn Korea as a single independent entity, whose political and cultural structures were inextricably linked and hence of equal importance.¹³⁶

To highlight the different policy positions of Song Siyŏl on the one hand and Hŏ Mok and Yu Hyu on the other, Haboush characterizes the former as "culturalist" and the latter as "nationalist." Considering that both were premised upon a belief in Chosŏn uniqueness, however, Haboush broaches the possibility of discussing "nation" and "national elements" without recourse to modernization theory.¹³⁷ In this respect, Haboush shares Chŏng's concern with the need to move beyond the deterministic frameworks of colonialist and postcolonial scholarship, which have long served to pigeonhole late Chosŏn political culture as too traditionalist and factionalist to have engendered any form of nationalism. On the other hand, insofar as both Haboush's and Chŏng's revisionist efforts endorse treating the Korean nation as a seventeenth-century construct rather than a colonial-modern one, they pose only

¹³⁵ Haboush, "The Ritual Controversy and the Search for a New Identity," pp. 84-85.

¹³⁶ Haboush, "The Ritual Controversy and the Search for a New Identity," pp. 87-88.

¹³⁷ Haboush, "The Ritual Controversy and the Search for a New Identity," pp. 89-90.

a partial challenge to the broader primordialist, anti-Sinocentric orientation of earlier Korean nationalist historiography.

Another commonality between Chŏng's and Haboush's works is their choice of primary sources, owing to their shared interest in reexamining late Chosŏn political discourse on matters of state ritual and characterizing its participants as something other than Confucian pedants or factional partisans with narrowly defined, self-serving interests. Much of Chŏng's and Haboush's source material, therefore, consists of royal pronouncements, memorials, circular letters, and other similarly imperative or persuasive speech acts that may be said to employ the rhetoric of ritual propriety to articulate ideas about legitimacy, statehood, and collective identity. In effect, Chŏng and Haboush succeed in explicating the idioms of quite a specific type of discourse and set of communicative practices; on the other hand, they leave undetermined the extent to which their findings reflect broader trends in identity formation and self-representation.

More recent historians, such as Chŏng Chaehun, Kim Munsik, Hŏ Sunu, U Kyŏngsŏp, and Pae Usŏng, have found *Chosŏn chunghwa* at work in certain examples of late Chosŏn historiography, fiction, and cartography, and among them there has also been an insistence on dissociating *Chosŏn chunghwa* from nationalism and studying the former in and on its own terms.¹³⁸ As U Kyŏngsŏp and Pae Usŏng have been keen to point out, the longstanding scholarly preoccupation with affirming or denying the nationalist character of *Chosŏn chunghwa* has served to essentialize the construct as opposed to historicizing it; a more productive direction for future

¹³⁸ Chŏng Chaehun, "Chosŏn hugi sasŏ e nat'an an Chunghwa chuŭi wa minjok chuŭi," *Han'guk sirhak yŏn'gu* 8 (2004): 299-323; Kim Munsik, *Chosŏn hugi chisigin ŭi taewoe kwangye* (Saemunsa, 2009); Hŏ Sunu, "Chunghwa chuŭi kyunyŏl i ch'oraehan chuch'e ūisik ūi hollan kwa kŭkpok ūi sŏsa – T'aewŏnji," *Kososŏl yŏn'gu* 33 (2012): 215-249; U Kyŏngsŏp, *Chosŏn chunghwa chuŭi ūi sŏngnip kwa Tong Asia* (Unistory, 2013); Pae Usŏng, *Chosŏn kwa chunghwa: Chosŏn i kkumkkugo sangsanghan segye wa munmyŏng* (Paju: Tolbegae, 2014).

research would be to investigate the multiple interpretations, uses, and reworkings that *Chosŏn chungghwa* is likely to have undergone over time and in different discursive contexts.¹³⁹

Supposing that *yŏnhaengnok* constituted one such context, how did *Chosŏn chungghwa* figure in the genre's constructions of identity and difference? As mentioned at the outset of this chapter, *yŏnhaengnok* scholarship has tended to assign a relatively short period of dominance to *Chosŏn chungghwa* so as to account for the emergence and influence of the *Pukhakp'a* in the latter half of the eighteenth century. To be sure, beginning with Hong Taeyong's *Tamhŏn yŏn'gi*, *yŏnhaengnok* on the whole become more encyclopedic and detailed in their treatment of Qing and other cultures, indicating a broadened conception of what counted as relevant and useful information. However, it would be reductionist to claim that *Chosŏn chungghwa* was supplanted by a more culturally relativistic worldview simply based on what *yŏnhaengnok* authors wrote about and how much. From the standpoint of how they rendered their observations intelligible and meaningful to readers, the matter becomes more complex and less linear.

In *yŏnhaengnok* spanning the entire course of Chosŏn-Qing relations, we find no shortage of assertions of Chosŏn uniqueness made on Confucian grounds, but we also encounter constructions of hierarchical difference along ethnic, regional, gender, and class lines that give shape to a rather incongruous world of plural selves and others, centers and peripheries. Neither *Chosŏn chungghwa* nor *Pukhak* provides an adequate ideological context for explaining the tendency of more or less all *yŏnhaengnok* authors to assume a range of different subject positions throughout their

¹³⁹ U Kyŏngsŏp, *Chosŏn chungghwa chuŏi ūi sŏngnip kwa Tong Asia*, pp. 36-41; Pae Usŏng, *Chosŏn kwa chungghwa*, pp. 20-21.

works, including ones that could even lend support to the model tributary thesis. To take the most straightforward example, Sō Yumun, writing in 1798, comments rather proudly on the Qing's preferential treatment of Chosŏn:

The law of the Great State (*Taeguk*) is such that gold seals with turtle-shaped knobs are bestowed upon imperial princes, that is, the emperor's brothers and sons. One need only look at the silver seals with camel-shaped knobs granted to the Annam and Ryuku states [as tokens of their investiture] to know that we are treated differently from all other countries.¹⁴⁰

Sō's unironic use of the language of *sadae* to claim Chosŏn superiority over other tributary states may strike the modern reader as short-sighted and self-limiting, but it was not an unusual rhetorical strategy for *yŏnhaengnok* authors to adopt when situating Chosŏn in relation to the wider world.

Likewise, it does not appear to have been considered problematic to invoke the dichotomy of civilized center and barbarian periphery to refer to the Chosŏn and Qing sides of the Yalu River (i.e., Chosŏn as center and Qing as periphery), only to invoke it again to refer to the inner and outer sides of Shanhaiguan (i.e., Beijing as center and the rest, Chosŏn included, as periphery). This suggests that even where cultural standing was concerned, different orderings of the world had simultaneous currency and could be drawn upon to justify various othering and bordering gestures. It seems more productive, then, to speak of situational and relational subjectivities and to ask whether there are any patterns to their deployment across *yŏnhaengnok* texts—at the intertextual, rather than the intratextual, level. In doing so, we can begin to discern not just how similarly late Chosŏn travelers responded to their

¹⁴⁰ Sō Yumun, *Muo yŏnhaengnok*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip* Vol. 62, p. 454: 대국의 법에 금으로 만든 인의 거북뉴는 친왕에게 주는 인이요, 친왕은 황제의 형제와 아들을 일컫는 이름이라. 안남국·유구국 같은 나라는 다 은으로 만든 인에 탁타뉴를 얹혔으니, 이로 보아도 우리나라를 대접하는 것이 외국과 비교할 수 없는 줄 알러라.

surroundings and encounters but also, perhaps more crucially, how such travelers, as *yŏnhaengnok* authors, conceived of the genre in which they were writing.

***Yŏnhaengnok* as Genre and Discourse**

Modern scholarly attempts to define the *yŏnhaengnok* genre have tended to consider the type of travel on which *yŏnhaengnok* were based, the typical content of *yŏnhaengnok* texts, and the formal variations observable across the texts to arrive at a general description of the existing *yŏnhaengnok* corpus. Im Kijung's definition, for example, touches on all three of these aspects:

Yŏnhaengnok are firsthand records of Korean diplomatic travel to China, wherein experiences and observations of the encountered culture are recounted in a free and creative manner. *Yŏnhaengnok* contain a great variety and abundance of information on the dynamic interactions between Korea and East Asia and between East Asia and the world, including details on official and unofficial trade activities, cultural exchange, and knowledge transfers. *Yŏnhaengnok* take the following as their basic subject matter: the embassy's progress to Beijing; Chinese institutions, traditions, and history; interpersonal and cultural interactions; Beijing's book culture and intellectual life; traditional Chinese and new Western forms of entertainment; the presence of Western material culture and books in Beijing; Chinese and Western technologies; and the everyday lives, customs, and language of local inhabitants. Quite often, *yŏnhaengnok* also contain information unavailable in Chinese sources, making them indispensable sources for anyone working in East Asian studies.¹⁴¹

Im's emphasis on the wealth of information contained in *yŏnhaengnok* presumes a scholarly audience who would be most interested in using *yŏnhaengnok* as documentary sources. His evaluation of *yŏnhaengnok*, therefore, foregrounds their historiographical usefulness and does not address their historical uses and

¹⁴¹ Im Kijung, *Yŏnhaengnok yŏn'gu*, pp. 9-10.

significance, effectively eliding any distinction between the experience of embassy travel and the representation of it.

Kim Hyönmi, on the other hand, has worked towards restoring this distinction by making the literariness of *yŏnhaengnok* the main subject of her study. At the outset of the same book I discussed in the Introduction, she highlights the multifacetedness of eighteenth-century *yŏnhaengnok* and takes issue with the narrower focus favored by modern scholarship:

Eighteenth-century *yŏnhaengnok* are prose accounts of diplomatic travel to the Qing. As works of travel literature, *yŏnhaengnok* are related to *choch'ŏnnok* of the previous Ming era and to *yŏnhaengsi* [travel poetry]; as documentary sources, they bear witness to diplomatic events and also contain the authors' new insights and ideas acquired through travel. Such multifacetedness may have contributed to scholarly neglect of the *yŏnhaengnok*'s literary characteristics, and the prevailing tendency of *hanmunhak* scholars has been to study a small number of selected texts in isolation.¹⁴²

Kim proceeds to chart the evolution of the eighteenth-century *yŏnhaengnok* and identifies Kim Ch'angöp's *Yŏnhaeng ilgi*, Hong Taeyong's *Tamhŏn yŏn'gi*, and Pak Chiwŏn's *Yŏrha ilgi* as paradigmatic of the genre in the early, mid, and late eighteenth century, respectively. The patterns of resemblance and difference she detects within the *yŏnhaengnok* corpus illustrate that there were certain formal and thematic conventions governing *yŏnhaengnok* production, but also that these were malleable in the hands of skilled writers and were further shaped by changes in the political and intellectual climate of the eighteenth century. I would point out, however, that Kim's emphasis on authorial influence is likely to stimulate precisely the kind of scholarship that she has sought to discourage, in redrawing attention to those influential few texts while implicitly characterizing the rest of the corpus as derivative and less worthy of attention.

¹⁴² Kim Hyönmi, *18-segi yŏnhaengnok ūi chŏn'gae wa t'ŭksong*, p. 15.

Conceptualizing the *yŏnhaengnok* as a genre can do more than help us determine how original or conventional a given *yŏnhaengnok* text was for its time; it also allows us to consider how *yŏnhaengnok* might embody a distinct way of constructing and organizing knowledge about the world that enabled and perpetuated certain subjectivities while excluding others. Here, I take inspiration from genre theorists who in recent decades have turned their attention from describing what constitutes a genre to explaining how genres “work” for text users and the communities to which they belong. Notably, Carolyn Miller has argued that “a rhetorically sound definition of genre must be centered not on the substance or form of discourse but on the action it is used to accomplish.”¹⁴³ Elaborating on her definition of genre as a type of social action, she writes:

[W]hat we learn when we learn a genre is not just a pattern of forms or even a method of achieving our own ends. We learn, more importantly, what ends we may have . . . We learn to understand better the situations in which we find ourselves and the potentials for failure and success in acting together. As a recurrent, significant action, a genre embodies an aspect of cultural rationality. For the critic, genre can serve both as an index to cultural patterns and as tools for exploring the achievements of particular speakers and writers; for the student, genres serve as keys to understanding how to participate in the actions of a community.¹⁴⁴

Following on from Miller, Anis Bawarshi suggests that we attend to “the role that genre plays in the constitution not only of texts but of their contexts, including the identities of those who write them and those who are represented within them.”¹⁴⁵ He refers to this role as the “genre function,” which applies to both literary and non-literary texts and through which all text users “become social actors . . . endowed with certain social status and value.”¹⁴⁶ Both Miller’s and Bawarshi’s theorizations

¹⁴³ Miller, “Genre as Social Action,” p. 151.

¹⁴⁴ Miller, “Genre as Social Action,” p. 165.

¹⁴⁵ Bawarshi, “The Genre Function,” p. 335.

¹⁴⁶ Bawarshi, “The Genre Function,” p. 357.

serve to liken the power of genre to that of discourse in the poststructuralist sense—namely, the power to define and reproduce shared realities and, in turn, the possibilities for selfhood and agency within them.

In the Introduction, I suggested that the novelty associated with traveling to China, further enhanced by the Manchu presence, fueled the demand for *yŏnhaengnok* and the perception of them as resources for self-cultivation and status enhancement. On the production side, I noted the genre's dual emphasis on traveling well and writing well, not so much as a diplomat but rather as a cultured and intellectually curious tourist—an ideal mode of seeing and narrating that military aides may have been particularly well-positioned to adopt. As I have emphasized in this chapter, however, this mode plays out in *yŏnhaengnok* texts via multiple subjectivities that were perhaps performed more so than inherently possessed by the authors as historical persons.

These points can be further developed in view of the fact that late Chosŏn readers had access to imported Chinese books for satisfying most of their geographical and ethnographic information needs, ranging from imperial and local gazetteers to the works of late Ming and early Qing travel writers such as Xu Xiake 袁宏道 (1587-1641), Yuan Hongdao 袁宏道 (1568-1610), and Lin Qianguang 林謙光 (fl. 1680s-1690s). This might suggest that *yŏnhaengnok* were valued primarily for their reportorial content, but as we will see in the following chapters, *yŏnhaengnok* authors often reproduced information from earlier *yŏnhaengnok* texts and Chinese sources to supplement, or otherwise stand in for, their own observations.

Chapter Two

Naming the Other and Other Others: Collective Designations in *Yŏnhaengnok*

More than a month into his stay in Beijing, Kim Ch'angŏp was confronted with the prospect of having to hand over his travel writings to be inspected by none other than the Kangxi emperor himself. Fearing that the contents of his writings, especially the “tales and gossip not meant for others’ eyes,” could have a most “worrying” effect, Kim arranged for an edited, clean version to be produced by one of the Chosŏn embassy’s attendant scribes. Kang Umun, the poor scribe entrusted with the task, is said to have stayed up all night copying into a separate book just Kim’s remarks on the weather, the route taken from the Yalu River to Beijing, and the places where the Chosŏn envoys had stopped to rest or spend the night. What the emperor had actually asked to see was a list of books then available in Chosŏn Korea, together with any reading or written material the Chosŏn embassy had in their possession. However, in an exchange between the Qing and Chosŏn interpreters about the emperor’s request, there had been mention of the Chosŏn envoys having barely enough time to keep a travel diary, let alone read anything of substance—and therein lay the cause of Kim’s sudden alarm.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁷ Kim Ch'angŏp, *Yŏnhaeng ilgi in Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip*, Vol. 33, pp. 176-179: 至夜深後，方滅燭就睡，譯官輩自暢春苑還來，告曰，禮部左侍郎二格坐暢春苑門外，招渠輩問曰，你國有何書籍，即書四書四經而對之，又問曰，此外更無他書，又書唐詩，古文真寶而對之，又問曰，使臣必有持來書籍，皇帝要見，明日拿來，三使臣當待門進暢春苑云，伯氏即呼燭起坐，副使書狀皆來會，時約二更許矣，方同議所對之辭，已而提督及筆貼式常尊以皇旨騰送，其文曰，伊等俱好讀書，或有持來的文章，不拘何樣書籍，俱拿來，朕覽曉諭，伊等無得隱匿，盡皆拿來，一覽並無妨碍，問伊處無清朝何樣書籍云，使臣相議，以爲皇帝既問我國所有書籍，又以所無書籍爲問，則雖係禁書，一槩祕諱，非誠實之道，如是懇叩之，後必不以禁物爲咎，設有所問，但以明朝所嘗得來爲對，事不打緊，以利害言之，使知禁書之出去亦得矣，遂以四書五經，綱目，諸子，事文類聚等書，并書十餘種列錄，譯輩以五經中春秋爲禁書，故去而對之，然不成事理，故以五經錄之，至於兵書，亦不可謂全無，

Eventually, neither the original nor the counterfeit version of Kim's travel account made it to the emperor's informal office at the Changchunyan. A selection of *hansi*, also hurriedly compiled overnight (at Kim's suggestion, no less), was sent in instead; this, along with a carefully constructed list of innocuous book titles, would serve as proof of the envoys' insistence that books in Chosŏn Korea were limited and books they personally owned even more so.¹⁴⁸ Much to their relief, the emperor believed their story and even bestowed upon them a gift of the Qing court's recent publications. In his *Yŏnhaeng ilgi*, Kim portrays this incident as a diplomatic disaster in the making that he himself helped to avert with his timely foresight and resourcefulness. As for his counterfeit diary, he maintains that he had been simply erring on the side of caution and not, as some of his readers might suspect, suffering from a bout of self-delusion.

Even if we choose not to take Kim's story at face value—after all, how likely would it have been, really, for the Kangxi emperor to want to thumb through an officeless *yangban*'s jottings?—we can still imagine how panic-stricken Kim must have been when forced to review what he had written thus far through a pair of Manchu eyes. The “tales and gossip” would have exposed his intelligence-gathering efforts, and his frequent use of the pejorative exonym *ho* 胡 (lit. barbarian, Ch. *hu*) to refer to the Manchus would have only made matters worse. To be more precise: Kim

故孫武子，吳子，三略等書，并皆入錄，現今帶來書籍，無他冊，以伯氏唐律廣選，副使陸宣公奏議呈納爲定，暢春苑問答之辭，更加細問，則禮部侍郎二格曰，使臣持來書，是何書耶，首譯曰，遠路驅馳，奚暇看書，通官曰，似聞使臣於轎內看書，何謂無書也，首譯曰，使臣路中所看，不過是日記也，日記中說話，有不可使彼人看，若或收納日記，事將可慮，余遂造一冊，使遇文將渡江以後陰晴及宿歇程道，連夜抄書，以備意外之事。

¹⁴⁸ Kim Ch'angŏp, *Yŏnhaeng ilgi in Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip*, Vol. 33, pp. 185-186: 余更思之，暢春苑書對文字，以無爲辭者，雖從通官之指揮，終欠誠實，以若干詩書示，似不妨，故余發其議，書狀之意，與余同，副使亦以爲然，遂定其議，會副使行中，有國朝詩刪，遂抄律絕並三十五首，夜令寫字官繕寫作冊，所對文字，亦商議改書，而索還前紙，是日通官之往暢春苑者，朴得仁，洪二哥，文鳳先三人也。

uses *ho* to designate Manchu people and Manchu things in eighty-four separately dated entries in his *Yŏnhaeng ilgi*, in contrast to the mere seventeen entries where he actually uses the term *Manju* 滿洲 (lit. Manchu) or *Man* 滿 for short.¹⁴⁹ Clearly, Kim had no qualms about disclosing his anti-Manchu sentiments to his intended audience of Chosŏn readers; perhaps the ideological climate of the time even demanded it.

Kim Ch'angŏp's seemingly bold word choice takes on a less idiosyncratic appearance, however, when viewed in light of the unreserved use of the *ho* label in the official records and histories of Chosŏn. In the *Sŭngjŏngwŏn ilgi*, forty entries dating from the period of Hyŏnjong and Sukchong's reigns (1659-1720) can attest to the currency of the term *hoin* 胡人 (C. *huren*) as an acceptable synonym for the more commonly used term *Ch'ŏngin* 清人 and the less common *Manjuin* 滿洲人 in official discourse. Likewise, in the *Hyojong sillok*, *Hyŏnjong sillok*, and *Sukchong sillok*, which were compiled in the early 1660s, from the late 1670s to the early 1680s, and in the 1720s, respectively, "Ch'ŏngin" appears in a total of two hundred seven entries and "hoin" in forty-nine entries, whereas "Manjuin" and "Manju" appear in none. Even Qing envoys to the Chosŏn court were not exempt from the unceremonious *ho* label. If *Ch'ŏngsa* 清使 (lit. Qing envoy) was their customary designation, the use of *hosa* 胡使 as an alternative was not strictly off limits, least of all to the compilers of the *Sukchong sillok* who use it in thirteen instances without once attempting to justify their word choice.¹⁵⁰ These figures reflect the rhetorical parameters and ideological leanings of official discourse on the Qing Manchus during Kim

¹⁴⁹ These figures were obtained by searching for the terms in the digitized version of the *Yŏnhaeng ilgi* and then sifting through the search results to exclude instances where the character *man* was used in such non-Manchu contexts as "smoke-filled" rooms.

¹⁵⁰ All these figures correspond to search results generated from the original *hanmun* texts in the online *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* database (<http://sillok.history.go.kr/main/main.jsp>).

Ch'angöp's lifetime. In light of such resistance to calling Manchus by their preferred ethnonym, then, it is rather Kim Ch'angöp's choice to use the term *Manju* at all that begins to stand out and demand our attention. Might we say that Kim had been more openminded than most, or was it typical of the *yŏnhaengnok* genre to diverge from official rhetoric?

If we broaden the scope of this content analysis to the *Chosŏn wangjo sillok*, *Sŭngjŏngwŏn ilgi*, and *Pibyŏnsa tŭngnok* in their entirety, some interesting patterns of labeling emerge that may be compared and contrasted with those found in *yŏnhaengnok*.¹⁵¹ Broadly, these patterns represent the various ways in which Chosŏn Koreans deployed identity categories to order the world depending on the historical moment and discursive context; implicit in each pattern is a dominant conception of "Us," against which to distinguish and evaluate "Them." What also interests me are the moments where a common labeling practice appears to have been supplanted by another, considering that such lexico-semantic changes do not generally occur in a vacuum or by accident, but rather arise in response to real or perceived changes to the status quo.

My decision to pursue this line of inquiry was motivated by a simple observation: collective designations used by Chosŏn Koreans for other peoples, many of them context-sensitive and derogatory to varying degrees, have only been transliterated, very loosely translated, or otherwise overlooked in Korean- and English-language scholarship. For instance, neither the transliteration of 胡人 as "hoin" nor its rendering into *han 'gŭl* as "orangk'ae" or "toenom" says much about the term's particular connotations and etymology. What needs explaining is how

¹⁵¹ I have excluded the *Tongmun hwigo* from this content analysis, as I am mainly interested in how non-Koreans were discussed in domestic discourse rather than in diplomatic correspondences; its relatively late compilation (1788) was another contributing factor.

such a loanword from Chinese made its way into the Korean vocabulary and became something of a buzzword in Chosŏn political discussions about the Manchus. As “yain” was previously used to refer to Jurchens, what also remains to be determined is whether the *yain-to-hoin* shift coincided with Manchu ascendancy in the early seventeenth century.

In this chapter, I explore the different meanings attached to *hu/ho* in Chinese and Korean usage, examining in particular the historical junctures at which the label was transferred from one people or group of peoples to another. My findings suggest that in both the Chinese and Korean contexts, the term did not simply denote otherness in an ethnogeographical sense but also came to connote a significant disruption or threat to the normative politico-moral order. As a rhetorical strategy, its use served a mobilizing function, compelling listeners and readers to set aside their individual differences and act in the interest of the collective in-group; as a conceptual shorthand, it invoked a shared understanding of what constituted rightful hegemony. The Korean case allows us to revisit the posited shift in Chosŏn Koreans’ perception of their country’s place in the world—from the China-centered *sojunghwa* to the Chosŏn-centered *Chosŏn chunghwa*—and question whether this shift coincided with the Ming-Qing transition. Even if the Manchu conquest of China may have constituted an impetus like no other for Chosŏn elites to adjust their worldview, I point out that it was certainly not the first occasion on which state-level actors, at least, appropriated Sinocentric ideas to speak exclusively of Chosŏn centrality.

Following a survey of occurrences of “Ch’ŏngin,” “hoin,” and “Manju” in the *Sillok*, *Sŭngjŏngwŏn ilgi*, and *Pibyŏnsa tŭngnok*, I offer up for comparison labeling patterns in a sample of four prose *choch’ŏnnok* and twelve *yŏnhaengnok* texts.

Unlike the official records and *choch’ŏnnok*, the *yŏnhaengnok* exhibit a consistent

preference for neutral ethnonyms over cultural or geographical epithets, which might serve to characterize *yŏnhaengnok* discourse as more objective and descriptive than argumentative or normative.

However, this commitment to objective ethnographic description seems to have applied primarily to the Han Chinese and Manchus. Other foreign peoples tend to appear in *yŏnhaengnok* as caricatures, functioning as foils to the civility, even humanity, of Chosŏn Koreans. In such examples of strong othering, the civilized-barbarian dichotomy is invoked and affirmed on grounds of what Chosŏn Koreans upheld that these “other Others” apparently did not: an established Confucian society, official dress code (*ŭigwan* 衣冠 or *kwandae* 冠帶), and gender segregation. To push the contrast further still, their foreign, “ugly” physical features are often likened to those of animals. As the most stable and monolithic constructions of otherness that we find across *yŏnhaengnok* texts, the other Others may be understood as satisfying a cruder appetite for the novel and strange while also serving to qualify the Chosŏn travelers’ own foreigner status.

Collective Designations in Official Discourse: From *Yain* to *Hoin*

Before the conventionalization of the *ho* label in Chosŏn official discourse, the term “yain” 野人 (lit. people of the wild, Ch. *yeren*) was more commonly used to refer to Jurchens residing on the northern fringes of Chosŏn territory and beyond. “Yain” first appears in the *Sillok* in a brief anecdote about T’aejo, the Chosŏn dynasty’s founder, when he was a young boy:

T’aejo, when out hunting with his father Hwanjo, would spot a wild beast and chase after it even up treacherous, icy paths. Every arrow he shot from atop his horse hit its target; there was not one beast that escaped.

Greatly surprised, the *yain* exclaimed: “Dear master, no one could possibly rival you in all the world!”¹⁵²

The anecdote draws on the Jurchens’ stereotypical image as hunter-fishers to suggest that T’aejo, having essentially beat them at their own game, commanded their respect and subservience. Following in the same eulogistic vein, a later entry in the *T’aejo sillok* details how T’aejo, unlike his Koryŏ predecessors, managed to pacify the Jurchens, expand Chosŏn territory to the Yalu and Tumen rivers, and even inspire some Jurchen leaders to migrate to Chosŏn so that they could serve and protect him in his military campaigns. All the while, the terms *Yŏjin* 女眞 (lit. Jurchen) and *yain* are used almost interchangeably:

The northeast province, the founding site of our dynasty, has long been regarded with fear, awe, and gratitude. *Yain* chieftains have come from as far as Yilan to serve T’aejo. . . .

After T’aejo ascended to the throne, these *Yŏjin* chieftains were conferred the *manho* and *ch’onho* military titles, accordingly. Yi Turan was sent [into the northern territories] to ensure the peaceful submission of the *Yŏjin*. They were taught to wear caps and belts instead of wearing their hair loose, and they corrected their beastly ways under the enlightening influence of propriety and righteousness. They intermarried with our people, performed corvée labor, and paid taxes just as anyone in the family registers would do.

Beyond the Tumen river, customs are different, but news of our righteousness traveled as far as Juzhou. . . . When the king visited the northeast to pay homage at the royal tombs, *yain* from the other side of the river clamored to see him; those who had come from too far afield [to get there in time] all wept as they turned back. To this day, the *yain* feel deeply indebted. Whenever they drink with border commanders to the point of happy intoxication, they start talking about the time when T’aejo was king and never fail to move themselves to tears.¹⁵³

¹⁵² *Taejo sillok* 1:6b: 太祖從桓祖出獵，見獸，走馬冰崖，射輒中之，無一脫去。野人驚歎曰：“舍人也，天下無敵！”又獵于原野，有大豹伏葭蘆中突出，欲犯之，勢迫未暇回勒，鞭馬避之。深淵之冰，始凝未堅，人尚不可渡，馬躡冰而走，蹤穿水湧，而終不陷。

¹⁵³ *T’aejo sillok* 8:15b-8:17a: 東北一道，本肇基之地也，畏威懷德久矣。野人酋長遠至，移闌豆漫皆來服事，常佩弓劍，入衛潛邸，昵侍左右，東征西伐，靡不從焉. . . . 上即位，量授萬戶千戶之職，使李豆蘭招安女眞，被髮之俗，盡襲冠帶，改禽獸之行，習禮義之教，與國人相婚，服役納賦，無異於編戶。且恥役於酋長，皆願爲國民. . . . 江外殊俗，至於具州，聞風慕義，. . . 後上幸東北面謁山陵，江外野人爭先來見，路遠不及者，皆垂涕而返。野人至今慕德，每從邊將飲酒酣，言及太祖時事，必感泣不已。

In this patronizing yet not entirely hostile portrayal of the Jurchens, the use of *Yōjin* and *yain* serves to distinguish, albeit loosely, between Jurchens living inside Chosŏn borders as immigrants and those living outside, on “the other side of the river.” In order for Jurchens to even be called Jurchens, it is intimated, they need to have moved into Chosŏn territory with peaceful intent and integrated with Chosŏn society, particularly by abandoning their “beastly” customs and performing the duties expected of Chosŏn commoners. Otherwise, they merited only the *yain* label.

If the *T’aejo sillok* presents us with the ideal model of Chosŏn-Jurchen interactions, we find in the *Sillok* records for subsequent reigns that the process of implementing this model was both complicated and costly. Combining military force with the lure of investitures, trade, and naturalization, the Chosŏn court sought to regulate contact with the Jurchens, use them as a buffer against the Ming, and prevent the consolidation of power by any single Jurchen leader.¹⁵⁴ In so doing, the Chosŏn court often found itself in silent competition with the Ming court, which was also making systematic efforts to pacify and win over some of the same Jurchen tribes. In Ming policies towards the Jurchens, “Yeren” 野人 denoted one of three distinct Jurchen groups inhabiting specific pockets of the Sino-Korean frontier; the other two groups were the Jianzhou and the Haixi, who actually lived in closer proximity to Chosŏn territory than the Yeren.¹⁵⁵ The Ming court considered all three Jurchen groups to be under its jurisdiction, but in practice, the Jurchens took advantage of both the Ming and Chosŏn courts’ interest in securing their allegiance, playing off

¹⁵⁴ For a detailed discussion of Chosŏn policies towards the Jurchens, see Kenneth Robinson, “Residence and Foreign Relations in the Peninsular Northeast during the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries,” in *The Northern Region of Korea: History, Identity, and Culture*, pp. 18-36.

¹⁵⁵ Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, p. 48.

both sides primarily for trading privileges, and enjoyed considerable autonomy as a result.¹⁵⁶

From the Chosŏn court's standpoint, the Jurchens were at once detrimental and indispensable to border security—so volatile were they that they could go from raiding Chosŏn's border villages to serving Chosŏn as informants and military personnel to raiding again—and proved all the more challenging whenever the Ming would enter the fray and outmaneuver Chosŏn.¹⁵⁷ This may explain why *yain*, with its strong connotations of unruliness and barbarism, remained a catchall term in Chosŏn usage unlike in Ming usage; it was in this sense a Chosŏn neologism, which would pervade Chosŏn official discourse until around the mid-sixteenth century. In *Sillok* entries for the period ranging from Sejong's reign to the end of Chungjong's reign (1418-1544), mentions of *yain*, not *Yŏjin*, abound: notably, Haixi Jurchens are referred to as “Haesŏ *yain*” in fifteen entries and Jianzhou Jurchens as “Kŏnju *yain*” or “Kŏnjuwi *yain*” in one hundred fifty-eight entries. It is worth noting, too, that Jurchen envoys to the Chosŏn capital, who were permitted to trade with Korean merchants under the official pretext of paying tribute to the Chosŏn court, were accommodated in a state-run hostel originally known as the *Yain'gwan* (野人館); the hostel was renamed *Pukp'yŏnggwan* (北平館) in 1438.¹⁵⁸ The *Yain'gwan*-to-*Pukp'yŏnggwan* name change was to correct what was clearly a diplomatic faux pas, which goes to show that the *yain* label was in such prevalent use that it could sometimes make its way outside of domestic discourse.

¹⁵⁶ Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, p. 48; Rawski, pp. 43-45.

¹⁵⁷ A good example is the Chosŏn-Ming contest over the Odoli tribe leader Mongke Temur. See Donald Clark, “Sino-Korean Tributary Relations under the Ming,” in *The Cambridge History of China Volume 8*, pp. 286-287.

¹⁵⁸ *Sejong sillok* 80:22a (1438/02/19).

The earliest *Sillok* records indicate that the term *hoin*, on the other hand, served as an exonym for the Yuan Mongols, as exemplified by its use to refer to the former Yuan official Naghachu, who led the Mongol occupation of Liaodong in the early years of the Ming, in *T'aejo sillok* 1:24b, *T'aejong sillok* 7:21a, and *T'aejong sillok* 17:27b. Likewise, the term *Howŏn* 胡元 was used in disparaging reference to the Yuan dynasty.¹⁵⁹ Using the *ho* label in this particular sense was itself a relatively recent appropriation, dating no further back than the final years of the Koryŏ dynasty, and constitutes but a brief phase in the history of *ho/hu* in the Korean and Chinese contexts. As I argue later, different peoples at different times were dubbed *hoin/huren*, which, as far as the late Koryŏ and Chosŏn elites were concerned, had less to do with the ethnicities of the peoples in question than with their perceived encroachment on the autonomy of the state. The term could be elastic in meaning, applicable to a number of ethnic groups and cultures, but less so in significance: only in specific historical and discursive situations was its use warranted, or else we would not encounter such a striking shift in usage from *yain* to *hoin* halfway through the *Sillok* corpus.

Graph 1 shows the occurrence of the terms *Yŏjin*, *yain*, and *hoin* in the *Chosŏn wangjo sillok*, from the *T'aejo sillok* to the *Kojong sillok*, and may be taken to represent how much, in raw figures, these terms were used in Chosŏn historiography over the course of Chosŏn's tributary relationships with the Ming and the Qing. The occurrence of *Yŏjin* is consistently low, falling further in the second half of the *Sillok* corpus, whereas the occurrence of *yain* follows this same trend but on a vastly higher scale. *Yain* occurs in the greatest numbers in the *Sejong sillok* and

¹⁵⁹ For example, *Sejong sillok* 125:21a and *Sŏngjong sillok* 134:13a.

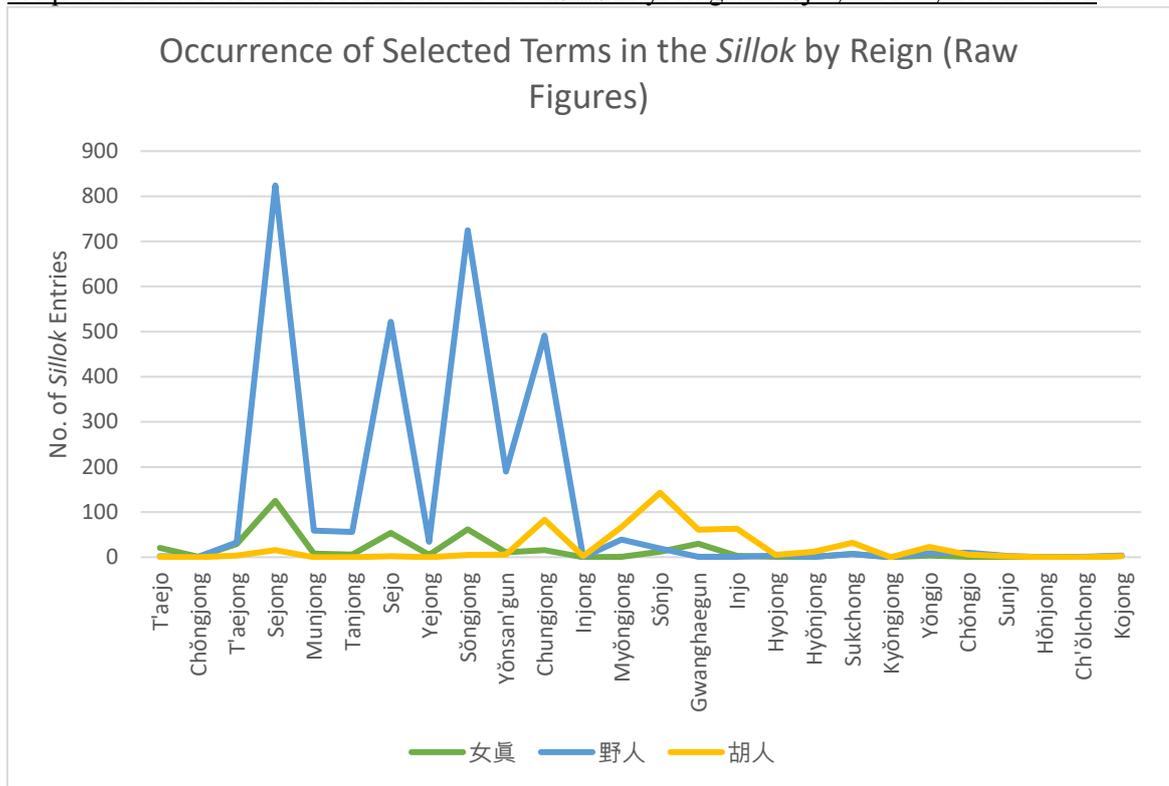
Sŏngjong sillok, but this may be largely due to the relatively long reigns of Sejong (r. 1418-1450) and Sŏngjong (r. 1469-1494).

To exclude the variable of reign duration, I calculated the average occurrences per year of reign and have plotted these in Graph 2. Graph 2 shows how frequently, rather than in how many entries, one encounters the selected terms in each *Sillok*; as such, it provides a more proportionate diachronic picture of the terms' usage patterns.¹⁶⁰ In both graphs, however, we can see the outright predominance of *yain* from the *Sejong sillok* to the *Chungjong sillok*—a strong indication that an attitude of distrust and condescension consistently set the tone of Chosŏn's dealings with Jurchens from the fifteenth to the mid-sixteenth century—and its surprisingly rapid decline thereafter. I would identify the *Chungjong sillok* as a significant turning point: here, the continuing decline of *yain* is accompanied by an unprecedented rise in the use of *hoin* as an alternative designation for the Jurchens. After this point, especially from the *Myŏngjong sillok* to the *Injo sillok*, there appears to be a negative correlation between *hoin* and *yain*, one strong enough to suggest that the former supplanted the latter. We can also confirm that the use of *hoin* to refer to Jurchens, rather than Mongols or any other ethnic group, peaked during the reigns of Sŏnjo and Kwanghaegun, which may be somewhat surprising: the most significant inter-state conflict to occur during this period was the Imjin War (1592-1598), whereas the Manchu invasions took place later, in 1627 and 1636-1637, falling just outside even the years when the *Sŏnjo sillok* and *Kwanghaegun ilgi* were compiled.¹⁶¹ To make

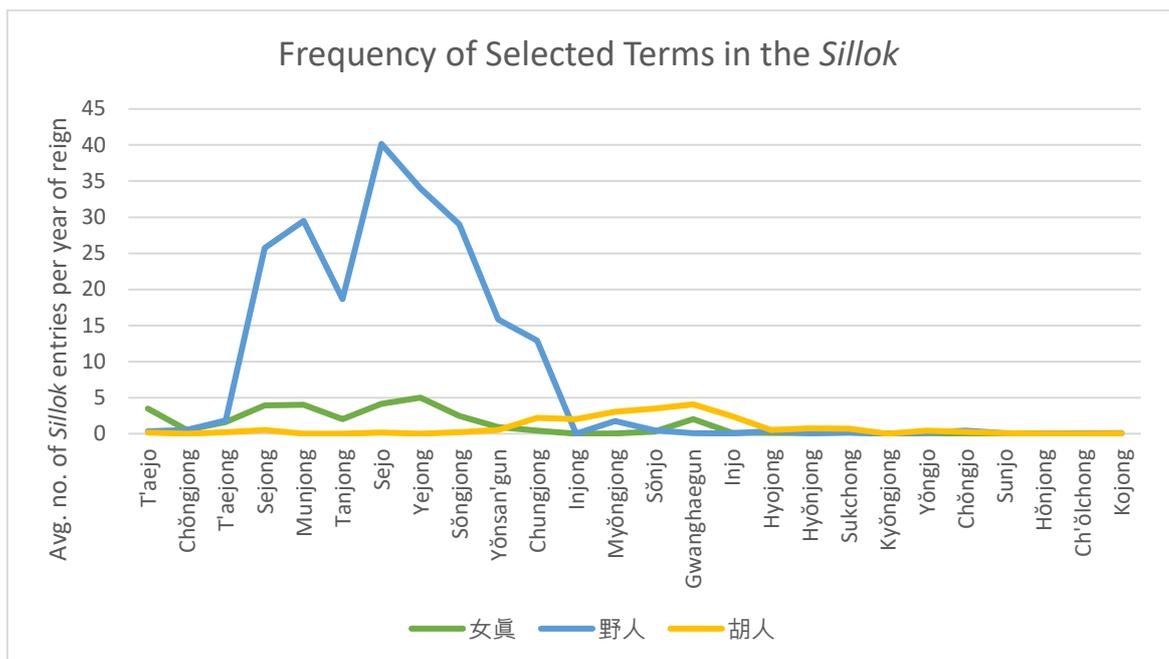
¹⁶⁰ Based on the raw data, I could have also calculated the proportional occurrence of one term in relation to the other two terms. However, the resulting percentages would have been misleading: especially in early Chosŏn usage, “*yain*” and “*hoin*” were near-synonyms at best, making it impossible for us to treat their respective occurrences as evidence of one term being preferred over the other when referring to one and the same thing.

¹⁶¹ The *Sŏnjo sillok* was compiled in 1609-1616 and the *Kwanghaegun ilgi* in 1624-1627 and 1633.

Graph 1. Occurrence of Selected Terms in the *Sillok* by Reign: “Yöjin,” “Yain,” and “Hoin”



Graph 2. Frequency of Selected Terms in the *Sillok* (No. of *Sillok* Entries ÷ Reign Duration in Years)



sense of this apparently premature *yain-to-hoin* shift, then, a brief digression on the prior meanings of *ho* and their respective historical contexts seems in order.

First, an etymology of *hu* in the Chinese context: meaning “dewlap” in the primary sense, *hu* was used as a catchall term for pastoral nomads threatening China’s northern borders in the late Warring States period and then became an alternative designation for the Xiongnu in the Han period.¹⁶² For several centuries hence, the *hu* label continued to be attached to the Xiongnu and other northern nomadic peoples while also beginning to appear in the names of imported foodstuffs to denote their foreign origin, as in *hoch’o* 胡椒 (C. *hujiao*), the term for pepper, and *hodo* 胡桃 (C. *hutao*) for walnut.¹⁶³ We encounter the last clear indication of this trend in a *Zizhi tongjian* (Comprehensive Mirror to Aid in Government) entry for the first month of 634, where the Taizong emperor of Tang, as proof of his far-reaching dominion, humiliates a chieftain from the southern Lingnan region and Illig Qaghan of the Turks by ordering them to sing and dance together at his palace. Others in attendance are said to have laughed and joked: “This is the first time in history that northern (*hu*) and southern (*yue*) barbarians have been part of the same family.”¹⁶⁴ Not long thereafter, *hu* lost its northern nomadic connotations and came to refer almost exclusively to Central Asians, that is, peoples associated with the west of China proper: Sogdians, Persians, and Buddhist monks of Sogdian, Indian, or Tibetan origin.¹⁶⁵ The seemingly abrupt shift in the use of *hu* during the Tang period has attracted the attention of numerous sinologists, who have speculated on a possible

¹⁶² Di Cosmo, *Ancient China and Its Enemies*, p. 129.

¹⁶³ Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A Manual*, p. 725.

¹⁶⁴ Cited in Skaff, *Sui-Tang China and Its Turko-Mongol Neighbors*, p. 58. The four-character idiom, “*hu yue yi jia* 胡越一家,” popularized by this incident denotes the vastness and ethnic diversity of the Chinese empire or, in an ahistorical sense, the coming together of persons of disparate backgrounds under a single roof.

¹⁶⁵ Chen, *Multicultural China in the Early Middle Ages*, pp. 93-94; Marc S. Abramson, *Ethnic Identity in Tang China*, pp. viii-ix and pp. 53-54.

ethnic link between the Xiongnu and the Iranian peoples of Central Asia, but their findings based on existing archaeological and textual data have been as yet inconclusive.¹⁶⁶

Post-Tang uses of the *hu* label, on the other hand, have attracted considerably less scholarly attention, and as a non-specialist I have struggled to find more than a few passing comments on the subject. I can only point out that in the Southern Song, Neo-Confucian scholars arguing for a tougher stance against the Jurchen Jin referred to the Jurchens as *huren*,¹⁶⁷ and then in the Yuan-Ming transition, the Red Turbans revived the term as part of their anti-Yuan rhetoric. An entry in the *Koryŏsa* provides us with a clear example of the latter:

Aggrieved by the prolonged subjugation of the people under the *hu*, we have raised troops to reclaim the Central Plains [中原]. To the east, we have advanced past Shandong 齊魯; to the west, we have gone beyond Chang'an [函秦]; to the south, we have passed Fujian and Guangdong [閩廣]; and to the north we have progressed to Hebei and Liaoning [幽燕]. All have gladly joined our side, just as the hungry would delight at a good meal or the ailing at a cure. We have now instructed our generals to maintain strict control over their soldiers so as not to cause a disturbance [to these people]. Those who follow us we shall comfort; those who resist us we shall punish.¹⁶⁸

The Red Turbans threatened the Koryŏ court with the above proclamation in the second lunar month of 1359, nine months before their first raid on Koryŏ territory.

The Koryŏ king and his officials would have very seldom, if ever, encountered *hu* used in this way before, but the message would have read loud and clear.¹⁶⁹ Written in the language of Sino-Confucian universalism, the Red Turbans' proclamation uses

¹⁶⁶ Chen, *Multicultural China in the Early Middle Ages*, pp. 93-94. It has also been suggested that the Xiongnu were Huns; see, for example, Etienne de la Vaissiere, "Huns et Xiongnu," *Central Asiatic Journal* 49 (2005): pp. 3-26.

¹⁶⁷ Dikotter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China: Hong Kong Memoirs*, p. 22.

¹⁶⁸ *Koryŏsa* (1359/02/22)

¹⁶⁹ During the Mongol overlordship of Korea, it was common practice in Koryŏ official discourse to use the uncontroversial terms “元” (Yuan) and “元中” (Yuan China) to refer to the Yuan and “帝” (emperor) to refer to the Yuan emperor.

the traditional place names of Chinese antiquity to mark out their territory and presumes both a civilizational and experiential sameness between the Chinese and Koreans in contradistinction to the *hu*, the Yuan Mongols. In the *Ming shilu* (Veritable Records of the Ming), Zhu Yuanzhang, the Red Turban leader who would soon establish the Ming dynasty, is shown continuing to draw on this rhetoric in a 1365 speech to his Han Chinese followers:

The Yuan were originally *huren* [胡人] who arose in the deserts and came into control of China quite suddenly, uniting all within the seas. At the onset of their dynasty the officials who assisted them were worthy and those recommended for appointment were all men of virtue... But later on morally inferior persons [小人] assumed authority and evil persons clambered for advancement. They selected their relatives and cronies and formed cliques so that officials in both the Capital and the provinces became avaricious and shameless. . . . Now, at the outset of a founding, if we do not firmly establish a legal system in order to eliminate evil practices I fear in the future officials will follow the old ways and will be unable to straighten things out. It is imperative to employ the virtuous and able in order to foster good government.¹⁷⁰

Zhu appears to use “*huren*” in a strictly ethno-geographical sense, but this label proceeds to take on connotations of moral inferiority and political corruption over the course of his speech. The thesis that even non-Han Chinese may be Confucianized and transformed into virtuous subjects and rulers is disregarded, in favor of an ethnocentric understanding of *hua*. A comparative reading of the Red Turbans’ proclamation to the Koryo court and the above speech, therefore, would suggest that Zhu had been conscious of his audience and was inclined to draw on different strands of *hua-yi* discourse accordingly.

If we take a moment now to consider why the Xiongnu, Sogdians, Tang Buddhists, Jin Jurchens, and Yuan Mongols were by turns dubbed *huren*, the most plausible, though deceptively simple, explanation to come to mind is that they had all

¹⁷⁰ *Ming shilu* 211, cited in Farmer, *Zhu Yuanzhang and Early Ming Legislation*, p. 31.

risen up as rival polities, as usurpers, or, in the case of Tang Buddhists, as a rival religio-cultural system to incur significant disruptions to the Han Chinese hegemony. The Xiongnu formed a confederacy and rose to such great power that the Han dynastic founder Gaozu was forced to sign a peace treaty, marry his daughter to the Xiongnu ruler, and pay annual tribute;¹⁷¹ the Sogdians, the primary instigators of the An Lushan Rebellion, set up the Yan dynasty and fought for over a decade to overthrow the Tang; Tang Buddhists, who became easy targets after the An Lushan Rebellion, were persecuted on grounds of having corrupted Chinese morals and customs; the Jin Jurchens threatened the continuation of the Song dynasty after conquering both the Khitan Liao and the northern half of Song China; and then the Yuan Mongols stepped in, thwarting any ambitions the Southern Song may have harbored, to become the first non-Chinese to rule over all of China. There were other derogatory words in the Chinese vocabulary by which non-Han Chinese peoples and things could be identified—*fan* 番, *man* 蠻, *yi* 夷, and *rong* 戎, for example—and yet, these do not seem to have possessed quite the same evocative power or rhetorical function as *hu*. *Huren* were more than simply non-Han Chinese, un-Sinicized foreigners; they were the biggest perceived threats to the prevailing world order.

How, then, did *hu* translate in the Korean context? The earliest recorded uses of *ho*, which we find in the *Samguk sagi* and *Haedong kosŭngjŏn*, indicate that the meanings of *ho* in pre-Chosŏn usage generally coincided with those of *hu* in Han and Tang usage. In these three sources, *ho* appears in reference to the Xiongnu,¹⁷² the Central Asian soldiers conscripted by the Tang in the Koguryŏ-Tang War,¹⁷³ and the

¹⁷¹ Rawski, “Sons of Heaven,” p. 237.

¹⁷² *Samguk sagi* 13; *Koguryŏ pon’gi* 1.

¹⁷³ *Samguk sagi* 21; *Koguryŏ pon’gi* 9.

Indian monks Malananda and Ado;¹⁷⁴ all these uses were direct assimilations, comparable to how the Chinese would have typically used *hu* at each point in time. On the other hand, the Koryŏ ruling elite seem to have been more cautious when it came to designating Koryŏ's own neighbors: Kim Pusik mentions in his eulogy to King Injong that the late king was quick to reprimand his court poet for referring to the Jurchen Jin as *hojŏk* 胡狄, barbarian northerners, calling the act reckless and disrespectful.¹⁷⁵ It is only towards the end of the *Koryŏsa* and *Koryŏsa chŏryŏ*, in the context of a politically and economically destabilized Koryŏ in its final throes, where we begin to encounter deliberate Korean appropriations of *ho*. More specifically, it was in the hands of a few reform-minded bureaucrats and their literati associates, all of whom had strong connections to the Royal Confucian Academy (Sŏnggyun'gwan) and had found a likeminded ally in Yi Sŏnggye, that *ho* finally took on the additional meanings of "Buddhist" and "Yuan Mongol" and came to signify un-Confucian, hence illegitimate, power structures.¹⁷⁶ To take only the most striking example, consider the uses of *ho* in the following memorial submitted by Yun Sojong and Sŏng Sŏngnin in 1390:

The Later Qin embraced the teachings of the barbarian monk [胡僧] Kumarasūp [Kumārajīva] and perished soon thereafter; the Yuan embraced the teachings of the alien monk [蕃僧] P'arabalje and later served Chigong [Dhyānabhadra] hand and foot, praying for prosperity and longevity all the while, only to be defeated at Yingchang. In the teachings of the Buddha, there is no father and no king. The Later Qin and the Yuan insisted on the ways of the Five Barbarians [五胡]

¹⁷⁴ *Samguk sagi* 24; *Haedong kosŭng chŏn* 1.

¹⁷⁵ *Koryŏsa* 17; *Koryŏsa chŏryŏ* 10 (1146/02/28).

¹⁷⁶ These individuals included Sŏng Sŏngnin (1338-1423), Chŏng Tojŏn (1342-1398), Yun Sojong (1345-1393), Pak Ch'ŏ (1365-1454), and Kim Ch'ŏ (?-?), who had previously taught at the Royal Confucian Academy or were still based there; as such, they were at the forefront of devising and advocating Confucian approaches to statecraft and reform. All of these individuals also came from politically minor descent groups whose fate would change as a result of their alliance with Yi Sŏnggye: three of the descent groups, the Ch'angnyŏng Sŏng, Ponghwa Chŏng, and Hamyang Pak, went on to gain representation in the central government during the first decade or so of the Chosŏn dynasty (1392-1405). See Tables 3.4 and 3.6 in Duncan, *The Origins of the Chosŏn Dynasty*,

and northern barbarians [北狄], instead of learning from the sage-kings. Having thus defied the Three Bonds and Five Constant Virtues and sinned before Heaven, they have only themselves to blame for their early demise.

There is no better time than the present for Your Majesty to make and lay down the law, to lead by example, and to pave the way for the tens of thousands of generations to come. How is it that Your Majesty, now of all times, desires to repeat the mistakes of the barbarian northerners [胡狄] and embrace barbarian doctrines [胡教]? One with a country in his hands should seek to establish a moral government and reap the benefits. . . . I beg Your Majesty not to honor someone who has no respect for the scholarly gentleman or for one's father, but rather to honor Yao and Shun and promote the Way of Confucius and Mencius so that the Three Han may prosper in peace.¹⁷⁷

King Kongyang had wished to appoint a Buddhist preceptor, and the above was Yun and Sŏng's response, giving strong indications of their Confucian, reformist outlook that would eventually carry over into their support for Yi Sŏnggye's establishment of the Chosŏn dynasty. In a quintessentially Confucian style, the memorial invokes past events in the history of Sinitic civilization and uses the *ho* label numerous times to drive home the point that Buddhism was a heterodox ideology that could lead to Koryŏ's own downfall. If Koryŏ Koreans had hitherto understood *ho* as an ethnic slur, possessing quite specific connotations of non-Han Chineseness, here, through a series of careful allusions to historical events and historiographical antecedents, the label became partially de-ethnicized and reworked as the antithesis to the Confucian moral and political order.

The term *oho* 五胡 (Ch. *wuhu*) is an explicit reference to the five non-Han Chinese peoples associated with the downfall of the Western Jin in the early fourth century—the Xiongnu, Xianbei, Jie, Qing, and Di—and has precise antecedents in

¹⁷⁷ *Koryŏsa chŏryŏ* 34.

early Tang historiography, most notably in the *Jin shu* (Book of Jin).¹⁷⁸ The “ho” 胡 in *hosŭng* 胡僧 (C. *huseng*), *hojŏk* 胡狄 (Ch. *hudi*), and *hogyo* 胡教 (Ch. *hujiao*) functions as a qualifier but denotes something very different in each instance, standing for “Indian,” “Later Qin and Yuan,” and “Buddhist,” respectively. The term *hosŭng* can be traced back to earlier usages, as evidenced in the *Samguk sagi*, *Haedong kosŭngjŏn*, *Samguk yusa*, and again, in the histories compiled in the early Tang;¹⁷⁹ we are then left with *hogyo* and *hojŏk*, the two most controversial terms in this memorial, whose appearance may be attributed to the particular interests and beliefs of their coiners.

Despite the longstanding acceptance of *hosŭng* as a general term for foreign Buddhist monks, references to Buddhism as *hogyo* remained practically unheard of in the Koryŏ court until as late as when this memorial was submitted. As is well known, Buddhism enjoyed a privileged position in Koryŏ society, but the unpredictable social mobility and political interference this facilitated, as exemplified by the inordinate royal favor bestowed upon the monk Sin Ton, proved intolerable to the scholar-officials in central government who were just as much interested in preserving their authority as in finding Confucian solutions to Koryŏ’s institutional and social problems.¹⁸⁰ Yi Sŏnggye’s assumption of de facto power in 1388 was their chance to launch a full-fledged movement against Buddhism and remove non-Confucian elements from the political sphere for good; alongside more sophisticated philosophical arguments, their remarkably emboldened polemics featured the

¹⁷⁸ “Wuhu” appears nine times in the *Jin shu* and three times in the *Bei shi* (History of Northern Dynasties), according to the Scripta Sinica database (<http://hanchi.ihp.sinica.edu.tw/ihp/hanji.htm>).

¹⁷⁹ The Chinese use of “huseng” to refer to Buddhist monks of Central Asian or Indian origin is well exemplified in the *Liang shu* (Book of Liang) and in the *Song gaoseng zhuan* (Biographies of Eminent Monks Compiled in the Song). On the prevalence of this term in Tang official and everyday discourse, see Marc S. Abramson, *Ethnic Identity in Tang China*, pp. viii-ix and 53-54.

¹⁸⁰ Duncan, *Origins of the Chosŏn Dynasty*, p. 255.

unprecedented use of *hogyo* to designate Buddhism. Even with the tacit support of the wider Confucian scholarly community, however, such verbal audacity seems to have backfired from time to time, as in the case of Pak Ch'o and his famous anti-Buddhist memorial of 1391. The memorial is said to have caused such a stir in the Koryŏ court that Pak's sympathizers sought to silence Pak rather than rush to his defense.¹⁸¹

Whereas it would take almost another two centuries for Buddhism to be relegated to the sphere of popular and private religions, the labeling of the Yuan Mongols as *hojŏk* may have found somewhat readier acceptance in the late Koryŏ court, facilitated at least in part by the recent memory of Naghachu's exploits in Liaodong. This ironic yet necessary assimilation of Red Turban rhetoric supported the scholar-officials' vision of a more centralized economy and a stronger bureaucratic government centered around a "sage-king," neither of which was going to be viable if Koryŏ had to engage in costly hostilities with the Ming.¹⁸² As the Ming had based its legitimacy on having restored Han Chinese rule of China and saved Sinitic civilization from outsider oppression, it made practical sense for Koryŏ to revise its own outlook and rhetoric accordingly. Along with the Khitan Liao and Jurchen Jin, the Mongol Yuan had to be recast as an illegitimate dynasty that had violated the Mandate of Heaven; meanwhile, Koryŏ could claim affinity to the Ming on grounds of a shared moral and historical consciousness that dated back to antiquity.

In short, Yun and Sŏng's memorial was a product of the pragmatic if opportunistic considerations that informed the Confucian, reformist approach to

¹⁸¹ *Koryŏsa* 120:34b-39a; *Koryŏsa chŏryŏ* 35 (1391/06)

¹⁸² On the motivations, see Deuchler, *The Confucian Transformation of Korea*, pp. 90-92.

restoring the stability and credibility of a country in existential crisis. How, with respect to rhetoric, Yun and Sǒng went about defending their anti-Buddhist, pro-Ming stance—namely, the redefinition of *ho* to encompass all that which Koryŏ could not afford to be—would later find resonances in Chosŏn court deliberations over the Japanese and Jurchen problems some two and half centuries later.

Returning to the early sixteenth century, then, where I noted a sudden revival and re-appropriation of the *ho* label, we find Chosŏn in a similar predicament of worsening external threats, a weak kingship, and unabated infighting between merit subjects and Neo-Confucian literati: the makings of another existential crisis. A close examination of the *Chungjong sillok*, where we first encounter a high occurrence of *hoin* as an exonym for the Jurchens, reveals that the first Chosŏn officials to repeatedly refer to the Jurchens as *hoin* and thereby reintroduce the term into the official vocabulary were among the most vocal and powerful authorities on Chosŏn's diplomatic and military affairs.¹⁸³ They had firsthand experience in either suppressing the Riot of the Three Ports (*Samp'o waeran*) in 1510 or fighting off the Jurchen invasion of Ch'angsŏng in 1512, which would have given them considerable leverage; moreover, most of them were merit subjects, having been involved in Yŏnsan'gun's deposition of 1506, which could mean that they were exercising their prerogative of not having to mince their words before the still young and ineffectual King Chungjong, whom they had helped to put in power.

Whatever the individual motivations of these interlocutors, it is clear at least in retrospect that their apparent scaremongering was neither groundless nor entirely in vain, but also that their foresight, despite producing resounding changes at the

¹⁸³ Notably, these individuals included Yu Sunjŏng (1459-1512), Chŏng Kwangp'il (1462-1538), Yi Changgon (b. 1474), and Yi Son (1439-1520).

discursive level, did little to prepare Chosŏn infrastructurally for the events that would devastate the country at the turn of the century. The Riot of the Three Ports was the first major incident of Japanese violence to occur on Korean soil since the founding of the Chosŏn dynasty. Fears that another similar scenario could arise, not just in the south but also in the north, were revoiced two years later by Chief State Councillor Yu Sunjong, when talk of resuming diplomatic relations with the Japanese began to percolate:

The venerable Hwanghŭi is also said to have been generous with the *waein* but surely not without first considering and preparing for the implications. We have urgent matters at hand in the south and north. It takes only a day or two for the *waeno* to reach our shores; meanwhile, the *hoin*, with their notoriously strong bows and horses, can launch a surprise attack at any time. It would be catastrophic if they captured one of our fortresses, and yet, presently, the military officers we have dispatched to the south and north are fewer than a hundred. Our enemies worry me greatly.¹⁸⁴

Yu's fears were shortly confirmed by the spate of Jurchen border incursions in the sixth and seventh months of the same year, which may not have been so disastrous in terms of Chosŏn casualties, but which nonetheless served to push border security issues higher up the Chosŏn court's agenda and crystallize official perceptions of the Jurchens and the Japanese as a two-pronged threat.¹⁸⁵ With respect to defense structures and policies, the Chosŏn court responded by stationing five hundred more Jurchen Quelling guards (*Chŏngnowi*) in the north¹⁸⁶ and bringing together the various agencies that had been handling security-related issues to form a consolidated Border Defense Command (*Pibyŏnsa*).¹⁸⁷ With respect to discourse, not only did it

¹⁸⁴ *Chungjong sillok* 16:8a-8b (1512/intercalary 5/14).

¹⁸⁵ *Chungjong sillok* 16:37a (1512/07/13).

¹⁸⁶ *Chungjong sillok* 25:75b (1516/07/25).

¹⁸⁷ *Chungjong sillok* 28:22a (1517/06/27).

become something of an imperative to discuss the Jurchens and the Japanese in the same breath, but it also became more common to use *hoin* and *yain* interchangeably:

I would propose building fortresses in the commanderies and counties to suppress the *hoin*'s appetite for malice. Anyone not of our kind should be driven out and shown that civility [華] and barbarism [夷] shall never commingle. As for *yain* envoys, they should be made to stay in designated, sufficiently fortified lodging and prevented from coming and going at will, in the same way that *yain* and *waein* envoys are supervised in the capital. Such measures should be enough to put our minds at ease.¹⁸⁸

North Hamgyōng military commander Ch'oe Hanhong's appeal for additional security measures, above, was obviously intended to be persuasive and makes use of the *wae* and *ho* labels to this end. Ch'oe's rationale for segregating Jurchen visitors from the Chosŏn populace, though, is most striking: in alluding to the *hwa-yi* distinction in the context of Chosŏn-Jurchen relations, where China is of zero relevance, he presumes a Chosŏn-centered regional order with its own geopolitical and ethnocultural connotations.

As I have suggested earlier, whether Chosŏn Koreans believed China to be both the center of imperial power and the sole seat of civilization is highly debatable and becomes all the more so if we are concerned with the self-image of early Chosŏn ruling elites. Participating in a Ming-centered world order does not seem to have prevented the Chosŏn court from asserting suzerainty over the Jurchens and peoples of Tsushima, on grounds that Chosŏn was more civilized and had more to give than receive.¹⁸⁹ Similarly, there is little textual evidence from before the sixteenth century to suggest that Chosŏn, when not in direct dealings with the Ming, envisioned itself

¹⁸⁸ *Chungjong sillok* 54:4b (1525/04/05).

¹⁸⁹ Chōng Taham argues this point most persuasively in “Chosŏn ch’ogi yain kwa taemado e taehan pyōlli, pyōnbyōng ūisik ūi hyōngsōng kwa kyōngch’agwan ūi p’agyōn” [Creating Chosŏn’s Suzerainty over Jurchen and Tsushima and the Dispatch of Kyōngch’agwan], *Tongbang hakchi* 141 (2008): pp. 221-266.

as a model tributary state.¹⁹⁰ So long as “civilization” was understood primarily as “Confucian,” Chosŏn could be identified as China’s tributary or equal, which is to suggest that within the Chosŏn court’s internal discussions, it may have been considered deliberate and bold, but not illogical, for the *hwa* concept to be invoked solely in reference to Chosŏn.

Now we have come full circle to the question of why the *yain-to-hoin* shift might have occurred before the Manchu invasions rather than after. We have seen how the *ho* label was associated with heterodoxy and illegitimate assumptions of power through its particular historical usages in the Chinese and Korean contexts; we have also seen how it was commonly invoked for rhetorical and sensational effect in incitements to action and change on an institutional scale. It seems possible, then, for us to treat new appropriations of the *ho* label as the earliest signals, and not simply the products or aftereffects, of epochal changes in history, in that they can often be traced to the foresight and ambition of specific individuals or groups wishing to draw public attention to a problematic status quo. In other words, we may need to accord more importance to the almost century-long buildup to the Imjin War and to the Imjin War itself in shifting Chosŏn perceptions of the world and self, instead of focusing too narrowly on the Ming-Qing transition as the primary cause. Likewise, it needs to be emphasized that the association of *ho* with Manchu, unparalleled elsewhere in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries,¹⁹¹ had much to do with Korean peninsula’s particular geographical location and geopolitical history, and that this lexico-semantic change both drew on and lent support to already existing conceptions of Chosŏn as an independent embodiment of *hwa*.

¹⁹⁰ Kye, “Huddling under the Ming Umbrella,” pp. 41-46; Bohnet, “Ruling Ideology and Marginal Subjects,” p. 480.

¹⁹¹ In the Chinese context, the association of “ho” with Manchu would only come about during the Taiping Rebellion of the mid-nineteenth century. See Naquin, *Peking*, p. 385.

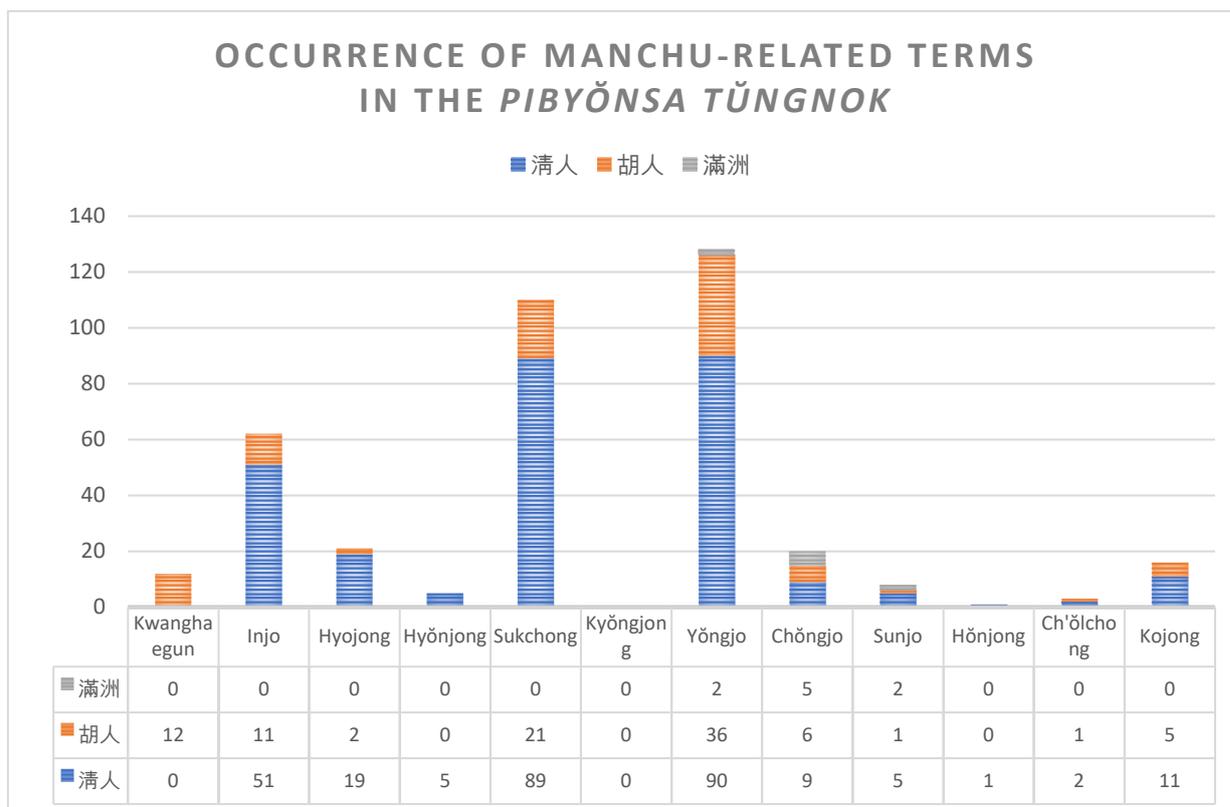
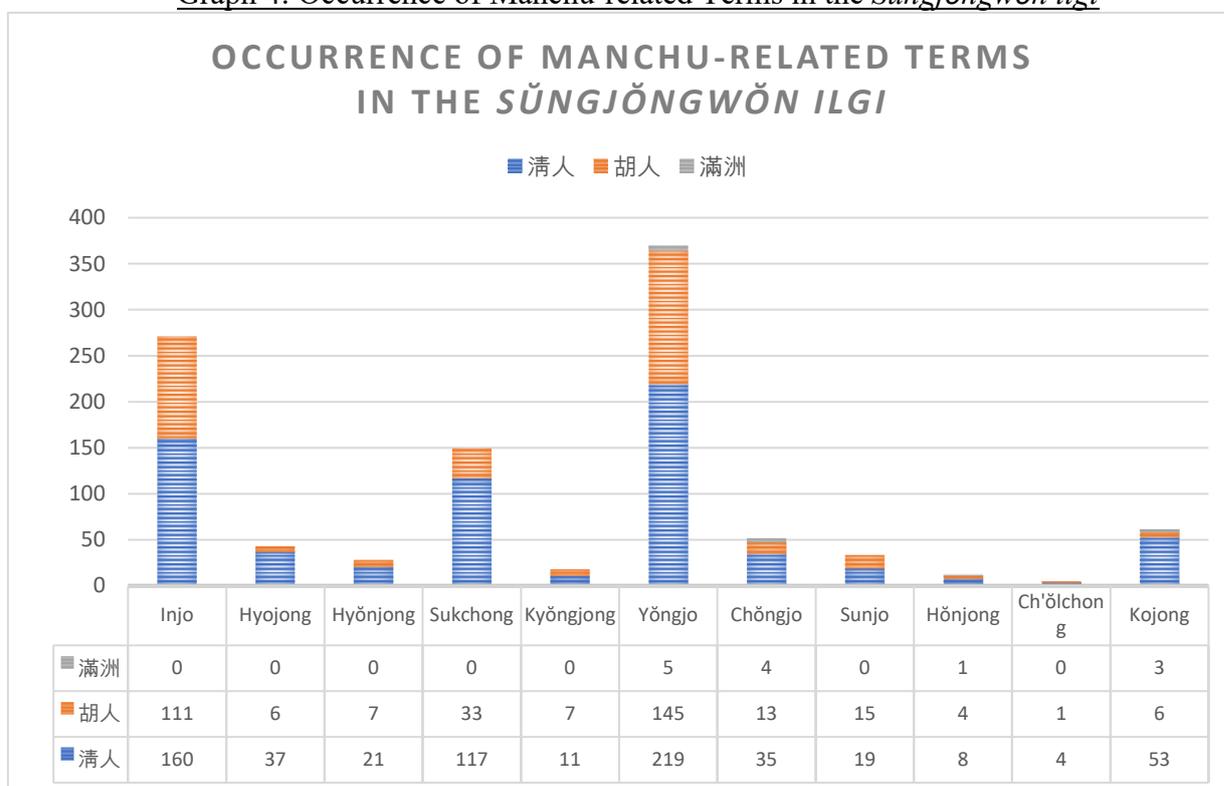
Labels for the Manchus in Official Records and in *Yŏnhaengnok*

Following Hong Taiji's proclamations in 1635-1636 that Jurchens would henceforth be known as Manchus and the Manchu-led Later Jin as Qing, the terms *Manju* 滿洲, *Ch'ōngguk* 清國, and *Ch'ōngin* 清人 were gradually and reluctantly incorporated into the Chosŏn official vocabulary. The heated debate surrounding if and when Chosŏn should acknowledge the dynastic name change from *Chin'guk* 金國 to *Ch'ōngguk* 清國 dragged on for months, from the sixth to the twelfth lunar month of 1636,¹⁹² but in the immediate aftermath of the second Manchu invasion of Chosŏn, both the terms *Ch'ōngguk* and *Ch'ōngin* started being used in Chosŏn official discourse.¹⁹³ The term *Manju* on the other hand, does not appear in the *Sillok* until another decade later, in *Injo sillok* 48:2b (1647/02/05), and is used in only twenty-four other entries in the entire *Sillok* corpus.

This same pattern of designating the Manchus as *Ch'ōngin* or *hoin* while generally avoiding the term *Manju* can be observed in the *Pibyŏnsa tŭngnok* and *Sŭngjŏngwŏn ilgi*; the only exceptions occur in transcripts of interrogations of castaways and border trespassers, wherein the subjects were asked to specify their ethnicity. The slightly higher proportion of occurrences of *hoin* in the *Sŭngjŏngwŏn ilgi* than in the *Pibyŏnsa tŭngnok* may be explained by the differences in content and function between the two sources: the former provides a fuller, almost verbatim account of bureaucratic discussions and thus contains more speech acts of an argumentative or advisory nature (e.g., *so* 疏 and *ŭi* 議), whereas the latter consists mostly of condensed entries and incident reports (*kye* 啓) serving to inform rather

¹⁹² *Injo sillok* 32:30a-32:31b (1636/06/17), 33:23b-33:24a (1636/09/19), 33:26b (1636/09/27), 33:37a-33:37b (1636/11/24), 33:39b-33:40b (1636/12/06).

¹⁹³ *Injo sillok* 34:19a (1637/01/26).

Graph 3: Occurrence of Manchu-related Terms in the *Pibyönsa tŭngnok*Graph 4: Occurrence of Manchu-related Terms in the *Sŭngjŏngwŏn ilgi*

than persuade or influence the throne. What we can ascertain from looking at Graphs 3 and 4 is that the term *hoin* remained in official use until the end of the Chosŏn dynasty. However, anti-Manchu sentiments tended to wax and wane from the mid-seventeenth century onwards, depending on the incidence of border-related issues, the leadership style of the reigning monarch, and the internal politics of the Chosŏn court.

The Chosŏn government under Sukchong and Yŏngjo introduced new state rituals to commemorate the Imjin War and give renewed expression to Ming loyalism, which in turn served to define and legitimate the two kings' royal authority.¹⁹⁴ In 1704, the sixtieth anniversary of the fall of the Ming, Sukchong erected the Taebodan shrine to thank the Wanli emperor for his intervention during the Imjin War and to recognize the Chosŏn monarchy's role in continuing the legacy of Wanli's imperial court, thereby cementing Chosŏn's image as the last surviving exemplar of Confucian civilization. Later, Yŏngjo nominated the Hongwu and Chongzhen emperors, the first and last rulers of Ming China, to be worshipped alongside the Wanli emperor at the Taebodan; on the nineteenth day of the third month of 1764, he performed an elaborate ceremony to remember the Chongzheng emperor's death, which had occurred on that same day one hundred twenty years before.¹⁹⁵ The anti-Manchu climate that Sukchong and Yŏngjo actively encouraged is well attested by the very high occurrences of *hoin* in the official records for their reign periods, which are second to only that of Injo's reign period. A more detailed analysis of these figures, which I will reserve for a future study, would require considering the impact of the Qing's mapping projects in the Paektusan region during

¹⁹⁴ Kuwano Eiji, "Chosŏn Korea and Ming China after the Imjin Waeran," p. 295; Bohnet, "Ruling Ideology and Marginal Subjects," p. 483.

¹⁹⁵ Kuwano Eiji, "Chosŏn Korea and Ming China after the Imjin Waeran," pp. 295-296.

Sukchong's reign and Yŏngjo's conscious efforts towards further Confucianizing Chosŏn Korea and putting an end to factional strife.

Turning to *yŏnhaengnok*, we encounter a low occurrence of *hoin* coupled with a remarkably high occurrence of *Manju*; we also find a consistent preference for the ethnically oriented term *Hanin* to designate the Han Chinese, over the more geographically oriented term *Chunggugin* and the more reverent, culturally oriented terms *hwain* and *Tangin*. The inclusion of Ch'oe Pu's *P'yohaerok*, Hŏ Pong's *Choch'ŏn'gi*, Yi Hangbok's *Choch'ŏnnok*, and Hong Ikhan's *Choch'ŏn hanghaerok* in this analysis allows us to discern a surge of interest in ethnic categories from the mid-seventeenth to the early nineteenth century.

Hŏ Pong (1551-1588), like Ch'oe Pu, achieved lasting renown for his travel account, which underwent multiple printings in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Hong Ikhan (1586-1637), on the other hand, was perhaps better known for his Ming loyalism and vehement opposition to negotiating peace terms with the Qing during the second Manchu invasion; he was subsequently taken prisoner by the Manchus and killed on grounds of "obstructing peace" (*chŏkhwa*).¹⁹⁶ His travel account of 1625 shows the first signs of sustained interest in ethnic differences, as he had traveled at a time when the Jurchens under Nurhaci already controlled Liaodong and were causing the region's inhabitants to flee in the tens of thousands to neighboring Chosŏn.

Whether Hong Ikhan had managed to set a precedent for subsequent *yŏnhaengnok* authors cannot be ascertained from this data alone, but what does

¹⁹⁶ *Injo sillok* 34:33b-34a (1637/0305).

become clear is that Kim Ch'angö̃p's frequent use of the *ho* label was unusual for the genre. On the other hand, a closer look at Kim's descriptions and evaluations of Manchus reveals a gradual change of opinion over the course of his journey, which suggests that Kim had used the *ho* label as much as he did in order to temper some of his more controversial views and avoid alienating his readers.

Images of Manchus in Kim Ch'angö̃p's *Yö̃nhaeng ilgi*

Kim Ch'angö̃p's first encounter with Manchus takes place in the no man's land between the Chosön and Qing territories. Three Manchu soldiers pass where the embassy has set up camp for the night, but the sighting appears to have been brief, perhaps too brief to allow more than a mention. The following morning, however, the Manchu soldiers make a reappearance and approach the Korean embassy's interpreters for some tobacco:

Three Qing people approached us. They were the same men who had passed us the day before. One of them came galloping on his horse while the other two came walking on foot. They went to where the interpreters were and started smoking the tobacco given them. With their clothes and hats so tattered and their faces so filthy, they hardly looked human at first glance. Yi Yuryang spoke to them while Pak Tonghwa, the chief interpreter, stood by not saying a word. It was the strangest thing. When asked about the incident concerning the Crown Prince, they said they knew nothing. We gave them some wine and sent them on their way.¹⁹⁷

The closer encounter would have enabled Kim to describe the soldiers individually, but he comments only on their unimpressive attire and “filthy” faces, which to him serve as sufficient markers of their beastlike lack of civility. It is worth noting that the Koreans in this scene are named and shown acting hospitably (to a degree),

¹⁹⁷ Kim Ch'ang'öp, *Nogajae yö̃nhaeng ilgi*, in *Yö̃nhaengnok chönjip* Vol. 32, pp. 371-372: 清人三人來，卽昨日過去者也。一人驅馬從山坡間過去，兩人步過幕前，到諸譯坐處，索烟吸之，衣帽敝惡，面目醜陋，始見不似人，李惟亮與之問答，首譯朴東和，在傍不出一聲，可異也。問皇太子事，對以不知。餽燒酒以送。

whereas the Manchus are presented as a nameless, unsightly group with nothing to offer the Koreans. If Kim had any preconceptions about Manchus being culturally inferior, nothing about this first encounter serves to prove him wrong. However, at the palisade gate, beyond which lies Qing China, Kim is afforded the opportunity to observe many more Manchus, including the local government officials of Fenghuang. Kim writes:

In the afternoon the palisade gate was opened and hundreds of Manchus came rushing through. Much to my surprise, most of them were large in stature and many splendidly dressed—not at all like the three barbarians I had first come across [on no man’s land].¹⁹⁸

The sight of tall and well-dressed Manchus surprises Kim, and yet he continues to refer to the Fenghuang officials as *ho* and maintains in his description a sense of hierarchy and difference.

About a fortnight into his journey, however, we find Kim interacting with the locals and displaying a growing preoccupation with what they might think of him, a Korean. Initially, he only approaches Han Chinese men for their opinions, but responses of the reassuring, validating type prove hard to come by. Kim approaches a young man who strikes him as very handsome and asks his name, his age, what he has studied, and whether he has any siblings. Afterwards, Kim asks: “Do you like our style of dress?” The young man replies that he does not. Unprepared for such a reply, Kim quickly changes the subject, asking if he knows of any scholars in the area. Their conversation shortly comes to an end, and Kim gives the young man a calligraphy brush.¹⁹⁹ The next day, Kim decides to approach another Han Chinese man:

¹⁹⁸ Kim Ch’ang’öp, *Nogajae yonhaeng ilgi*, in *Yonhaengnok chönjip* Vol. 32, pp. 373-374: 午後開柵門，數百清人，一擁出來，乍見駭怕，其中身材雄壯，衣帽鮮華者居多，非初見三胡之比。

¹⁹⁹ Kim Ch’ang’öp, *Nogajae yonhaeng ilgi*, in *Yonhaengnok chönjip* Vol. 32, pp. 423-424.

We stopped for breakfast at an established owned by Wang Wu, a Han Chinese. He appeared to be around fifty years of age and said that he had moved to this place from Liaodong. Also, he mentioned: “Liaodong was where your people used to live.” Seeing my leopard fur coat, which I had taken off and draped over a rock, he immediately tried it on and said it was very nice. I asked, “What do you think of our style of dress?” “It’s good,” he replied, and then appeared to want to say something further, taking off his own hat and pointing at his head. I instructed Shin Chisun to interpret for him. Wang was saying that his father had worn hats of the Ming style. I asked him why in the beginning he had claimed to be Manchu if he was in fact Han Chinese, to which he replied: “I may have Han ancestry, but as a subject of the emperor, how can I not be Manchu?”²⁰⁰

Kim may have hoped to find a Ming loyalist in Wang, given Wang’s Han Chinese ancestry, but instead comes to discover the extent of Qing influence on the country’s people. Disappointed with the lukewarm responses so far, Kim resorts to asking a young Manchu boy for his thoughts.

The conversation that ensues between Kim and the boy is significant in a number of respects. It is the first extended interaction between Kim and a Manchu, recounted in full, and also constitutes the first time Kim shows very clear, unreserved interest in the particulars of a Manchu’s socioeconomic background, education, and personal views. As a result, the Manchu boy emerges as a likable and precocious individual, which runs counter to Kim’s tendency to portray Manchus as a monolithic other to Chosŏn Koreans and the Han Chinese. Kim asks the boy tentatively: “How do my clothes look to you? I look quite funny, wouldn’t you say?” The boy replies that he would not dare laugh at Kim’s clothes, as they exemplify ritual propriety.²⁰¹

²⁰⁰ Kim Ch’ang’ŏp, *Nogajae yŏnhaeng ilgi*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip* Vol. 32, pp. 425-426:

入漢人王五家朝飯，主人年可五十許，言自遼東移居于此，因言遼東卽你們住的，見余豹裘在炕上，卽取而穿之曰，好好，余問你見俺們冠服如何，曰，好，遂脫帽，指其頭有所言，使申之淳問之，以爲渠父亦曾着網巾戴笠云，初稱滿州人，詰問然後，始告以實，問前後之言何異，則以爲先世雖漢人，旣爲今皇帝所屬人，豈非滿州。

²⁰¹ Kim Ch’ang’ŏp, *Nogajae yŏnhaeng ilgi*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip* Vol. 32, p. 433:

有一胡兒在其前，眉目可愛 . . . 問俺們衣冠，你見如何，好笑否，答不敢笑，實說無妨，答曰，衣冠乃是禮也，有何笑乎。

Impressed with the boy's answer, Kim asks whether anyone holds a title in his family. When the boy replies that he comes from a poor, humble background, Kim asks him his name, his age, whether his parents are still alive, whether he has any siblings, and how many books he has read—questions that have hitherto only come up in his conversations with Han Chinese men.

Kim engages the boy further, asking if there are any *talcha* 獐子 in his village and whether he thinks of them and “Koryŏ” people in the same way. The boy replies that there is a difference: Koryŏ people are superior, and *talcha* are inferior. Intrigued, Kim asks how Qing China is any different from its barbarian neighbors, considering that Qing people, too, shave their heads; the boy explains that it is on the basis of ritual propriety, and not head-shaving, that his people differentiate themselves from barbarians.²⁰² Later, reflecting on his encounter, Kim points out that the boy would have taken “talcha” to mean “Mongol,” whereas for Chosŏn Koreans it could also refer to Manchus.²⁰³ This recognition of semantic discrepancies may be read as a subtle comment on the relativity and instability of the civilized-barbarian dichotomy in actual application, an insistence that becomes more pronounced as Kim's narrative progresses.

Once in Beijing, Kim revises his opinion of Manchus further, even conceding to them certain positive attributes and a level of sophistication that are found wanting

²⁰² Kim Ch'ang'ŏp, *Nogajae yŏnhaeng ilgi*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip* Vol. 32, p. 434:

問此村亦有獐子否，答無有。問你們與獐子結親否，答夷狄之人，怎麼合我們中國結親。問我高麗，亦是東夷，你看俺們，亦與獐子一樣麼，答貴國乃上等之人，獐子乃下流之人，怎麼一樣。問你知中國與夷狄有異者，聽誰說，答在書，孔子之言，吾其披髮左衽矣。問獐子剃頭，你們亦剃頭，有何分別中國夷狄，答雖我們剃頭有禮，獐子剃頭無禮。

²⁰³ Kim Ch'ang'ŏp, *Nogajae yŏnhaeng ilgi*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip* Vol. 32, p. 434:

余以清人爲獐子，而奇謨認以蒙古，故其答如此。

in Chosŏn Koreans. Upon examining the elaborate dress code of the Qing, Kim laments the situation in his own country:

Our country calls itself a country of proper official dress, and yet all we have are belts and strings of coins to denote status and wealth. Our own dress code makes no distinction between the literary and military professions or between the rich and poor. Moreover, I find it embarrassing and absurd that our Chief Envoy and Deputy Envoy wear the same crane motifs on their robes, thereby causing much unneeded confusion.

Whereas people here are mostly large in stature and quite striking in appearance, I look around at our people and can only conclude that we must be naturally small. Apart from the three main envoys, everyone looks worn and weathered from the long journey, and to make matters worse, the clothes most of us have hired are ill-fitting. The sleeves are too long and the hats come down to our eyes, making us look far from respectable.²⁰⁴

Kim makes no attempt to downplay the impressive physique and sophisticated dress code of the Qing people. Instead, he turns a critical eye on himself and his own people to point out where Chosŏn Koreans may be mistaken in their self-appraisal and views of the Manchus. Not only did the Manchus demonstrate a highly developed sense of decorum and order through their clothing, but, as Kim soon admits, they were also virtually indistinguishable from the Han Chinese.

Such discoveries may have unsettled and frustrated Kim, and yet these are relayed in a seemingly frank and straightforward manner, indicating a desire to enlighten rather than humor the reader. Still, the othering impulse, the drive to marginalize another group in assertion of one's own, remains strong: Kim transfers his othering gaze from the Manchus to the Mongols, now portraying the Mongols as

²⁰⁴ Kim Ch'ang'öp, *Nogajae yŏnhaeng ilgi*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip* Vol. 33, p. 18: 我國自謂冠帶之國，而貴賤品級之別，不過在帶與貫子。至於補服，不曾分文武貴賤，副使亦用仙鶴，與伯氏同其文，紊亂可笑。此處人，身材長大，姿貌豐偉者居多，而顧視我國人，本自矮細，又道路風塵之餘，三使臣外，率皆黧黑，所穿衣帽，又多來此而貫者，袍則長短不中，紗帽寬或至眼，望之不似人，尤可歎也。

an uncivilized, inscrutable people. He writes the following about the Mongols who had also come to Beijing to pay tribute to the Qing emperor:

When I awoke from an afternoon nap, Kang Umun came and announced: “Just over the western wall, there are Mongols picking and eating lice.” I went to the foot of the wall and stacked saddles on top of one another for me to stand on. When I managed to peer over the wall, I saw an empty lot where the Mongols were pitching dozens of tents. There must have been eighty people to each tent. The Mongols had broad cheekbones that made them look very different from Qing people, and their clothes were so worn and dirty they hardly looked human. One barbarian had stripped off his clothes and was picking lice off his bare body. Whenever he caught a louse, he would promptly put it in his mouth, which was even more disgusting. But Mongols are not alone in eating lice; Han Chinese people do it, too. . . . I heard that this time there were also women among the Mongols who had come, but I did not see any in this instance. From what I have heard, they dress like Manchu women and wear their hair like our countrywomen. However, they come and go as they please and do not shy away from strangers, which makes them no better than wild beasts, I would say.²⁰⁵

Kim’s description of the Mongols echoes his earliest encounter with Manchus, who, too, looked less than human to him at the time. Kim supplements his direct observations with hearsay to conclude that Mongols were “no better than wild beasts”; even if he might have been willing to revise his opinion, the wall separating him from the Mongols comes to embody a language and knowledge barrier. On at least two further occasions, Kim mentions peering over the wall at the Mongols and only being able to ascertain the number of their tents, and at other times it is the Mongols who approach the wall and become onlookers to the Chosŏn Koreans.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁵ Kim Ch’ang’ŏp, *Nogajae yŏnhaeng ilgi*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip* Vol. 33, p. 25:

承文院書員姜遇文來言，西牆外蒙古方吞虱。余往牆底，累鞍爲梯，據而視外，卽空地也，蒙古共有數十幕，而一幕八十餘人。其人皆廣額，異於清人。衣裘弊污，不似人形。一胡方脫衣捫虱，得輒吞之，尤可醜也，然吞虱。非但蒙古，漢人亦然也。 . . .

女人又有來者而適不見。聞其衣制如胡女，頭髻類我國。但便旋，不避人，蓋去禽獸無遠矣。

²⁰⁶ Kim Ch’ang’ŏp, *Nogajae yŏnhaeng ilgi*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip* Vol. 33, pp. 63, 77, 95, and 155.

But whenever they find themselves in each other's presence: "two pairs of eyes would face each other, but no words could pass between them."²⁰⁷

The Other Others

Kim Ch'angöp was not the only *yŏnhaengnok* author to remark on the physical appearance, attire, and habits of Mongols from a distance, in effect doing little more than perpetuating the stereotypical image of Mongols as an especially hardy and unruly brand of barbarians. By the eighteenth century, Mongols were a visible presence in the Chinese heartland, comprising long-term residents registered in the Manchu Eight Banners, Buddhist lamas patronized by the Qing court, tributary delegates, and merchants,²⁰⁸ but such ample opportunities to observe and know Mongols firsthand were only selectively taken up by Chosŏn travelers, who viewed Mongols as an easier target for othering than the Manchus. As we have seen with Kim Ch'angöp, the more Chosŏn travelers grew ambivalent about the Manchus, finding them to be more civilized than previously thought, the more they directed their gaze to Mongols and saw in them a more unambiguously barbaric Other. Yet this othering of Mongols was not simply so that the *yŏnhaengnok* authors would have a new foil against which to assert Chosŏn civility and superiority. As the following examples illustrate, Mongols more often appear in explicit comparisons with Manchus than with Chosŏn Koreans, allowing the author to discuss the strengths and

²⁰⁷ Kim Ch'ang'öp, *Nogajae yŏnhaeng ilgi*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip* Vol. 33, p. 44: 四目相對, 語莫能通.

²⁰⁸ By 1698, as many as ten thousand Mongols, most of them nobles and their entourages, were permanently based in Beijing while Mongol tributary delegations also tended to be quite large, with a headcount of several hundred. See Crossley, "Making Mongols," pp. 70-71, and Naquin, *Peking: Temples and City Life, 1400-1900*, p. 471.

weaknesses of the Qing regime without also having to question Chosŏn assumptions of superiority. With Chosŏn Koreans removed from the immediate picture, Manchus could be rendered as the proverbial kettle and Mongols the pot: at the end of the day, both were categorically black, and their differences only a matter of degree.

Hong Taeyong, writing in 1765, observes:

The sun had yet to spread its light, and it was a bitterly cold morning. On the road some tens of Mongols had parked their wagons and were busy preparing food in cauldrons. Their eyebrows and beards were coated with frost and their clothes blanched with snow, because there are no fixed dwellings in Mongol culture. Mongols with official appointments make themselves at home in tents, and Mongol commoners and soldiers show no aversion to strong winds or heavy snow. It remains an intimidating fact that they would rather spend the night on their wagons than look for lodging in any settlement they come across on the way to and from Beijing.

The [Qing] barbarians, despite enjoying dominion over all under Heaven, remain fearful of Mongols, because they would make a formidable adversary in battle. To forge and safeguard Manchu-Mongol alliances, the emperor marries Manchu princesses to Mongols, invites Mongols to take the civil examinations and pursue all sorts of careers in government, and allows Mongol merchants to come and go as they please. There are thirty-eight Mongol tribes that do not present tribute, but only because they are now more or less under direct Qing administration. Ever since the Kangxi emperor first prescribed these policies, the fighting has ceased and there has been peace on the frontiers for over one hundred years.²⁰⁹

Hong was evidently aware of the various efforts and concessions made by the Qing court to bring Mongols and Mongol territories under its control, which he interprets here as a direct reflection of the Mongols' fearsome might and belligerence. While

²⁰⁹ Hong Taeyong, *Ŭlbyŏng yŏnhaengnok*, Vol. 2, p. 214: 이때 햇빛이 채 퍼지 못하고 아침이 심히 추운데, 길가에 몽고인 수십 명이 여러 수레를 머무르고, 바야흐로 통노구에 밥을 짓고 있다. 수염과 눈썹에 성애가 가득히 맺혀 있고, 옷에 서리가 하얗게 내려 있으니, 몽고의 풍습은 방이 없는 까닭이다. 벼슬 있는 자는 장막으로 집을 삼고, 백성과 군사는 모두 밤낮으로 한데서 풍설을 피하지 않는다. 이리므로 북경을 다니매 비록 여염을 만나도 들어가서 자는 일이 없고, 수레 위에서 밥을 세운다고 하니 실로 사나운 거동이다. 싸움을 당하면 대적하기 어려운 정병이 될 것이니 이리하므로 오랑캐가 천하의 힘을 가졌으나 오히려 몽고의 강성함을 두려워하여 황제의 공주로 서로 혼인을 통하고, 선비를 불러 과거를 보게 하여 온갖 벼슬길을 열어 주고, 물화 매매에 왕래를 임의로 하게 하였다. 이런고로 서른여덟 부락이 조공은 아니 하나, 실은 일통이나 다름이 없는지라 싸움이 그치고 변방이 평안하여 100 여 년 태평을 누리니 다 강희제가 정한 법이다.

identifying both Mongols and Manchus as barbarians, he portrays the former not just as more barbaric, but also as more difficult to comprehend in human terms, given their nomadism and animal-like imperviousness to the elements. Questions of legitimacy aside, Hong suggests, the Qing Manchus were at least prudent enough to recognize their immediate threats and take measures accordingly; insofar as they seemed to understand statecraft and had managed to run an empire for over a century, they deserved some differentiation from Mongols, their baser counterparts.

It is worth noting that Hong does not openly sympathize with the Manchus or attempt to draw any parallels with Koryŏ-Yuan relations, thereby preserving a certain distance between his Chosŏn self and his objects of description. He does nothing to subvert the civilized-barbarian dichotomy, and instead alludes to different levels of barbarism to account for Mongol-Manchu differences. Like Hong, subsequent Chosŏn travelers continued to observe Mongols from a distance and assimilate whatever new information they acquired about them into the category of barbarism.

Kim Kyŏngsŏn writes in 1832:

A great many Mongols come to Beijing to pay tribute in the new year. They go around the city as they please, all of them clad in yellow or white leather clothes and hats made of yellow-dyed leather. They pick lice off themselves, which then go straight into their mouths and get swallowed whole; they are a filthy people, covered from head to toe in dust and grime.

Mongol officials and students of the Imperial Academy have adopted the Manchu dress code, but most of them still prefer the color yellow. A Mongol Buddhist priest is called a lama. Lamas receive the highest government salaries, and they, too, wear yellow clothes. I have heard that all Mongols, be they lamas or laymen, prefer the color yellow, because they consider themselves to be of the same ancestry as the emperor. The emperor makes no attempt to correct their behavior, either.

Whenever our embassy's servants see how dirty they are and proceed to ridicule and rebuke them, these people may not understand our language but can still sense that they are being mocked. They glare at us and even try to hit us. Moreover, as the emperor favors our

country, the Mongols are always resentful and try to take out their frustrations on us. It can be really quite scary.²¹⁰

Kim Kyöngsön rehashes Kim Ch'angöb's anecdote of the louse-eating Mongols to characterize all Mongols as habitually unkempt and unhygienic, and then proceeds to elaborate on their seemingly unanimous and indiscriminate preference for the color yellow. Chosön sumptuary laws had long restricted the domestic consumption of yellow-colored garments and accessories, in emulation of Ming dress regulations and, by extension, the customary Chinese designation of yellow as an exclusively imperial color. A countrywide ban on wearing yellow was introduced under King T'aejo in 1396,²¹¹ reissued under King T'aejong in 1401 and 1406,²¹² and expanded under King Sejong to include colors close to yellow in 1419.²¹³ Although the frequency of the bans seems to speak to their ineffectuality, at least within the Chosön court the imperial significance of the color yellow was strictly observed.²¹⁴ No Chosön monarch would take the liberty of donning a yellow robe until King Kojong, who did so only upon declaring himself ruler of the Taehan Empire in 1897.²¹⁵

To Chosön observers and readers, then, the Mongols' unchecked penchant for yellow clothing and the Qing court's apparent leniency would have been a surprise at the very least, if not an opportunity to question the purpose of the Chosön court's

²¹⁰ Kim Kyöngsön, *Yönwön chikchi*, in *Yönyaengnok chönjip* Vol. 71, 267-268:

歲時則又有以貢獻至者，其數亦夥，遍行街路，皆以染黃皮爲帽，身着皮衣，或黃或白，捉虱吞之，塵垢遍體，見甚醜惡，其通仕籍及入學肄業者，衣帽同滿制，而但色尚黃者多，蒙人之爲僧者，謂之喇嘛僧，僧廩最厚，而亦皆着黃衣，無論僧俗，好着黃衣者，自以爲與皇帝同故，而皇帝亦不之禁云，我隸見其麤鄙，必詬辱之，其人雖不解句語，槩知其凌蔑，反目疾視，甚則欲毆之，且以皇帝禮待我國，有加於渠，常含怒，思一逞云，殊可畏也。

²¹¹ *T'aejo sillok* 9:9a (1396/06/09)

²¹² *T'aejong sillok* 1:24b (1401/04/10); *T'aejong sillok* 12:4a (1406/07/17)

²¹³ *Sejong sillok* 3:3b (1419/01/09)

²¹⁴ Kwon, *Symbolic and Decorative Motifs of Korean Silk: 1875-1975*, pp. 82-83.

²¹⁵ Schmid, *Korea Between Empires*, p. 74.

own ritual scrupulousness. Kim Kyōngsŏn responds by insinuating that the Mongols were an ignorant and unruly bunch even by Manchu standards, on which basis he condones the condescending behavior of the Chosŏn embassy servants. In choosing to subject Mongols to further othering, instead of venturing to interact with them or reconsider his own notions of superiority and legitimacy, Kim displays more or less the same prejudices as those of Kim Ch'angŏp and Hong Taeyong.

The reluctance to view Mongols as anything but barbarian also becomes apparent in Sŏ Kyōngsun's description:

Men and women live together in the tents. In a cauldron heated over horse dung, they boil mutton and pork with the hairs still intact. Men and women sit facing each other to eat. All the women are young and pretty, and most of the men old and ugly; they look too different to belong to the same ethnic group. With all their faces so grimy from having never been washed, one can only make out their glittering eyes.

I have heard that the Mongol diet consists of sheep's milk and animal meats. Mongols can go for three days without food and three days without sleep. They do not care for grains or enjoy living in houses, so they travel, with all their family members in tow, and lodge in tents wherever they decide to set up camp. What's more, they are impervious to extreme cold and heat, which goes to show why the Chinese do not take their savagery lightly.²¹⁶

Sŏ highlights the absence of an inner-outer (K. *nae-woe*, C. *nei-wai*) distinction in the Mongols' living and eating arrangements for men and women, which would have stood in direct contrast to the gender norms of Chosŏn *yangban* society. The use of the inner-outer distinction as a marker of civility in *yŏnhaengnok* will be considered more fully in the next chapter, whereas here I am more interested in So's going so far

²¹⁶ Sŏ Kyōngsun, *Monggyŏngdang ilsa*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip* 94, pp. 353-355:

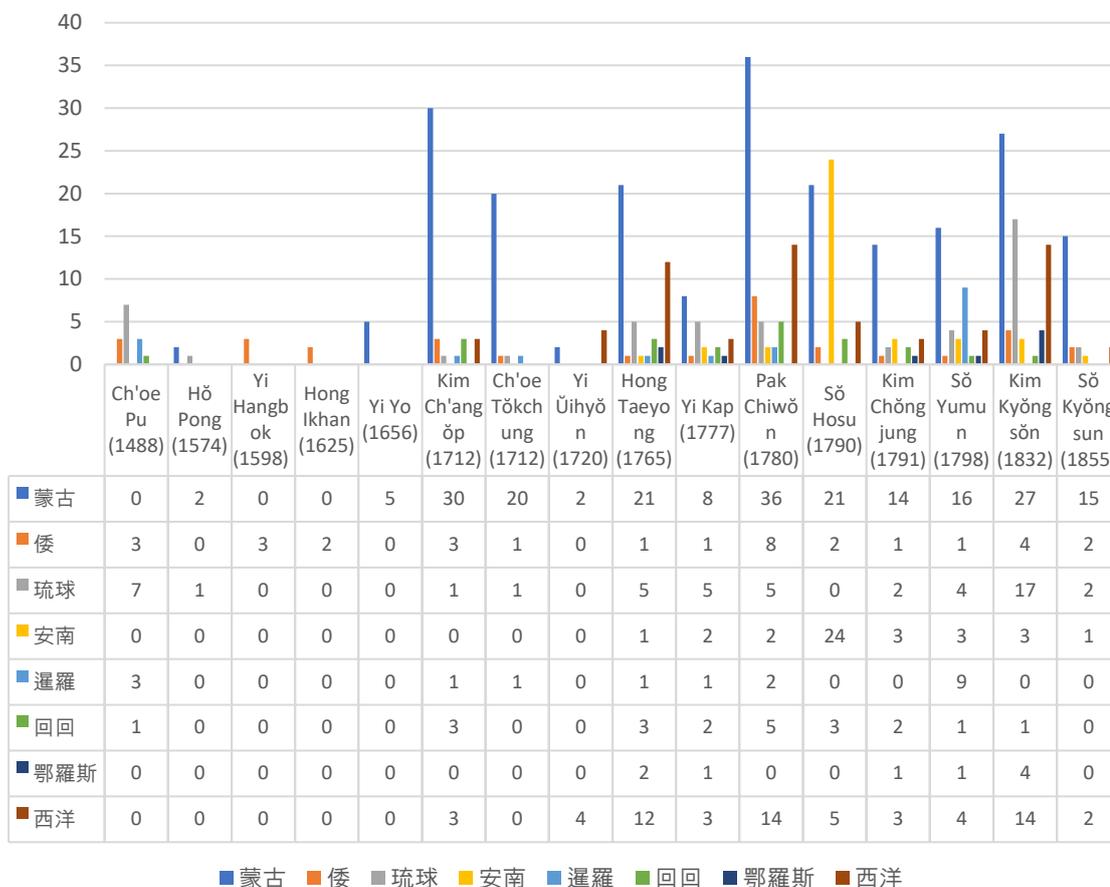
余携韓主簿到蒙古館，館不過三面築牆，一面作門限，初無棟宇之制，以毳帳如人字形，張幕於空墟中，如是者十餘處，必鋪戎氈數疊於地上，男女雜處幕中，聚土作塊，以支鐵鑊，拾馬通蒸之，烹羊豕肉，不去毛，男女對坐而食，女皆少艾，男多老醜，絕不相倫，而並皆不類，積垢在面，只見兩眼閃閃，蓋聞蒙古之俗，專以酪漿獸肉爲之茶飯，能三日不食，三日不眠，不嗜五穀，不喜宮室，出行則盡室載去，隨處張幕，嚴冬盛暑，亦所不憚，所以華人畏其凶穉。

as to suggest that the women and men could be of different ethnicities. His unwillingness to ascribe any redeeming quality to the Mongols is such that he would sooner entertain the possibility of intermarriage than admit Mongol women could be pretty.

As illustrated in Graph 7, Mongols are the most discussed “other Other” in *yŏnhaengnok*, followed by Westerners, Ryukuans, and Annamese, which roughly correlates with the frequency of direct contact Chosŏn embassy travelers had with other foreigners in Qing China. On the other hand, not all discussions of other peoples and cultures appear to have been grounded in firsthand experience or even secondhand information that the authors had obtained specifically during their journeys, but rather based on supplementary textual research undertaken in the process of crafting their travel notes into full-fledged *yŏnhaengnok* texts.

Graph 7: Occurrence of Other Collective Designations in Chosŏn Travel Accounts of China

OCCURRENCE OF OTHER COLLECTIVE DESIGNATIONS IN CHOSŎN TRAVEL ACCOUNTS OF CHINA



To take one example, Yi Haeüŋ, who would not have encountered any Siamese envoys on his 1803 trip,²¹⁷ provides a detailed description of Siam (K.

Sömna 暹羅):

Sömna is the name of what was originally two countries. The Sömna people are descendants of the Han-dynasty Red Eyebrows (K. *Chöngmi*, C. *Chimei*) who migrated during the Yuan dynasty to form one country. From the southern extreme of Champa, they travel eight thousand *li* by sea to reach Guangdong and then travel another seven thousand *li* on land to reach Beijing; they pay tribute once every five years. . . . Their tributary payments consist of the following . . . They receive in return . . .

²¹⁷ According to Fairbank and Teng's compilation of all tribute missions sent to the Qing court, Siam sent embassies in 1795, 1797, 1798, 1799, 1801, and 1804 but not in 1803. See Fairbank and Teng, "On the Ch'ing Tributary System," pp. 195-196.

According to the *Yitongzhi*: “Sōmna has a bellicose culture and an uneven climate. Their women, being superior to men in intellect and character, preside over the country’s legal and financial matters.”

Also, someone said: “If a Sōmna man over forty years of age lets his anger show on his face, his countrymen oppose and shun him. This is why they strive to contain their anger and will stay placid like a fool even when they are aggrieved.”²¹⁸

In addition to the *Da Qing huidan* (Collected Statutes of the Great Qing) and *Da Qing yitongzhi* (Comprehensive Gazetteer of the Great Qing), Yi Haeüŋ appears to have consulted Sō Yumun’s *Muo yōnhaengnok*, where we find an earlier mention of the supposed imperturbability of the Siamese.

Sō had traveled to Beijing in 1798 and observed the Siamese embassy firsthand:

The most senior ranking envoy from Sōmna was unable to attend the practice ceremony. Three other envoys and four of their servants came in his place, and their uniformly sickly demeanor was most alarming. Coming from the southernmost part of the world, where winters are mild, they were dressed in unlined clothes and had no outer garments filled with down or made of leather. No wonder they would fall ill from the cold northern weather. There was nothing distinguished about any the envoys’ faces, and even the servants who had looked fine the night before were now unwell. At first glance they could pass for goblins. . . . The people of Sōmna do not lose their temper once they have reached forty years of age. Losing one’s temper is apparently the quickest way to be ostracized and looked upon as less than human. So, as soon as they turn forty, they become as still as wooden dolls and only smile in the face of insults. It is a most strange cultural trait. Of the four envoys, three had been here before three years ago.²¹⁹

²¹⁸ Yi Haeüŋ, *Kyesan kijōng*, 5:150b-151a: 暹羅, 本二國名. 暹乃漢赤眉遺種, 元時合爲一國, 在占城極南. 浮海八千餘里至廣東下陸, 自廣東至北京七千餘里. 五年一朝貢 . . . 所貢之物 . . . 賞賜國王 . . . 一統志曰, 暹羅俗尚侵掠, 氣候不正. 其婦人志量出男子上, 國中每有計議, 刑法輕重, 錢穀出入, 皆決之. 又有人云, 暹羅男子, 年四十以上, 若怒而形于色, 則國人擯而不齒. 故攻苦忍耐, 卒遇不平, 凝然如愚人.

²¹⁹ Sō Yumun, *Muo yōnhaengnok*, in *Yōnhaengnok chōnjip* Vol. 64, pp. 170-171: 이날 섬라(暹羅) 상사는 병들어 참여하지 못한다 하여 세 사신과 종인(從人) 네 명이 들어왔으며, 다 얼굴에 병색(病色)이 있어 보기에 매우 위태로운지라. 대개 그 나라가 남쪽의 맨 끝에 있어 겨울이 춥지 않아서 다 겹옷을 입고 솜과 가죽옷을 입지 않았으니, 북쪽 지방의 추위에 어찌 병이 없으리오. 사신(使臣)도 용모가 보잘것없으며 종인은 지난번 밤에 보던 바와 달리 또한 병이 들었는지라, 얼핏 보기에 도깨비와 다름이 없더라. . . . 풍속이 나이 40 이 되면 조금도 성을 내지 못하는 법이니, 만일 노(怒)하여 성을 내면 사람에게 버림받아 사람의 반열에 참여하지 못하는지라. 이런 고로 40 후에는 갑자기 남에게 큰 치욕을 당해도 나무 인형같이 잠잠하여

If Yi Haeŭng was indeed referring to Sō as that “someone,” it is somewhat curious that Yi had chosen to recount the factoid about the Siamese temperament and not any of Sō’s direct observations. He may have found Sō’s description too personal to fit rhetorically and epistemologically with his other references, or perhaps sentimentally too ambiguous; images that could elicit sympathy in the reader would have run counter to the aim of depicting Siam as a geographically and culturally distant place.

The tendency of *yōnhaengnok* authors to subject the Qing’s other tributary states and frontier peoples to strong othering may have also stemmed from an awareness of the disparity between domestic and foreign perceptions of Chosŏn.

Hong Taeyong writes:

When I first arrived in China, I was told that the asking prices of goods tend not to vary from seller to seller, but the Chinese vendors here seemed more than happy to rip us off on account of our being foreigners. I had a quiet look around at how they conducted business with one another, and their shameless price gouging was worse than in our country. As the Chinese saying goes, ‘Crows everywhere are equally black.’ Some six or seven men, who were going around in pairs, stopped to browse the porcelain wares. They were all dressed in fine clothes and looked to me like scholarly gentlemen, so I approached [each pair] and tried to start a conversation with them. They would give each other a glance and walk away, as if they were uneasy about my presence. Most Chinese know very little about our country, having only been exposed to the bullish, disorderly behavior of our interpreters on which to base their opinion of all Koryŏ people. How utterly embarrassing that they loathe us as they do the Mongols and Arasa!²²⁰

다만 옷을 따름이라 하니, 극히 이상한 풍속이며, 이번 들어온 네 사신 중에 셋은 을묘년에 들어왔던 사람이라.

²²⁰ Hong Taeyong, *Tamhŏn yŏn’gi*, in *Yōnhaengnok chŏnjip* Vol. 49, p. 216: 始聞中國市賣，有定價，不妄賈，意其爲外國人而侮之也，細察其自相買賣，其虛張胡討，低昂之懸絕，反甚於我國，則眞漢話所謂天下老鴉一般黑者也，有六七人伴行看器玩，皆絃服秀美，意其爲士人也，近就之將與語，諸人相顧而起，不欲與之接也，蓋華人未諳我國事者，徒見驛卒驅人頑醜行惡于街市，謂麗人皆此類也，厭苦之如蒙古鄂羅斯，最可羞也。

Hong's disdain towards the shamelessly profit-driven vendors is quickly forgotten when he notices finely dressed men who might be "scholarly gentlemen"—just like himself. Yet much to his surprise, his friendly advances go unreciprocated. It is in this rare moment where Hong gets a taste of his own medicine, finding himself in the position of the misunderstood and feared Other, and the experience is humiliating. He turns on his own people, the Chosŏn embassy interpreters, and blames them for not giving a better impression of their country.

Similarly, Pak Chiwŏn reflects on his foreigner status upon turning up at a guest house unannounced and startling its proprietors:

The people here, not having encountered any so-called Koryŏans before, would not have been able to tell us apart from the Annamese, Japanese, Ryukyuan, or Siamese. This hat, so wide-brimmed as to resemble a black umbrella, would have caused them to wonder: "What kind of hat is that? How strange!" This robe, with such large, billowing sleeves, would have caused them to wonder: "What kind of clothing is that? How strange!" . . . From the envoys down to the interpreters, military officers, and soldiers, each dressed differently. What's more, our horde of servants and stablemen were all barefoot and bare-chested; their faces were browned by the sun and clothes too frayed to cover their behinds. . . . Instead of thinking that we had traveled together from the same country, they must have thought that the barbarians of the south [*nanman*], north [*beidi*], east [*dongyi*], and west [*xirong*] were descending upon them all at once.²²¹

Pak's self-parody gives expression to the desire for Chosŏn Koreans to be seen as the civilized people they believe themselves to be, rather than as the "Koryŏans" but does not go so far as to suggest that the "Annamese, Japanese, Ryukyuan, or Siamese" must find themselves in similar predicaments.

²²¹ Pak Chiwŏn, *Yŏrha ilgi*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip* Vol. 54, pp. 131-132: 所謂高麗無因而至此，則北路之所初見也，想應莫辨安南日本琉球暹羅。第其所著帽子，圓簷太廣，頂張黑傘，初見矣，是何冠也，異哉。所服袍子，袖袂廣濶，翩翩欲舞，初見矣，是何衣也，異哉。 . . . 然而自使臣以下服著各殊，有譯官一隊服著，有裨將一隊服著，有軍牢一隊服著。而駙卒馬頭輩，無不跣足袒臂，面貌焦枯，布袴綻裂，不掩臀腿 . . . 彼必不識同國同來 想應分視 南蠻北狄東夷西戎 都入渠家。

Chapter Three

The Other Sex: Women and Gender in *Yŏnhaengnok*

I would like to begin this chapter by stating an obvious yet often neglected fact: Chosŏn missions to China were an all-male enterprise, conducted by men and written about by men. The male monopoly over politics, travel, and literary production in the Chosŏn context has meant that my own research for this dissertation would inevitably center on men and become tinted with a male bias, which I can at best acknowledge and attempt to work with, rather than around. To extend my discussion of othering from the previous chapter, I focus here on “the other sex,” the women of Qing China whose presumed immobility and passivity on the one hand and exotic desirability on the other may have made them attractive objects of representation for Chosŏn travelers. I seek to uncover the prejudices, values, and preoccupations that may have motivated and shaped the travelers’ representations of Qing women, with a view to better understanding how gender intersected with ethnicity, culture, and class in their particular experiences and constructions of otherness. I am less interested, therefore, in the factuality of the assertions made about Qing women than in the beliefs and ideals these assertions may have served to perpetuate or transform.

As a matter of course, certain familiar themes that might strike the modern reader as clichéd are invoked in my analyses: the treatment of women as male possessions, the objectification of women under the male gaze, and the drowning out of women’s voices by male speakers, for example, have all become rather run-of-the-mill descriptions of patriarchal societies and cultures, of which Chosŏn Korea was arguably one. The fact remains, however, that *yŏnhaengnok* have been scarcely studied for their gender-related content, much less brought to bear on the current

understanding of the role of gender in cultural encounters, which derives largely from studies of other regions and civilizations.¹ It is this gap I hope to fill, focusing on the question of why *yŏnhaengnok* authors wrote about women at all.

Back at home, *yangban* men tended not to write publicly about real, historical women unless the women had displayed virtues worthy of commemoration, which is to say that a woman needed to have conformed to a certain moral prototype (and died) in order to enter state-sanctioned public discourse. Fictional women, on the other hand, encompassed a wider array of personality traits, inclinations, and behaviors, but they were also often situated in a distant time and place—Tang China, for example, in Kim Manjung’s *Kuunmong*—or written about anonymously so as not to pose a direct challenge to the hegemonic culture that only saw value in categorizing women as either virtuous or unvirtuous. The *yŏnhaengnok* represents an interesting offshoot of this trend, in allowing free rein to disclose and expose, warts and all, the Other’s women. The same unwritten rules of writing about women do not appear to have applied when outside one’s turf, nor does there seem to have been any stigma attached to expressing feelings of physical attraction when directed at the bodies of foreign women. To begin thinking about these observable tendencies in more critical terms, let us first briefly consider how gender has been approached in other intercultural contexts.

¹ At the time of writing this dissertation, I could only find two academic articles that deal exclusively with the portrayal of women in *yŏnhaengnok*: Kim Hyŏnmi’s “18-segi yŏnhaengnok soge nat’a’nan Chungguk ūi yŏsŏng” (*Han’guk ko’jŏn yŏsŏng munhak yŏn’gu* 11 (2006): 181-205) and Kim Minho’s “Yŏnhaengnok e poi’nŭn Chungguk yŏsŏng hyŏngsang” (*Chungguk ōmun nonch’ong* 54 ()): 299-330). Kim Hyŏnmi’s article identifies a double standard in Chosŏn travelers’ portrayals of Qing women, suggesting that Han Chinese women tended to be judged more favorably than Manchu women based on preconceived associations of the former with Confucian virtue and modesty. Kim Minho’s article, on the other hand, contrasts *yŏnhaengnok* with Ming vernacular fiction and Westerners’ travel accounts to argue that Chosŏn travelers, in paying closer attention to ethnic and regional differences, provided more realistic and nuanced depictions of Qing women than did Ming fiction writers such as Feng Menglong and Western travelers such as Marco Polo and Antonio Almeida.

In Edward Said's *Orientalism*, gender finds expression in "the pattern of relative strength between East and West and the discourse about the Orient that it enabled."² Orientalist discourse tended to masculinize the West and feminize the East, in assertion of the entitlement of the strong to control, know, and speak on behalf of the weak; what is presupposed, then, is the normative marginalization and objectification of the West's own women, on which this gendered analogy rests. The use of gender to signify and legitimize unequal power relations, as highlighted by Said, is a point that has been taken up and explored extensively in studies of travel writing. To take an example most relevant to our purposes, Roxanne L. Euben, in her comparative study of the European and Islamic travel writing traditions, identifies a "remarkably consistent schema" across different cultures and time periods when it comes to the representation of women in male travel narratives. She describes this schema as "the transformation of women's bodies and behavior into a legend, as on a map, by which entire cultures can be decoded," which in her view attests to a historically and globally pervasive gender ideology that classifies women as those who do not travel but rather stay put.³ Women are perceived not only as the weaker sex, requiring close guarding and sheltering by men, but also as the passive bearers of the culture that their men have created and instilled—for other men to size up, covet, or disparage. In narratives of male travel, therefore, women's bodies and actions are more likely to appear on the page because of the male achievements and failings they are thought to represent than because of any intrinsic value or agency accorded to the women themselves.

² Said, *Orientalism*, p. 6

³ Euben, *Journeys to the Other Shore*, p. 190.

Considering that *yŏnhaengnok*, too, are male travel accounts and were born to some degree out of a sense of rivalry with the Qing, how far do Euben's ideas hold true for the Chosŏn case? As I illustrate in the following sections, Chosŏn travelers did look to Qing women for clues about the mainstream culture and moral state of Qing China, paying close attention to the women's dress and conduct in public places. Yet not all Qing women were equal in the eyes of the Chosŏn travelers, who tended to judge Han Chinese women more favorably than Manchu women; I attribute this partiality to the travelers' Ming loyalism, lingering belief in a shared cultural heritage and historical memory with the Han Chinese, and preconceived notions about Chinese women derived from Chinese (and Chinese-inspired) literature and art. The tendency to differentiate Qing women along ethnic lines is strongest in *yŏnhaengnok* of the early eighteenth century, whereas from the latter half of the eighteenth century onwards, we find the Han Chinese-Manchu dichotomy beginning to recede in importance and give way to other lines of inquiry and interpretations.

Meanwhile, physical desire, the most basic of motivations, acts as a constant across various travelers' alleged encounters and discoveries, which should discourage us from supposing that behind each and every representation of women was some highminded intent, be it informative or political. Lest we forget, the male gaze owes much of its prevalence across cultures and epochs to the immediate gratification and pleasure it affords the gazer; the thrill of being caught looking and having one's gaze returned is also part of the fun, which, through its textual representation, the reader is also invited to enjoy vicariously. What we find most compellingly—and, dare I say, honestly—depicted in *yŏnhaengnok* is the mutual spectatorship that would occur whenever Chosŏn travelers and the local women found themselves in each other's presence. The numerous and often humorous anecdotes attesting to how men and

women, subject and object, would play cat and mouse in such a situation reflect a tolerance for politico-moral ambiguity and subversion seldom seen in Chosŏn official discourse.

Travelers' Expectations and the Han Chinese-Manchu Dichotomy

Scholarly discussions of women's lives and status in Chosŏn Korea have mostly proceeded from the premise of a Confucian social hierarchy and focused on identifying within such a system the limitations to and possibilities for female agency. Few scholars would consider Confucianism to be the only ideological force in shaping Chosŏn Korean conceptions of femininity and female identity, but not a whole lot of work has been done to demonstrate anything to the contrary. What Chosŏn travelers' first impressions of Qing women reveal is that the travelers had been initially most curious about the physical appearance, rather than the moral character, of Qing women, basing their expectations and optimism on knowledge that could not have just come from reading Confucian texts. The question of whether Qing women were virtuous was secondary or even tertiary to the question of whether they were really like the Chinese beauties that late Chosŏn Koreans routinely encountered in Chinese and Chinese-inspired fiction and artworks: clothed in expensive silks and adorned with precious jewelry.⁴ The following excerpts, which I have taken from Kim Manjung's *Kuunmong*, the Chinese vernacular tale "Du Shiniang Sinks Her Jewel Box in Anger," and the late-Ming novel *Jin Ping Mei*, illustrate how Chinese women may have been envisioned in the Chosŏn popular imagination:

⁴ On the reception of Chinese vernacular fiction in Chosŏn Korea, see Chŏng Yŏngho and Min Kwandong, "Chungguk paekhwā t'ongsok sosŏl ūi kungnae yuip kwa suyong," *Chungguk inmunkwahak* 54 (2013): pp. 223-251.

In the moonlight there appeared a woman dressed in red standing alone under a peach tree. She bowed, saying, “Why are you so late in coming, Master?”

Yang was stunned. He observed her carefully and saw that she was dressed in a light rose-colored silk and wore a long pin of green jade through her hair. Her waist was girdled in white jade, and in her hand she held a fan of phoenix feathers. Hers was not the beauty of a mere human, and Yang was enchanted. “I am of the world of dust,” he said, “and have made no promise to meet you under the moon. How could I possibly be late?”⁵

Of the sisters, Xie Yuelang and Xu Susu lived nearest to the Du house and were Shiniang’s most intimate friends, so Shiniang went to Xie Yuelang’s house first. Surprised to see Shiniang with her hair unadorned and her clothes old and worn, Yuelang asked her what had happened. Shiniang told Yuelang the whole story. . . . Yuelang let Shiniang do her toilette and, in the meantime, invited Xu Susu to come over for a reunion. After Shiniang had finished, the two beauties Xie and Xu offered her their kingfisher-feather hair ornaments, gold bracelets, jade hairpins, earrings inlaid with jewels, a brocade blouse, a floral-pattern skirt, a phoenix belt, and a pair of embroidered shoes. With Du Shiniang now aglow in all her splendor, a farewell celebration feast was laid out.⁶

Sitting down in the place of honor, he noticed that the woman was wearing a blouse of aloeswood-colored moiré with variegated crepe edging, which opened down the middle, over a drawnwork skirt of white glazed damask. Shoes of scarlet iridescent silk, with white soles, satin high heels, and gold-spangled toes were visible beneath her skirt. On her head she wore a chignon, enclosed in a fret of silver filigree. . . . Her hair was further adorned with plum-blossom shaped ornaments with kingfisher feather inlays, and a host of trinkets were stuck about the temples which had the effect of further enhancing:

The fragrant redness of her ruby lips, and
The glossy whiteness of her powdered face. ⁷

The common emphasis on clothing and adornment in all of the above texts hints at a conception of femininity that privileges artifice over nature. Here, clothes and accessories make the person: the finer and more elaborate a woman’s attire, the closer she is to being her best self and attracting male attention. If such an idealized image of Chinese women was something late Chosŏn travelers had hoped to corroborate

⁵ Fenkl, trans., Kuunmong, p. 5.

⁶ Yang and Yang, trans., *Stories to Caution the World*, pp. 554-555

⁷ Roy, trans., *The Plum in the Golden Vase or Chin Ping Mei*, p. 383

firsthand, then the reality seems to have been a disappointment—but, by the same token, also an opportunity to debunk a popular myth and enlighten those at home.

Writing in 1780, Pak Chiwŏn recounts his first close encounter with the local women in Qing China:

Every now and again, a woman's voice could be heard coming from the other side of the wall. Her voice sounded to me as delicate and charming as a bird's song. I thought to myself, 'This must be the innkeeper's daughter – surely, a beauty of beauties.' But when I ventured into the kitchen to take a peek, on the pretext of needing to light my pipe, I was met with a woman who looked over fifty, at least. Her features were most fearsome and her demeanor most unrefined. She said to me: "My best wishes to you, Sir."

"And all the best to you, Madam," I replied, and pretending to be preoccupied with emptying the ashes from my pipe, I stole a few glances at her. She had practically covered her whole head with flowers and was also wearing a gold hair comb and jade earrings; she had lightly made up her face and had on long, wide-legged black trousers decorated with silver buttons and shoes with grass, flowers, bees, and butterflies embroidered on them. My guess was that she was a Manchu woman, as she had not bound her feet and her shoes weren't bow-shaped.

From behind the bead curtain a young woman appeared. She looked about twenty years old. I could tell from how she had parted her hair and done it up into two buns that she was yet unmarried. She, too, boasted features that were far from delicate, but her complexion, at least, was fair and unblemished. She had brought in a large metal bowl, into which she scooped a sizable helping of cooked millet; after also pouring herself a drink of water, she sank into a chair in the corner to eat her food. . . . A cyst the size of an egg protruded from her neck. She just sat there eating and drinking without even the slightest trace of self-consciousness registering on her face. With our Eastern people passing through here year after year, she had probably grown used to the sight of us.⁸

Pak's description of the two women reads almost like a parody of the fictional works

⁸ Pak Chiwŏn, *Yŏrha ilgi*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip* Vol. 53: 時間間壁婦人語, 聲嫩囀嬌嫵, 燕燕鶯鶯, 意謂主家婆娘, 必是絕代佳人, 及爲歷翫堂室, 一婦人五旬以上年紀, 當戶據牀而坐, 貌極悍醜, 道了叔叔千福, 余答道托主人洪福, 余故遲爲。玩其服飾制度, 滿髻插花, 金釧寶璫, 略施朱粉, 身着一領黑色長衣, 遍鎖銀紐, 足下穿一對靴子, 繡得草花蜂蝶, 蓋滿女不纏脚, 不着弓鞋, 簾中轉出一個處女, 年貌似是廿歲以上, 處女髻髮中分縷上, 以此爲辨, 貌亦傑悍, 而肌肉白淨, 把鐵鏟子, 傾綠色瓦盆, 滿勻了葛黍飯, 盛得一椀, 和鏟瀝水, 坐西壁下交椅, 以箸吸飯, 更拿數尺葱根, 連葉蘸醬, 一飯一佐, 項附鷄子大癭瘤, 噉飯喫茶, 略無羞容, 蓋歲閱東人, 尋常親熟故也。

cited earlier, as his hope of seeing a real “beauty of beauties” in the flesh is dashed not once, but twice: first by the gaudily dressed older woman whose melodious voice has Pak fooled, and then by the younger woman whose unsightly cyst and lack of manners are, again, let-downs adding to his disenchantment. More or less every detail about the women, from their “fearsome” facial features to their boorish manner, serve to highlight the naiveté of Pak’s expectations, but instead of abandoning all hope, Pak speculates: the women must have been Manchu, given their unbound feet and their ease in the presence of a male stranger.

Pak’s implicit association of footbinding and modesty with the Han Chinese is consistent with how numerous *yŏnhaengnok* authors before him have also drawn distinctions between Han Chinese and Manchu women, perhaps as a way of mediating between what they might have liked to see and what they actually saw. Kim Ch’angŏp, writing in 1712, challenges what seems to have been a popular belief about Chinese women among Chosŏn Koreans:

I was once told that all Han women, if they are married, continue to powder their faces and adorn their hair with flowers until old age, but from what I have seen, this is not always so.⁹

As someone who has seen matters with his own eyes and can confidently separate fact from fiction, Kim proposes a few rules of thumb for differentiating Han Chinese and Manchu women: first, “Han women powder their faces whereas barbarian women do not”; second, “men and women [who are Manchu], whether they are extravagant or modest, all prefer the color black, but Han women, being different, can be often seen wearing blue or red”; third, “*ho* women do not bind their feet”; and

⁹ Kim Ch’angŏp, *Yŏnhaeng ilgi* in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip* Vol. 32, p. 323: 舊聞漢女有夫，雖老皆傅粉簪花，今不見盡然。

fourth, “Han women avoid contact with strangers, whereas Qing [i.e. Manchu] women do not.”¹⁰

Kim’s evident ethnographic interest in the local women and use of the Han Chinese-Manchu dichotomy to organize his findings represent a significant departure from early Chosŏn travel records, which do not devote quite as much attention to issues of gender or ethnicity, and hence may be taken to reflect a changed frame of reference for understanding a changed China. Indeed, Kim Ch’angŏp was not mistaken in pointing out that Han Chinese and Manchu women dressed and adorned themselves differently: as has been widely documented, Han Chinese men adopted the Manchu queue under the Qing regime, but Han Chinese women continued to dress in the Ming style and practice footbinding, making them readily distinguishable from their Manchu counterparts.¹¹ However, Kim’s attention to the finer details (whether Han women wore makeup and what colors they preferred) as well as to non-sartorial matters (how they behaved in public places) demonstrates that he was not just a casual observer. Clearly, Kim Ch’angŏp sought to distance Han Chinese women from Manchu women as far as possible, drawing on the authority of direct experience to legitimate his sharp distinctions, which suggests to me that he had still counted the Han Chinese as belonging to the same civilized in-group as Chosŏn Koreans.

Kim Ch’angŏp’s contemporaries, Ch’oe Tŏkchung 崔德中 (birth and death years unknown) and Yi Ŭihyŏn 李宜顯 (1669-1745), were likewise inclined to judge Han Chinese women favorably and emphasize their differences from Manchu women. Ch’oe, who traveled with Kim Ch’angŏp on the same 1712 mission, echoes

¹⁰ Kim Ch’angŏp, *Yŏnhaeng ilgi* in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip* Vol. 32, pp. 323-35.

¹¹ Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, pp. 246-247; Mann, *Gender and Sexuality in Modern Chinese History*, p. 176

Kim's preoccupation with reliable markers of difference in his own very detailed description of Manchu women's dress:

We came across a horde of *ho* women. They were all wearing long black robes that came down to their heels, black trousers that were similar to men's trousers, leather shoes, and socks made of blue cotton. All the women, old and young, had double piercings in each ear, and wore white rings on their fingers. They had either wrapped their hair in black silk scarves or, as is also the custom in our country, braided and coiled their hair. Those who were wearing their hair in a bun had placed metal combs on top to create a rounded appearance like that of a hand-held mirror. Pearls were strewn over [the combs to keep them in place]. They had applied quite a lot of powder to their faces.¹²

Ch'oe's focus on sartorial details helps to concretize for the reader what is meant by "ho" when attributed to Manchu women. Apart from his use of the *ho* label, Ch'oe maintains an air of empirical objectivity that quickly dissipates when his attention turns to Han Chinese women:

In Shanhaiguan there were hardly any Manchus, only Han people. The women wore black coats over their pleated skirts and decorated their hair with flowers and beads. Occasionally, we also saw women in black veils ride by on their donkeys. That the Ming dress code still applied to women was a most endearing sight.¹³

East of Guangning, there were many barbarian women who unabashedly came out to watch us with their faces exposed, unlike Tang [i.e., traditional Chinese] women who adhere closely to the inner-outer distinction... *Ho* women wear lots of flowers in their hair and sometimes also adorn their hair with gold and jade; because they walk slowly in their long robes, they were doubly easier to observe than Tang women. Among Tang women, there were some in veils and Tang costume, riding by on their donkeys. They were just like beauties in a painting.¹⁴

¹² Ch'oe Tökchung, *Yōnhaengnok*, in *Yōnhaengnok chōnjip* Vol. 39, p. 459: 路逢一隊胡女，則皆掛黑長衣，至踵而止，下着黑袴如男袴，納唐鞋襪子，亦以青布造作，毋論老少，皆耳掛雙珠璫，指着白鐵環，而以黑帽羅裹頭，或編髮作環，如我國之制，不裹頭者，或當腦粧以鉛鈿，狀如圓鏡，絡以真珠，厚塗真粉。

¹³ Ch'oe Tökchung, *Yōnhaengnok*, in *Yōnhaengnok chōnjip* Vol. 39, p. 483: 關內清人絕無而董有，舉皆漢人，女人或着摺裳，穿黑唐衣，頭飾花珠，且垂面黑紗，乘驢子而行者，間間有之，女子則猶帶明衣制度，可愛。

¹⁴ Ch'oe Tökchung, *Yōnhaengnok*, in *Yōnhaengnok chōnjip* Vol. 40, pp. 107-108: 第寧遠以東，多是胡女，而不分內外，露面出見，唐女則內外甚密，而胡女頭插亂花，金玉飾頭，着長衣，緩緩作行，所見倍勝於唐女，而唐女或有垂面紗，着唐衣摺裳，騎驢而行者，完如畫中之女也。

Ch'oe paints a fleeting yet tender image of Han Chinese women in the first passage, which he conjures up again in the second to insist that Han Chinese women, on account of their continuing to dress in the Ming style and protecting their modesty in observance of the Confucian inner-outer distinction, were more civilized and more beautiful than Manchu women.

In portraying Han women as unsullied remnants of a glorious bygone era, Ch'oe may be no less guilty of idealizing Han Chinese women than writers of fiction, but through his word choices we are allowed insight into the possible motivations for differentiating between Han Chinese and Manchu women in the first place. The slippage from “Han” to “Ming” to “Tang” in his references to Han Chinese women indicates a strong attachment to the imagined China, built up from books, paintings, and conversations, and the desire to find proof of its existence within Qing borders. This nostalgia for a place that he believes he knows yet fails to find in fully embodied form serves to highlight the potential difficulty of completely disassociating the concept of *hwa* from its original geographical and ethnic referents, especially when one is physically standing on Chinese soil.

Yi Ŭihyŏn, who traveled to China eight years later, in 1720, makes some of the same observations as Kim Ch'angŏp and, like Ch'oe Tŏkchung, goes to some length to find an observable basis for setting the Han Chinese apart from Manchus:

[Manchu] women generally avoid contact with strangers. Whenever we entered a shop and happened to see women there, many of them would suddenly shy away and hide. However, they never shied away from the interpreters; they would sit with them, smoke with them, and not even flinch if their knees or hands touched, which was most ridiculous to see.

As for men and women's dress, whether one is extravagant or modest, black is their color of choice. However, many Han Chinese women are not like this, wearing blue or red trousers instead. . . . All the men, whether they are *ho* or Han, wear *ho* hats and *ho* clothing, but I have noticed that portrait paintings, even those of recent historical figures, depict the original Han Chinese style of dress. It is

evident that despite wide adherence to the current dress code, there is discontent in people's hearts.¹⁵

Yi's rhetoric consists of stating a generalization and following it up with a qualification that detracts from what would otherwise be interpreted as an indication of Manchu superiority or dominance. In addition to ridiculing how Manchu women tended to behave towards the Chosŏn embassy's interpreters, he maintains that the widespread adoption of the Manchu style of dress should not be taken to mean wholehearted acceptance and receptiveness to change. The superiority of Sinitic culture needed not be questioned, in other words, because the true loyalties of the Han Chinese, both women and men, were still to their inherited customs and institutions.

These early eighteenth-century travelers' construction of the Han Chinese-Manchu dichotomy go on to serve in later *yŏnhaengnok* as a reference point for identifying which aspects of Ming culture remained intact after several more decades of Qing rule and which had permuted or become obsolete through contact with Manchu culture. It has been suggested that Chosŏn travelers nursed a soft spot for Han Chinese women throughout the entire eighteenth century, but that such partiality tended to be strongest at the start of a traveler's journey and then weaken the more he grew accustomed to seeing Manchus and found "real" Han Chinese women to fall below his expectations.¹⁶ I would add that a diachronic survey of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century *yŏnhaengnok* also reveals a disenchantment with Han

¹⁵ Yi Ŭihyŏn, *Kyŏngja yŏnhaeng chapchi*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip* Vol. 35, pp. 451-452: 女子大抵避人, 余等入店, 輒多避匿, 而驛卒輩則不避之, 至與之雜坐吸煙, 接膝交手, 而不以為嫌, 亦可笑也, 男子所着胡帽及裘, 富厚者用貂, 其次用羔羊雜獸皮, 而不用狗皮, 凡着裘, 必使毛在表, 男女衣服, 無論奢儉, 色俱尚黑, 而漢女則不盡然, 穿青紅袴者多 . . . 無論胡漢, 一皆胡帽胡服, 而見畫本, 雖畫近來人物, 冠帽則悉依漢儀, 於此可見雖不得已從時制, 而心實歉然也.

¹⁶ Kim Hyŏnmi, "18-segi yŏnhaengnok soje nat'a'nan Chungguk ũi yŏsŏng," pp. 187-192.

Chinese women that becomes more and more pronounced in the longer run, paving the way not only for assertions of a culturally autonomous and unique Chosŏn self, but also for more positive evaluations of the Qing Manchus. The expectation and desire to find in Han Chinese women an unadulterated embodiment of *hwa* lose their former urgency, and the *hwa* concept itself comes to be formulated anew.

That being said, exceptions to the above generalizations also deserve discussion. It is worth noting that from as early as Kim Ch'angŏp's time if not earlier, Chosŏn travelers did evince an intolerance towards certain habits and customs they encountered in Qing China, regardless of their ethnic or historical provenance: in particular, the division of labor between the sexes and footbinding. The narrative attention consistently given to these two phenomena indicates that even at the height of Ming loyalism and of subsequent movements to restore Confucian orthodoxy in Chosŏn Korea, the ostensible Sinophilia of Chosŏn Koreans did not mean an indiscriminate preference for all things traditionally Chinese.

Irreconcilable Differences: Gender Roles and Footbinding

In his *Yŏnhaeng ilgi*, shortly following a description of typical women's attire and the influence of ethnicity on color preferences, Kim Ch'angŏp draws attention to the phenomenon of women dressing better than their male spouses and relatives. A subtle yet unmistakably critical tone emerges, as Kim notes that women, rich or poor, all favored silk while their husbands, dressed in rags and wearing an equally wretched expression on their faces, could be mistaken for the women's servants. Women are thus pitted against men, and the thematic focus shifts from ethnicity to gender. According to Kim, women in Qing China rarely stepped out of their homes and only occupied themselves with resoling shoes, whereas the men were responsible

for “all the hard work” and most household chores, including “fetching water, pounding rice, planting seeds, and even weaving and sewing”; granted, rural women took on more duties, such as winnowing crops and preparing meals, but not a single woman could be seen venturing out in public to do the shopping.¹⁷

It would appear that Kim had expected to find men and women dressed to a similar standard, especially if they belonged to the same household or socioeconomic group; likewise, he seems to have expected a more equal division of labor between men and women that would make women a more common sight in public places. In highlighting such inequalities between the sexes, Kim draws an implicit contrast with the normative performance of gender back home in Chosŏn Korea. This contrast, in turn, serves to other not only Qing women but also Qing China as a place where such morally and pragmatically unjustifiable practices constituted the norm.

In his *Kyŏngja yŏnhaeng chapchi*, Yi Ŭihyŏn repeats these same observations about the unequal division of labor *verbatim*, which suggests that he had read Kim Ch’angŏp’s *Yŏnhaeng ilgi* and considered it authoritative.¹⁸ The intertextual echoes do not end here, either, but rather continue to ring in Hwang Chae’s *Kabin yŏnhaengnok* of 1734,¹⁹ Yi Ŭibong’s *Pugwŏllok* of 1760,²⁰ Sŏ Yumun’s *Muo yŏnhaengnok* of 1798,²¹ and Yi Haeŭng’s *Kyesan kijŏng* of 1803,²² all of which invoke the image of “men who weave and sew” as an othering device. Considering

¹⁷ Kim Ch’angŏp, *Yŏnhaeng ilgi*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip*, Vol. 32, pp. 324-325: 凡大小事役, 男子悉任其勞, 驅車耕田負薪之外, 運水春米種田, 至織布裁縫等事, 亦皆男子爲之, 女子則罕出門外, 其所爲不過縫鞋底而已, 村女則簸穀炊飯等事, 或自爲之, 店房中絕不見女人往來。

¹⁸ Yi Ŭihyŏn, *Kyŏngja yŏnhaeng chapchi*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip*, Vol. 35: 凡大小事役, 男子悉任其勞, 驅車耕田負薪之外, 運水春米種粟, 以至織布裁衣等事, 亦皆男子爲之, 女子則罕出門外, 其所爲不過縫鞋底而已, 村女則簸穀炊飯等事, 或自爲之, 店房中, 絕不見女人往來。

¹⁹ Hwang Chae, *Kabin yŏnhaengnok*, 1:34b.

²⁰ Yi Ŭibong, *Pugwŏllok*, 1:39.

²¹ Sŏ Yumun, *Muo yŏnhaengnok*, 2:50b.

²² Yi Haeŭng, *Kyesan kijŏng*, 5:143a.

that references to weaving and sewing in Chosŏn literature are most prevalent in didactic texts intended for women readers and in eulogies for women, the feminized image of Qing men on its own would have spoken volumes and obviated the need for further comment.²³ More interestingly, this example illustrates how a description in one *yŏnhaengnok* could subsequently turn into a recurring trope in *yŏnhaeng* discourse and introduce a new stereotype into the cultural imagination of the reading public.

Footbinding, the other cultural phenomenon that fascinated and confounded Chosŏn travelers, finds coverage in both *choch'ŏnnok* and *yŏnhaengnok*, owing largely to the fact that footbinding was never practiced on the Korean peninsula. In his *Kapchin choch'ŏnnok* of 1604, Yi Chŏnggwi 李廷龜 (1564-1635) reproduces the linked verses that he and Yi Chun 李埈 (1560-1635) composed whilst in Beijing, which contains the lines “On her bed, a mat woven with reeds / Her feet bound, watch her rise and waddle (鋪床篔織蘆 / 足纏看勃率).”²⁴ The uncertainty of a footbound woman’s gait is represented here with an equally ambiguous tone: did Yi Chŏnggwi, to whom the lines are attributed, find bound feet pleasing, pitiable, or grotesque? It is difficult to tell. On the other hand, Kang Sŏn 姜銑 (b. 1645), in a poem appended to one of his entries for the twelfth month of 1699, expresses his disorientation and bewilderment more explicitly: “Barbarians, with their shaved heads, I struggle to tell apart from weasels / Tang ladies, with their bound feet, I keep

²³ On didactic literature for Chosŏn women, see Deuchler, “Propagating Female Virtues in Chosŏn Korea,” in Dorothy Ko, JaHyun Kim Haboush, and Joan R. Piggott, eds., *Women and Confucian Cultures in Premodern China, Korea, and Japan* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), pp. 142-169. The cultural understanding of sewing and weaving as feminine occupations is well exemplified in Kim Ch’anghyŏp’s *Mangmae aesa*, a eulogy for his deceased sister, where Kim fondly recalls his sister’s refusal to learn writing in favor of sewing. See *Nongamjip*, 5:36b-37b.

²⁴ Yi Chŏnggu, *Wŏlsajip*, 1:48b.

mistaking for children (蠻子剃頭難辨鬚 / 唐姬裹足却疑童).”²⁵ Kang Sŏn infantilizes footbound women for satirical effect, highlighting the absurdity of footbinding especially to his unaccustomed eye. His professed confusion, in invoking the larger themes of epochal change and disenchantment with Chinese superiority, also gives voice to a distinctly post-war Chosŏn perspective.

Compared to the above poetic depictions, prosaic treatments of footbinding in late eighteenth and nineteenth-century *yŏnhaengnok* tend to take an even harder line, denouncing footbinding as a bizarre, repulsive, and unjustifiable practice; they also draw attention to the difficulty of ascertaining the history of footbinding based on either oral or written evidence. This ultimately futile search for footbinding’s origins not only has the effect of further mystifying and exoticizing the practice, but also bears a striking resemblance to the “origin discourses” of Song, Yuan, Ming, and early Qing scholars who, too, had sought to make ontological and historical sense of footbinding, only to add to its commonly perceived mystique.²⁶ The parallels may well be coincidental, but given the level of descriptive detail in some of the examples discussed below, it is possible that some *yŏnhaengnok* authors had appropriated Chinese sources to further their claims of Chosŏn difference.

As we have seen, Kim Ch’angŏp identifies footbinding in his *Yŏnhaeng ilgi* as a distinguishing trait of Han Chinese women but does not explicitly pass judgment on the practice, which can also be said of Ch’oe Tŏkchung’s and Hwang Chae’s treatments of footbinding.²⁷ Starting with Hong Taeyong’s *Tamhŏn yŏn’gi* of 1765,

²⁵ Kang Sŏn, *Kugyŏk Yŏnhaengnok*, p. 19.

²⁶ For a detailed discussion of the search for footbinding’s origins in the pre-nineteenth-century Chinese context, see Dorothy Ko, *Cinderella’s Sisters: A Revisionist History of Footbinding* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2005), pp. 109-144.

²⁷ Ch’oe Tŏkchung, *Yŏnhaengnok*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip* Vol. 39, p. 497; Hwang Chae, *Kabin yŏnhaeng pyŏllok*, 2.

however, unreserved expressions of wonder and disapproval increasingly become the norm, thus contributing to the othering of “Han Chineseness” more so than “Qingness.” Hong Taeyong, finding it strange that so many of the women he glimpsed in busy thoroughfares still had bound feet, broaches the subject in his brush talks with Han Chinese scholars in Beijing:

I asked: “Also, when did it become customary for women to wear small shoes?”

Langong replied: “There is no definitive evidence, but it is said that the practice first originated with Maiden Li of the Southern Tang.”

I said: “This, too, is really not good. I have said in the past that the *wangjin* and footbinding were the first harbingers of the Ming’s demise.”

Lian nodded.

Langong said: “I tried on an actor’s *wangjin* once, and it was very uncomfortable.”²⁸

Hong’s surprise at the prevalence of footbinding hints at the difficulty of distinguishing between Han Chinese and Manchu women on all other fronts—a point I take up in the next section. His exchange with Langong and Lian, meanwhile, is notable for its rather unusual prophetic overtones, as Hong tries, without much success, to convince his Han Chinese friends of the inauspiciousness of footbinding. The insinuation that the continuance of footbinding could bode ill for the Qing is dismissed by Langong, who says nothing about footbinding and only acknowledges the discomfort of wearing a *wangjin* (K. *manggŏn*), a hairnet for men that became largely redundant in Qing China with the adoption of the Manchu queue.

Hong’s understanding of footbinding as a “bad omen” is likely to have been idiosyncratic, in that none of the other *yŏnhaengnok* studied for this dissertation interprets the significance of footbinding quite in this way, but he was not alone in

²⁸ 余又曰，婦人小鞋，始於何代，蘭公曰，無明證，但傳云始自南唐李宵娘，余曰，此亦甚不好，余嘗云網頭纏足，乃中國厄運之先見者，力聞頷之，蘭公曰，余嘗取優人網巾戲着之，甚不便。

regarding footbinding as a practice better abandoned than preserved. Those who traveled after Hong were similarly perplexed to find footbinding so widely practiced by Han Chinese women, but when expressing their negative reactions, they tended to focus more squarely on the appearance, smell, and debilitating effects of bound feet. Yi Kap, writing in 1778, uses grotesque imagery to justify his aversion and bafflement:

Han Chinese women bind their feet from a young age and so tightly, too, that their feet assume a skeletal appearance. This is why bound feet turn an ugly color and smell foul. The tips of bound feet are narrow as needles, but because the shanks are still plump, these are also kept safely hidden from view. Both the socks and trouser legs are bound again tightly with colored cloth, and the cloth does not come off day or night; even a loved one does not get to see what lies underneath. Some say that this practice originated with Daji [consort of King Zhou of Shang] while others say that it began in the Tang, but it is impossible to know for certain. With their feet so grossly misshapen, the women don't like others to look; they also struggle to walk, their gait like that of ducks or sparrows, and fall at the slightest gust of wind. And yet they idealize the three-inch golden lotus and feel embarrassed when their own feet are any larger. It has been over a hundred years since all the men undid their hair, so how is it that this of all things has survived unchanged?²⁹

Similarly, Yi Haeŭng depicts footbinding as defying both nature and common sense:

Han Chinese women bind their feet whereas Manchu women do not. It is impossible to know when footbinding was first practiced. Girls typically have their feet bound from the age of four or five. Their gait is so unsteady that they look to be on the verge of falling. Once, in a brush talk with a Jiangnan scholar, someone asked: "Is it true that the bound feet of a woman smell so foul that you would not be able to go near them?"

"Bound feet are always dusted with perfumed powder, so they smell only of perfume," was the reply.³⁰

²⁹ Yi Kap, *Yŏnhaeng kisa*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip* Vol. 53, pp. 41-42: 漢女自幼裹足，束之甚緊，便作髑髏，色醜臭惡。足端雖尖細如針，而其脛則壅腫浮大。故常深藏祕護。袴襪之上，必以色布堅裹之，晝夜不解，雖情人不得見。或云此法出於妲己，或云始於唐時，有未能的知。而足形之醜惡既如此，羞令人見之。又甚艱於行步，有若鳧趨雀步，路中遇風則輒顛仆。而三寸金蓮，尚且歆艷，稍大則反以爲恥。今天下被髮已百年，惟此一節，堅守不變者何也？

³⁰ Yi Haeŭng, *Kyesan kijŏng*, 5:143a: 漢女纏足，滿女則否。蓋未詳其扞自何時。女兒生而至四五歲，則輒纏之。行步搖搖，若將顛覆。聞有人曾與江南士人筆談時，問婦女纏足臭惡，不可近，信然否。曰，纏足必以香屑布之，故但有香馥之臭云。

The perception of footbinding as a needless mutilation rather than a desirable enhancement of the female body finds expression in both Yi Kap's and Yi Haeŭng's descriptions. Their unwillingness to look past the physical disfigurement, compromised mobility, and laborious upkeep entailed in having bound feet typifies how most Chosŏn travelers approached footbinding from the late eighteenth century onwards: with voyeuristic fascination, visceral disgust, and an acute sense of estrangement from their Han Chinese male counterparts.

Interestingly, I have not encountered in *yŏnhaengnok* any attempt to condemn footbinding on Confucian grounds, which could have been done by citing the interrelatedness of bodily self-preservation and filial piety, for example. It would appear that most Chosŏn travelers did not consider footbinding to be so ethically or morally troubling as offensive to their sensibilities and tastes as men. Their failure to see the appeal of footbinding, be it aesthetic, sexual, or practical, receives repeated emphasis in *yŏnhaengnok*, whereby the sexual normalcy and common sense of Han Chinese men are also tacitly questioned. As with the recurring motif of topsy-turvy gender roles, the mystification of footbinding in *yŏnhaengnok* seems to reflect at its core Chosŏn male interests and anxieties, as opposed to an innocent ethnographic impulse frustrated by the lack of readily available and verifiable information.

Indeed, there is little here to challenge Euben's assertion that male travel writings about foreign women are rarely about the women themselves. However, as I discuss in the following section, the surprised reactions of Chosŏn travelers to the prevalence of footbinding among Han Chinese women also need to be viewed in light of the travelers' increasing inability, or unwillingness, to distinguish between Han Chinese and Manchu women by any other criterion. By the late eighteenth century, the Han Chinese-Manchu dichotomy was losing its relevance and, along with it, its

one-to-one equivalence with the *hwa-yi* dichotomy. More and more *yŏnhaengnok* authors would discontinue privileging Han Chinese women in their descriptions and assert with confidence that China under Qing rule had indeed changed beyond any resemblance to the China of former times; whether deliberately or unconsciously, they became participants in the construction and reproduction of Chosŏn uniqueness.

Diminishing Differences between Han Chinese and Manchu Women

In his *Tamhŏn yŏn'gi*, Hong Taeyong describes the first women he saw shortly upon entering Qing territory:

Most of the shops in Bianmen were shabby and poorly stocked. The women wore cotton and were unmistakably rustic in their manner of dress. They did not even wear flower hairpins in their hair. However, they appeared to allow themselves no respite when it came to getting up every day at dawn to comb their hair and wash their faces before putting on makeup. We also passed some women wearing earrings in the traditional style of the southern barbarians. They had crowded around a brazier to warm their hands and showed no intention of moving whatsoever. When they saw us, they appeared neither embarrassed nor afraid. It was not just their dirty complexion and uncomely faces but also their clothes and hairstyle that would have shocked anyone seeing them for the first time. It took me a few days to get used to seeing them.³¹

Like his contemporary Pak Chiwŏn, Hong seems to have expected to be impressed by the attire of the local women, only to find rather the opposite to be true: they wore cotton, not silk, and were more rustic in appearance than urbane. Any mention of ethnicity, however, remains curiously absent from the text, as Hong only intimates that the disappointingly plain appearance of Bianmen's women may have been due to their low socioeconomic status, and that their conscientious grooming habits, at least,

³¹ Hong Taeyong, *Tamhŏn yŏn'gi*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip*, Vol. 49, p. 136: 邊門店，槩多貧弊，婦女亦布衣村粧，髻不簪花，惟曉起梳洗，脂粉不暫廢，或有耳環如蠻俗者，羣聚烤手不離爐，見我人不羞不怕，不惟其貌色粗醜，創見其衣髻，無不駭異，數日習熟之後，視若故常也。

were a redeeming quality. Even though, in contrast, Hong does not hesitate to criticize and ridicule the women adorned in the “southern barbarian” style, again, he does not give a clear indication of these other women’s ethnicity. From his use of the character *man* 蠻, however, which first appears in Zhou-dynasty texts in reference to the aboriginal tribes of southern China,³² we may infer that the women were neither Han Chinese nor Manchu.

Hong’s subsequent descriptions of Qing women work to steer the reader’s attention away from the question of Han Chinese or Manchu and towards that of rich or poor. When recounting his encounter with an eighty-year-old woman in Shilipu 十里堡, Hong again leaves ethnicity out of the picture and emphasizes socioeconomic status. The old woman’s four sons, “all of them affluent,” had opened their doors and provided each of the three main envoys with his own quarters for the night; as proof of the four sons’ wealth, Hong describes in detail the grandeur of their estate and the numerous livestock in their possession. As for the old woman, he recalls being immediately impressed by her sharp faculties: not only could she still see and hear well, but she “even wore a flower hairpin in her hair.” Hong’s teasing remark that the flower might be age-inappropriate (“How embarrassed the flower must be, to have to adorn an old woman’s head!”) does not faze the old woman, who retorts: “People may age and grow old, but flowers never do.”³³

Hong goes on to mention on the old woman’s many grandchildren and great grandchildren, as if to urge his readers to look to her obvious wealth, health, and prosperity, rather than her ethnic background, to make sense of her intriguing retort.

³² Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A Manual*, p. 724.

³³ Hong Taeyong, *Tamhŏn yŏn’gi*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip*, Vol. 49, p. 137: 十里堡店主姓張，有弟三人，皆富豪。三使行分入于其兄弟家，大門有扁曰燦耀慈幃，崇屋雕窗，有牛七頭，馬數十匹。其母年八十歲，邀坐與語，視聽不少衰，尚簪花于髻。余戲之曰，花應羞上老人頭。應聲答曰，人老花不老。盖有四子十六孫曾孫三十餘人，每歲時慶集，婦子滿座，至不能辨云。

Not once does Hong mention anyone's ethnicity, although the old woman's surname, Zhang 張, does indicate that she was Han Chinese; as we have seen in his treatment of the women of Bianmen, here, too, Hong implicitly identifies socioeconomic status as the most decisive factor in how women in Qing China dressed and adorned themselves.

Hong's representations of women indicate that the perceived differences between Han and Manchu women had grown fewer and/or less significant by the time Hong traveled to China, making the Han Chinese-Manchu dichotomy espoused by his predecessors a thing of the past. Hong sums up his observations on women's dress as follows:

The traditional Chinese mode of dress still exists, but Han Chinese and Manchu women dress more or less the same. The one notable difference is that Han Chinese women have bound feet and consequently wear small shoes, whereas Manchu women and Han Chinese women of military families do not. Also, most Han Chinese women put on small hats when going out in public.

I was unable to see any well-dressed women. Generally, their long gowns are so long as to almost drag on the ground, and their sleeves are a bit wider than the men's. . . . All women arrange their hair in a bun with a couple of braided locks coiled over it. They place combs all around to keep their hair arrangement in place and also pin on flowers; even a widow, however old, will not give up adorning her hair with flowers.³⁴

Hong identifies bound feet as the most reliable marker of Han Chinese ethnicity but points out that there were exceptions even in this respect; his overall impression that Han Chinese and Manchu women dressed "more or less the same" serves to de-emphasize and trivialize any attempt at differentiation along ethnic lines. Although it could well be that Hong's assertions were based entirely on empirical observation,

³⁴ Hong Taeyong, *Tamhŏn yŏn'gi*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip* Vol. 49: 閨服, 尙存華制, 滿漢略同。惟漢女纏足小鞋, 滿人及漢軍家不然, 漢女髻上多戴小冠, 爲異也。婦人盛服, 不得見焉。槩爲長衣幾曳地, 狹袖比男服稍寬, 時見穿濶袖者, 下有裳, 襪積甚細, 總髮爲髻。穹其中而盤其端, 可三四旋焉, 周簪小笄以安之, 遍插綵花, 雖老寡婦, 不去也。

his tendency to paint Han Chinese and Manchu women with the same brush may also indicate a waning of interest in seeking out vestiges of the former Ming.

Likewise, most other *yŏnhaengnok* authors writing after Hong seem to have found it more convenient and compelling to gear their descriptive efforts towards an overall picture of moral degeneration and unchecked social change. Kim Chŏngjung 金正中 (birth and death years unknown), who traveled to Beijing in 1791, deplors the indistinguishability of Han Chinese and Manchu women. He attributes the increasingly widespread adoption of Manchu styles and neglect of the inner-outer distinction to Han Chinese ignorance of the very things that had made China great:

Kim Ch'angŏp once wrote: "Han Chinese women avoid contact with strangers, whereas Qing women do not." But now, Han Chinese women pin two flowers in their hair [in the Manchu style] and linger before me instead keeping their distance. Have they unknowingly become like this as a result of Qing influence?³⁵

Kim Chŏngjung's discursive position here is interesting in at least two respects: firstly, it depends on the authority of Kim Ch'angŏp's *Yŏnhaeng ilgi* for meaning and legitimacy, and secondly, it presumes an epistemic advantage over Han Chinese women (and, by extension, Han Chinese men). The implication that the outsider-observer knows better than the insider-observed also underlies Sŏ Yumun's more light-hearted description:

On either side of Shanhaiguan, there were many women passing by in carriages. They would stick their heads out to get a good look at our people only to shrink back into their seats as soon as our eyes met; they probably had the intention of observing the inner-outer distinction, but how silly of them to peer out like that in the first place! To get a view from the back of the carriage, one would have had to move up close to the dirty and wretched carriage driver, practically pressing her cheek to his back: how could you possibly call that observing the inner-outer distinction? What's even funnier is that

³⁵ Kim Chŏngjung, *Yŏnhaengnok*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip* Vol. 75, p. 104: 老稼齋云，漢女避人，清女不避人，今漢女頭插綵花二枝，對立咫尺之地，駭駭然入於清之俗習，不知其然而自然耶。

they would stare and stare in plain awe of us, and only when the carriage attendants would turn and mutter something did they attempt to hide themselves from view.³⁶

Both Kim and Sō in the above passages highlight the lack of self-awareness and questionable sense of propriety of the observed women to suggest that the moral character of all Qing women, irrespective of their social standing and ethnicity, left much to be desired. What comes across more strongly in Sō's description, on the other hand, is the claim of superiority over Han Chinese men. That the women showed such unrestrained interest in the Chosŏn embassy, much to the annoyance of their male chaperones, would imply that they found the Chosŏn men more impressive and worthy of attention; it is difficult to say how much of this was a wishful projection on Sō's part, but, as will become clear in the next section, Sō was not the only one to take pleasure in such situations of reciprocal spectatorship.

Desire and Spectacle

Writerly biases and agendas aside, the rarity and brevity of Chosŏn travelers' encounters with Qing women seems to have lent an irresistible novelty to every such encounter, making it worth recounting even if doing so could detract from the traveler's authorial and public persona. In Kim Ch'angöp's *Yŏnhaeng ilgi*, face-to-face encounters with Qing women are narrated with humor and nuance, such that the women are presented not only as objects of the Chosŏn male gaze made all the more

³⁶ Sō Yumun, *Muo yŏnhaengnok*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip* Vol. 63, pp. 52-54: 관 내외의 여자가 수레를 타고 지나는 자가 많으니, 혹 앞을 헤치고 아리따이 고운 얼굴을 내어 우리나라 사람을 구경하다가 눈이 마주치면 움츠려 앉으니 이는 내외하는 뜻이 있으나, 수레를 모는 놈이 수레 앞에 반듯이 앉아 더럽고 흉악한 몰골로 수레 안에 앉은 계집과 낮과 등이 서로 닿을 듯하니 분명 제 지아비는 아니라, 이 무슨 내외(內外)라 하리요. 우스꽝스럽고, 혹 우리나라 사람을 눈이 뚫어지도록 보아 부러워하는 기색이 뚜렷한 데도, 수레를 따라가는 자가 돌아보아 무엇이랴 중얼거리면 갑자기 문을 내리고 피하니 또한 매우 우습더라.

tantalizing by their presumed belonging with (or to) Qing men, but also as active subjects who react and set the tone of the encounter. Kim recounts his very first sighting of Han Chinese women:

We went another seven or eight *li* and reached Langzi Mountain, where there was a fairly populated and flourishing village. There were many women stepping out of their front gates to watch us go by. It was here where I was able to see Han Chinese women for the first time.³⁷

Kim's traveling party strike the women as an unusual sight, but upon stepping outside for a better look, the women attract Kim's gaze and become something of a spectacle themselves. This intriguing twofold position of the women, as spectator and spectacle, is further illustrated in Kim's anecdotes about Wŏn'gŏn and Yu Pongsan, two attendants of the Chosŏn embassy who may be said to function in the narrative as comic foils to Kim, if not his alter egos.

When Kim stops at a shop to wait for the rest of the embassy to catch up, a group of women pass the shop:

We encountered a group of eight or nine Manchu women walking along the street.

Wŏn'gŏn asked, "Where are you going?"

One of the women replied, "We are on our way to see some Koryŏans." She was saying this to tease us.

Wŏn'gŏn exclaimed, "Now that makes me nervous!" To this all the women laughed.

When we continued some distance, we saw tens of people crowding along the edge of a rice paddy. We approached them for a closer look and found that they were in the middle of a funeral. . . . It turned out that the women from earlier had been making their way here.³⁸

³⁷ Kim Ch'angŏp, *Yŏnhaeng ilgi*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip*, Vol. 32, p. 391: 行七八里抵狼子山, 民居頗盛, 女人多出門前觀光, 自此始見漢女。

³⁸ Kim Ch'angŏp, *Yŏnhaeng ilgi*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip*, Vol. 32, pp. 399: 路遇胡女八九人步行, 元建問何往, 一女答曰, 爲觀高麗人, 蓋戲之也。元建曰, 好生不安, 羣女皆笑。行未幾, 有數十人聚田畔, 近前視, 乃葬人也。以金銀紙綻覆棺上, 設祭物于其傍, 向羣女之行, 亦赴此也。

For the modern reader, the playful exchange between Wŏn'gŏn and one of the Manchu women at once evokes and subverts the idea of the male gaze. The woman's witty response to all the male attention triggers a role reversal, prompting Wŏn'gŏn to feign anxiety to keep up with the banter. The relationship between spectator and spectacle, subject and object, is shown to be dynamic and in flux.

Kim positions himself in the text as a detached observer, which might spare him from being too closely associated with Wŏn'gŏn's bold, flirtatious character, but from an authorial standpoint, why share this anecdote at all? In giving a voice to one of the women, effectively equipping her with the agency to talk back, Kim subverts the trope of the active male subject and passive female object—whether as an unintended consequence of his diligent recordkeeping or in a more deliberate attempt to excite and engage his readers. Wŏn'gŏn's make-believe anxiety, likewise, hints at a potential for critical self-reflexivity that does not quite materialize on the page but, nevertheless, alerts the reader to a more profound tension between the Chosŏn self projected from within and the “Koryŏan” seen from without.

In other morally and politically ambiguous encounters with women narrated in the *Yŏnhaeng ilgi*, Yu Pongsan plays the protagonist while Kim, again, keeps his narratorial distance. In Lianshanyi 連山驛, a farming village, the embassy stops for breakfast at the home of a man called Yu. The women of Yu's household are dining in the inner quarter of the house, and the travelers are quick to notice that one of the women has “a very pretty face.” To get a better look, Yu Pongsan drags his chair closer to the door to the inner quarter and refuses to move from his spot, despite the

laughter and ridicule of others.³⁹ Later, when Kim notices two more beautiful women out on the road, he turns to Yu Pongsan to ask if he has noticed them as well:

I asked him, “Did you see the beautiful women?”

Pongsan replied, “How could I not notice? I got Sanggön to make them come out.” Sanggön is a foot soldier who walks with a trumpet in hand and follows behind the military officers. The sound of his trumpet draws out any women wanting to get a glimpse of us, but because Pongsan has to walk ahead of the military personnel, he always wonders, with much regret, about the women he may have missed.⁴⁰

Yu Pongsan draws attention to the entire embassy, consciously offering it up as a spectacle, so that he may enjoy the spectacle of women spectators. In these examples, spectacle breeds spectacle, yielding more than one answer to the question of who is watching whom.

Much later in the *Yonhaeng ilgi*, when the embassy is heading back home, Yu Pongsan’s characterization as a ladies’ man takes on almost hyperbolic proportions. Kim reveals that during an overnight stay in Shanhaiguan, Yu sent for company so that “he could flirt with her, touch her breasts, and fondle her back”;⁴¹ Yu’s pursuit of pleasure was apparently not confined to the visual realm. His sexual encounter would be uncontroversially interpreted as a conquest if not for the reappearance of his female acquaintance the morning after:

The girl from last night caught sight of Yu Pongsan and shouted in greeting, “Hoya!” “Hoya” is a common expression among the people

³⁹ Kim Ch’angöp, *Yonhaeng ilgi*, in *Yonhaengnok chönjip*, Vol. 32, pp. 445-446: 朝飯于劉姓人家，醬瓮在屋裏，求而嘗之，味雖微酸，亦佳，主人婦女在內炕喫飯，其中一人有姿色，柳鳳山見而悅之，引椅坐其門，同行指笑而亦不動。

⁴⁰ Kim Ch’angöp, *Yonhaeng ilgi*, in *Yonhaengnok chönjip*, Vol. 32, pp. 451-452: 三行同入察院，院在內城西門內，北邊堂宇頗頹落，舊屋也，上副使分入東西炕，書狀入西廊，來時，西門內見十餘歲女兒立門，容姿端秀，此來初見，又有年可二十餘者兩人皆美，余謂柳鳳山曰，君亦見如此女人乎，柳曰，吾豈不見，我令尙建引出矣，尙建即軍牢名，蓋軍牢持喇叭在前，前陪軍官隨其後，每過村店，柳鳳山輒催尙建吹喇叭，蓋聞喇叭聲，則觀光女人出來故也，然柳以在前先過，其後出者，或未及見，柳常恨之。

⁴¹ Kim Ch’angöp, *Yonhaeng ilgi*, in *Yonhaengnok chönjip*, Vol. 33, p. 330: 聞柳鳳山招致調戲，以手探懷撫背云。

of this region. Yu Pongsan, hearing this, was extremely pleased and smiled.⁴²

The mutual intimacy and complicity reflected in the above interaction support neither a patriarchal agenda nor a patriotic one. Rather, as we have seen with Kim's use of Wŏn'gŏn as a third-person protagonist, Yu Pongsan's uninhibited interest in Qing women hints at a different brand of masculinity and outlook on the world that Kim Ch'angŏp leaves for the reader to judge. From a historiographical point of view, the examples of Wŏn'gŏn and Yu Pongsan shed light on an underrepresented aspect of Chosŏn-Qing relations: for embassy attendants who were repeat travelers and spent much of their working lives on the road, liaisons with local women may not have been so unusual or difficult.

Turning to Hong Taeyong's *Tamhŏn yŏn'gi*, here, too, we find the volatile relationship between spectator and spectacle illustrated in vivid and humorous detail, but, unlike Kim Ch'angŏp, Hong presents himself as an active participant in the narrated events. When Hong reaches the outskirts of Beijing, he happens upon a house where a funeral is (wrongly) believed to be taking place. Wishing to see how funeral rites are performed in Qing China, Hong asks to be allowed in, but a boy standing at the front gate tries to turn him away:

The boy replied, "There is a matter we are busy attending to at the moment."

I assumed the boy was referring to the funeral, so I said, "This matter you speak of, that is the very thing I wish to see." The boy's face turned bright red, and all he kept saying was that there was a matter that needed attending to.

Shortly thereafter, someone from inside came to the gate and said, "A wedding is taking place here today." Only then did it occur to me that the boy was the groom. Feeling terribly sorry, embarrassed, and perplexed, I feigned a chuckle and retreated a few steps. After crossing a short bridge, I looked back and saw that six or seven

⁴² Kim Ch'angŏp, *Yŏnhaeng ilgi*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip*, Vol. 33, p. 330: 前日女人見柳鳳山, 迎謂曰, 好耶, 好耶者, 卽此處人人之言也, 柳得此言, 極以爲幸, 可笑。

women had stepped out to watch us from the front gate. A few of them were splendidly dressed. They had gathered to watch us as though we were a strange sight. Only Kim P'yŏnjang was unable to get a good look at them, so with his head bowed he retraced his steps back over the bridge. When he appeared to be heading back their way, the women took fright and hastened to get away. Everyone burst into laughter.⁴³

The above anecdote captures the heightened volatility of cultural encounters when sexuality also enters the equation. At the outset, Hong assumes the role of the assertive spectator, his advances fueled by a misunderstanding, but with the realization of his faux pas comes a role reversal where he and his party become the spectacle and find themselves in need of a quick getaway. The women who come out to watch them, however, fall prey to Kim P'yŏnjang's apologetic yet no less eager gaze, and the women, in turn, make their hasty retreat. The presence of laughter throughout this cat-and-mouse interaction at once masks and lays bare the vulnerability of all parties involved: not one emerges impervious to the other's misconceptions or objectivizing gaze.

In addition to providing quasi-voyeuristic pleasure and comic relief, the spectator-spectacle motif in *yŏnhaengnok* would have struck a familiar chord with Chosŏn readers because of the Chosŏn court's repeated prohibitions against women gathering in streets to watch Chinese embassy processions. According to the *Sillok*, the phenomenon of embassy-watching was identified as a social problem as early as 1449—not only on grounds of gender impropriety but also for fear that it would attract ridicule from the Chinese—and remained a source of controversy into the

⁴³ Hong Taeyong, *Tamhŏn yŏn'gi*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip*, Vol. 49: 或云是營葬也, 余踵門而請見, 門前有少年衣紋錦者, 答曰, 有事, 余意其謂葬事也, 欲一見其下法, 再言你家有事, 正我所願見, 其少年益頽然, 只連稱有事而已, 頃之, 有人出應曰, 這家方取親, 盖其少年即新婿也, 遂惶愧失笑而退數步, 渡短橋, 回見六七婦女, 簇擁于門, 數人衣飾極華麗, 諸人方聚望稱奇, 金平仲不及見, 低頭走上橋, 衆婦女意其復進也, 大驚一擁而走, 諸人大笑。

1770s.⁴⁴ It would appear that some Chosŏn male elites even considered it a memorable virtue not to partake in embassy-watching: in his eulogy for Lady Kang of Kŭmch'ŏn, Song Chun'gil 宋浚吉 (1606-1672) praises Lady Kang for having been the *only* woman in the capital who did not go watch the Ming embassy of 1626.⁴⁵

Curiously, none of the discussed *yŏnhaengnok* authors makes these parallels explicit. How might have Chosŏn readers responded to the revelation that Qing women, Han Chinese included, were no less susceptible to the lure of spectacle than Chosŏn women? This piece of insight may have served to normalize the spectating behavior, but not without also inviting assumptions about the general moral frailty of women. That the authors themselves refrain from comment seems to suggest a resistance on their part to subjecting Chosŏn's own women to a less than positive appraisal.

The protective silence surrounding the possible shortcomings of Chosŏn women is something we also encounter in how travelers would describe aspects of Chosŏn society and culture to Qing audiences. Euben's theory of the universal tendency of male travelers to use women synecdochally in representations of other cultures could be extended in this case to travelers' strategies of self-representation in cross-cultural interactions, but as we will see in the example of Pak Chiwŏn, below, the desire for external validation comes across more strongly than a self-assured sense of identity.

⁴⁴ For the Chosŏn court's deliberations on the embassy-watching issue, see *Sejong sillok* (1449/01/22); *Sŏngjong sillok* (1480/04/22); *Sŏngjong sillok* (1480/05/08); *Yŏnsan 'gun ilgi* (1503/04/01); *Sŏnjo sillok* (1606/04/08); and *Hyŏnjong sillok* (1670/02/018). The court historian's annotative comment in *Yŏngjo sillok* 11:17b (1727/03/07) indicates that *yangban* women were continuing to watch embassy processions at the time of the *Yŏngjo sillok*'s compilation.

⁴⁵ Song Chun'gil, *Tongch'undang chip* 18:42a.

When asked to name Chosŏn Korea's strengths in a brush talk with two Qing scholars, Pak Chiwŏn replies:

My country may be situated in a remote corner of the sea but possesses four good qualities. First, we have a tradition of upholding Confucian ideals and values; second, our land is free of flood disasters; third, we do not depend on other countries for fish and salt; and fourth, a woman [in my country] would never serve two husbands.⁴⁶

At first glance, the last quality on Pak's list comes across as redundant, appearing to only reiterate the commitment to Confucian orthodoxy mentioned at the outset, but it provides us with some interesting clues as to how Chosŏn travelers preferred to perceive and represent their own female counterparts. A Confucian reading, in equating women's chastity with order in the home and in society at large, would interpret Pak's statement as a subtle message about the masculinity and political prowess of Chosŏn men. One is led to believe that Chosŏn men are not only competent, respected husbands but also adept rulers, keeping both women's bodies and the body politic in check. As a metaphor for Chosŏn diplomacy, on the other hand, the chaste wife or widow may also be interpreted as undivided loyalty to the Ming, implying that to serve both the Ming and the Qing would be contrary to the Chosŏn sense of honor.

Pak's indirect assertions of manliness and righteousness do not go undetected by the two Qing scholars. After exchanging quick words with each other, one chooses to be polite: "That is truly a good country," he writes. The other, taking no notice of his friend's effort to be diplomatic, retorts: "Are you suggesting that all women in your country do not remarry? How is that possible?" Forced to qualify his

⁴⁶ Pak Chiwŏn, *Yŏrha ilgi*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip* Vol. 55, pp. 173-174: 弊邦雖僻居海陬, 亦有四佳, 俗尚儒教, 一佳也, 地無河患, 二佳也, 魚鹽不藉他國, 三佳也, 女子不更二夫, 四佳也.

statement, Pak explains that he was mostly referring to aristocratic women. Still unconvinced, the same scholar asks if such aristocratic women are prohibited by law from remarrying. Pak insists that they remain chaste of their own accord, out of a profound respect for tradition and virtue. Before the nitpicking can continue and moods turn irretrievably sour, the more tactful of the two scholars intervenes and attempts to steer the brush talk in a different direction. The diversion proves short-lived, however, as the focus returns to Chosŏn women and Pak is asked this time about how Chosŏn women typically dress. Pak obliges the scholars with a drawing that all three men can stand back from and appreciate, and any male egos bruised from the earlier back and forth are quickly assuaged.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Pak Chiwŏn, *Yŏrha ilgi*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip* Vol. 55, p. 175: 貴國婦人衣冠之制如何, 余略對上衣下裳及髻髻之法, 如圖衫唐衣, 略畫其製於桌面, 兩人皆稱善.

Chapter Four

The Ŭiju-Fenghuang Border Region as Ritualized Space: A Response to Marion Eggert

From as early as Koryŏ times, Korean embassies traveling by land accessed China by crossing the lower reaches of the Yalu river in Ŭiju. The Yalu river served as a natural border between the two countries, and customs checkpoints were in operation on both sides of the river.⁴⁸ Shortly after adopting the Qing dynastic title in 1636, however, the Manchus fortified their border with Chosŏn Korea by erecting a willow palisade extending northeastwards from Fenghuang to Kaiyuan, and the land between the palisade and the Yalu was designated no man's land, serving as an additional safeguard against trespassers and fugitives. In short, the Ŭiju-Fenghuang border was expanded from a single demarcation line to comprise a tripartite border region: Chosŏn travelers had to first cross the Yalu River, then traverse the no man's land, and then pass through the palisade gate before they could set foot on Qing soil.

Marion Eggert offers a useful description of the activities entailed in each of these three stages:

After arriving at Ŭiju, the embassy would rest a few (up to ten) days. This interval was used to complete and check the register of tribute goods, [to inspect] the embassy's men and horses (which were listed with height and color), to buy supplies (esp. foodstuff) needed on the further journey, to write letters home and, for the three main envoys, to be feasted by the magistrate of Ŭiju with a farewell banquet. On the morning of departure, the magistrate would set up tents at the bank of the Yalu River to conduct the customs control... Depending on rank and connections, the embassy passed the customs controls more or less undisturbed, before boarding several ships to cross the river (they crossed it on foot or horseback when it was frozen). Persons not allowed to enter China (like servants or family members not on the register) had to be left behind at this point. The journey through no man's land lasted for two days; the second night was usually spent in a

⁴⁸ Eggert, "A Borderline Case," p. 66.

place near Palisade Gate. A messenger was sent ahead to the gate to announce the arrival of the embassy, whereupon the magistrate of Fenghuang would proceed to the gate and open it to the embassy. People and horses entering the gate were checked individually according to the embassy's register. While the three main envoys were allowed to ride in light sedans, all other members had to dismount their horses. Only after this procedure did they set foot on the soil of the Qing Empire.⁴⁹

It may be said that the tensions and mutual distrust between Chosŏn Korea and Qing China at the outset of their relationship motivated the additional border control measures, in turn affecting Chosŏn travelers' experiences and perceptions of leaving one country and entering the other. In her article "A Borderline Case: Korean Travelers' Views of the Chinese Border," from where the above passage was taken, Eggert offers a comparative reading of early and late Chosŏn travel texts and suggests that late Chosŏn travelers no longer perceived their border crossing as an act of striding forward, towards the center of culture and civilization, but rather as "suffering an osmosis... as if being sucked through a membrane into another 'state.'"⁵⁰ This distinct shift in outlook is reflected in later travelers' unprecedented preference for prose and a more descriptive mode of storytelling, which Eggert calls the "narrativization" of the *yŏnhaengnok* genre: the task of travel writing had become less concerned with participating in a shared cultural realm through stylized poetic expression than with coming to terms with what was widely assumed to be a changed and unfamiliar China.

Moreover, as the act of border crossing itself was significantly extended in time and space, Eggert proposes:

If we take ritual to have exactly this basic function, namely to lengthen a moment of passage in a way that enhances, or even renders possible, awareness of its happening, the Ŭiju-Fenghuang border region can be seen as ritualized space, or ritual in a spatial instead of

⁴⁹ Eggert, "A Borderline Case," pp. 66-67.

⁵⁰ Eggert, "A Borderline Case," pp. 65-66.

its usual temporal guise. The heightened awareness of crossing the border, expressed in detailed and often rather personal accounts of later Chosŏn travelers, may support this theory.⁵¹

Drawing on Arnold van Gennep's theory of rites of passage, Eggert interprets the three stages of crossing the border region as distinct phases in the travelers' transition into a new territorial state and mental state, each typified by certain utterances and behaviors that become evident either through recurring motifs across multiple *yŏnhaengnok* texts or through a particularly detailed elaboration in an individual text.⁵² If the main thrust of Eggert's argument is that the changed spatiality of the border into a "border region" imparted a certain structure and meaning to the act of crossing it, what is also implied is that late Chosŏn travelers' representations of this border region lend themselves better to comparison and contrast than do early Chosŏn representations. In other words, the Ŭiju-Fenghuang border region may have provided ampler opportunities for self-representation than the Yalu river did on its own: a most compelling point that is hinted at but not explored.

This chapter revisits and builds on Eggert's work on the Ŭiju-Fenghuang border region, given the prominence of this geographical space as a commonly narrated feature of almost all late Chosŏn *yŏnhaeng* experiences and the particular impact that Eggert's contribution has had on English-language scholarship. Eggert's article happens to be one of the very few English-language secondary sources dealing with *yŏnhaengnok* and as such has informed a number of subsequent scholarly works on Sino-Korean borders and the Chinese tribute system, including my own initial research for this dissertation.⁵³ However, there are a few issues with her

⁵¹ Eggert, "A Borderline Case," pp. 67-68.

⁵² Eggert, "A Borderline Case," p. 69.

⁵³ For example, see Schmid, "Tributary Relations and the Qing-Chosŏn Frontier on Mount Paektu," pp. 132-133; Schmid, *Korea between Empires: 1895-1919*, p. 204; and Kim, Seonmin, "Ginseng, Silver and Borders in East Asia," p. 6.

methodology and argument that I would like to address here and attempt to redress throughout this chapter, by further exploring not only what the Ŭiju-Fenghuang border region may have meant to various late Chosŏn individuals, but also what subjectivities they were invoking and performing through their particular representations. Tentatively, I suggest that we refrain from drawing too sharp a contrast between the early and late Chosŏn periods, because the rhetorical strategies for coming to terms with and communicating one's sense of dislocation were not in themselves necessarily new.

To begin, then, I offer some preliminary remarks on how the strengths and limitations of Eggert's study have informed my own method and sources. Whereas Eggert's description of the border crossing process, gleaned from just the *yŏnhaengnok* texts, is informative and fairly adequate for our purposes, I would suggest that her interpretive framework based on Van Gennep's theory does more harm than good. Though illuminating in some respects, the latter serves to overemphasize the ceremonious nature of crossing the border region, which can in turn create the false impression that all of the discernible formalities, patterns of behavior, and recurring sentiments were unique to the late Chosŏn period. Furthermore, considering that Van Gennep himself had proceeded from the premise that all territorial rites of passage speak to a once universal, magico-religious belief in the sanctity of borders,⁵⁴ I suspect that his theory may be too loaded for such easy application in this context. At the very least, some justification seems necessary, as I

⁵⁴ Van Gennep posits that the magico-religious meaning ascribed to borders in the earliest and "semi-civilized" societies was subsequently secularized in modern industrialized settings, but that the basic ceremonial constituents of crossing a border have remained the same: "The length and intricacy of each stage through which foreigners and natives move towards each other vary with different peoples. The basic procedure is always the same, however, for either a company or an individual: they must stop, wait, go through a transitional period, enter, be incorporated." See Van Gennep, *Rites de Passage*, pp. 15-16, 28.

fail to see how “*not by pure chance* [emphasis added], these stages [of crossing the Uiju-Fenghuang border region] can be described in terms equivalent to the phases Van Gennep defined for ‘rites de passage.’” As far as I can tell, the parallels *are* coincidental, unless an argument can be made for the sacred place of borders in the Korean tradition.

I have structured the main body of this chapter according to the three stages of crossing the border region—preparations and leave-taking by the Yalu River in the first stage, traversing the no man’s land in the second, and passing through the palisade gate and entering the other side in the third—so as to enable more detailed considerations of Eggert’s work and a clearer presentation of my own findings and analyses. In lieu of the concept of the rite of passage, I draw on the less context-specific and more action-oriented concept of “bordering” as defined by Henk van Houtum and Ton van Naerssen:

Bordering processes do not begin or stop at demarcation lines in space. Borders do not represent a fixed point in space or time, rather they symbolize a social practice of spatial differentiation. Semantically, the word “borders” unjustly assumes that places are fixed in space and time, and should rather be understood in terms of bordering, as an ongoing strategic effort to make a difference in space among movements of people, money, or products.⁵⁵

In treating border narratives as examples of bordering in the verbal sense, I am less interested in the factuality of the information provided by travelers than in the impulses, prejudices, and conceptions of belonging that their representations make manifest. I ask: what are the sources of authority and knowledge invoked, reaffirmed, or challenged in the process of making differences in space and identifying what is home, here, ours versus what is away, there, theirs? And what are the collective and individual identities that emerge from this process?

⁵⁵ Van Houtum and Van Naerssen, “Bordering,” p. 126.

To attempt to answer these questions, I have worked with a slightly larger sample than Eggert's selection of six *choch'önnok* and three *yönhaengnok* texts. The three *yönhaengnok* texts discussed in Eggert's study are Kim Ch'angöp's *Nogajae yönhaeng ilgi* (1712), Pak Chiwön's *Yörha ilgi* (1780), and Sö Kyöngsun's *Monggyöngdang ilsa* (1855), and to these I have added four others for a more representative coverage of the genre: Hong Taeyong's *Tamhön yön'gi* (1765) and *Ŭlbyöng yönhaengnok* (1765), Sö Yumun's *Muo yönhaengnok* (1799), and Kim Kyöngsön's *Yönwön chikchi* (1832). As Eggert's chosen three texts were all written by military aides and in *hanmun*, when choosing my additional texts I gave precedence to authors who occupied senior embassy positions and to works written in *han'gül*. Sö Yumun and Kim Kyöngsön were the *söjanggwan* of their respective embassies; Hong Taeyong's *Ŭlbyöng yönhaengnok* and Sö Yumun's *Muo yönhaengnok* are *han'gül* works.

Ideally, my study would have benefited from including a few additional *choch'önnok* texts as well, but I have only been able to consider Hō Pong's *Choch'ön'gi* (1574). I treat this text as a counterexample to Eggert's distinction between early and late Chosön attitudes towards travel, albeit at the risk of according it too much importance. I hope that my observations will at least serve to highlight possibilities for further research, in the same way that Eggert's work has done for me.

Preparations and Leave-taking

a) Preparations

When a border is expanded to encompass a region, where does one territory end and the other begin? At what point has the traveler effectively left home and

embarked on his journey? At first glance, these two questions appear almost identical, but from the standpoint of most late Chosŏn travelers, there may have been a fundamental difference. In all seven of the *yŏnhaengnok* texts concerned, the Yalu river is presented as a national boundary, one which marked off the Chosŏn political domain and differentiated “our country” 我國 here from “the other, or their, territory” 彼地 there. In this respect, the meaning ascribed to the Yalu river appears to have changed little since the early Chosŏn period, even if, as Eggert suggests, the act of crossing it might have become more momentous and more daunting for late Chosŏn travelers (a point taken up in more detail in the next section). Likewise, it is worth noting that both early and late Chosŏn travelers conceived of “home” in a much narrower sense than “country,” which may seem natural and obvious enough, but what this implies is that by the time they reached Uiju, whether to cross just the Yalu river or the border region to enter China, their journey, and their bordering, had already long begun.

Crossing the Ŭiju-Fenghuang border region is a commonly narrated feature of the *yŏnhaeng* experience but cannot be regarded as a common starting point. Most *yŏnhaengnok* begin with an explanation of the circumstances that occasioned the journey and the preparations undertaken before departing the Chosŏn capital, followed by an account of the two to four weeks spent traveling just to Ŭiju. This first leg of the journey alone seems to have excited many travelers, who looked forward to seeing parts of their own country that they had only heard and read about, which is to say that the anticipation of encountering the unfamiliar was not reserved for China alone. By the same token, leaving the familiar surrounds of one’s home was something that would seldom go unnarrated, and in some instances, this event is recounted with an even sharper, more self-revealing poignancy than the border

crossing. Hō Pong names every one of the several dozen colleagues, friends, and relatives he met and drank with as part of his send-off;⁵⁶ Hong Taeyong reproduces the seven farewell poems he received from his father;⁵⁷ Sō Yumun expresses annoyance with himself for still struggling to sleep on his last night, despite having had weeks to mentally prepare for his upcoming journey;⁵⁸ and Kim Kyōngsōn admits to a “most bleak and sorrowful feeling” after parting with his son and family servants, who had accompanied him as far as Koyang, forty *li* outside of Seoul.⁵⁹

Once the traveler has ventured beyond Seoul’s familiar outskirts, sightings of the strange and unfamiliar begin to creep into his narrative and become prevalent for the first time in P’yōngyang. Both Hō Pong and Hong Taeyong attribute their special interest in P’yōngyang to the city’s historical significance: as they understood it, P’yōngyang was where Kija had founded his capital and laid the foundation for Korean civilization and culture.⁶⁰ Their respective accounts of P’yōngyang tend to center on its pavilions, musical and performance traditions, and natural landscape, which may be taken to reflect not only the activities that their P’yōngyang itineraries had in common, but also the influence of *yangban* class habits and tastes on their approach to experiencing and writing about P’yōngyang. For example, pavilions are among the first sights to be described for a number of possible reasons: pavilions served as venues for receiving and entertaining official guests; as such, they were thought to represent the political affairs and ambition of the district or city; and, just as importantly, they would have been a familiar sight to travelers in the midst of unfamiliar surroundings, promising them physical and mental respite. The

⁵⁶ Hō Pong, *Choch’ōn’gi*, in *Yōnhaengnok chōnjip* Vol. 6, pp. 20-22.

⁵⁷ Hong Taeyong, *Ŭlbyōng yōnhaengnok*

⁵⁸ Sō Yumun, *Muo yōnhaengnok*, in *Yōnhaengnok chōnjip* Vol. 62, p. 455.

⁵⁹ Kim Kyōngsōn, *Yōnwōn chikchi*, in *Yōnhaengnok chōnjip* Vol. 70, p. 259.

⁶⁰ Hō Pong, *Choch’ōn’gi*, in *Yōnhaengnok chōnjip* Vol.6, pp. 54; Hong Taeyong, *Ŭlbyōng yōnhaengnok*

importance of the pavilion as a social, cultural, and political space for *yangban* men is well exemplified by the 885 pavilions recorded in the gazetteer *Sinjŭng Tongguk yŏji sŭngnam*, along with the literary compositions they each inspired.⁶¹

As it was customary for the provincial governor to supervise the entertainment of embassies upon their arrival in P'yŏngyang, envoys and their aides were treated to a sumptuous, carefully curated first sampling of regional delicacies, music, dance, and martial arts—not all of which would be to their personal liking. Hŏ Pong complains that the talents on display at the governor's banquet were “far noisier and more chaotic than the day before,” and proceeds to worry about his fellow countrymen's increasingly vulgar tastes in music and dance.⁶² Hong Taeyong, on the other hand, offers a more diplomatic response: “I can see how this place is famous throughout the land for its exquisite instruments and flamboyant gestures.”⁶³ Hŏ Pong and Hong Taeyong thus engage in description and evaluation from the subject position of Seoulites with purportedly wider, “national,” concerns. Their literary construction of cultural differences along regional lines, while subscribing to the politically charged concepts of center and periphery at the heart of conventional prejudices against northerners, does not go so far as to resituate P'yŏngyang outside the boundaries of Chosŏn Koreanness. However, from P'yŏngyang, the travelers still had a long way to go to reach the border town of Ŭiju, and once there, they tended to express a far less accommodating attitude.

At Ŭiju, Chosŏn travelers faced the ever-closer prospect of entering foreign territory, which may have occasioned the need to “first reassure themselves of their

⁶¹ Kim T'aejun, *Han'guk ūi yŏhaeng munhak*, pp. 43-46.

⁶² Hŏ Pong, *Choch'ŏn'gi*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip* Vol.6, pp. 52: 監司張宴席，掛粉俟於綾羅島，令軍官耦射，饌具進設，拋毬響鉞，舞童舞鼓之伎喧闐膠擾，比昨日尤甚。我國之樂，歌曲淫褻，聲音哀楚，使人心悲傷，而其舞蹈進退之節，輕浮急促，不可正視，世之人方且以爲歡喜，而觀之窮晝夜不厭，亦獨何心哉。

⁶³ Hong Taeyong, *Ŭlbyŏng yŏnhaengnok*, p. 33.

masculine and valiant identities.”⁶⁴ According to Eggert, this assertion of masculinity and valiance finds expression in the presence of *kisaeng*, who would entertain embassies with equestrian shows and sword dances as part of their send-off, as well as in the donning of military uniforms just before the river crossing. Both the *kisaeng* and the military dress would have served to boost the travelers’ morale and enabled them to perceive themselves as manly, heroic adventurers;⁶⁵ Eggert also suggests that the change of dress may be interpreted as a sign of transition into a state of “interstructural liminality,” where the travelers, no longer in their usual dress and devoid of other social markers, experience their rite of passage as equals.⁶⁶

If we take a closer look at how the *kisaeng* of Ŭiju are represented in the primary texts, however, we find that they did not always have the desired effect as posited by Eggert. For example, a *kisaeng* is assigned to Sō Yumun on his first day in Ŭiju, and he is immediately appalled by her lack of good manners and refinement:

The attendant *kisaeng* poured some wine into a silver cup, and I watched her bring it to me without using a tray and without any dishes to accompany the wine. It was outrageous to see such slovenly conduct. Taking notice of my stares, the interpreter said to me: “This is an age-old custom of Ŭiju.” Where could have this so-called custom come from? Thinking to myself that it must have been modeled after the Chinese way of offering tea, I smiled and refused the wine.⁶⁷

Sō finds the *kisaeng*’s comportment so contrary to his expectations that he judges it to be un-Korean; his refusal of the wine doubles as a refusal to revise his existing understanding of Chosŏn Koreanness, the basis of his cultural identity. That he

⁶⁴ Eggert, “A Borderline Case,” p. 71.

⁶⁵ Eggert, “A Borderline Case,” pp. 70-71.

⁶⁶ Eggert, “A Borderline Case,” footnote 77.

⁶⁷ Sō Yumun, *Muo yŏnhaengnok*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip* Vol. 62, pp. 465-466: 수청기생이 은잔에 술을 부어 나오되 안주도 없으며 쟁반에 받친 일이 없으니, 일이 단정치 못하고 보기에 황당(荒唐)한지라, 내가 유심히 보고자 하니, 앞에 섰던 역관이 이르되, “이는 의주의 예부터 전해 오는 풍속이라.” 하니, 이른바 고풍은 어느 적에 비롯한 일인지? 대체 중원 사람의 차 권하는 법을 본받은 일이라 웃고 물리치니라.

would sooner suspect an unfamiliar Ŭiju “custom” of Chinese influence than accept it as a local particularity also points to an interesting inconsistency between geopolitical and cultural borders in his worldview, which persists even after he has spent several more days in Ŭiju.

On his second to last day in Ŭiju, Sŏ Yumun experiences the “truly strange sight” of *kisaeng* showcasing their horseriding and swordfighting skills. He describes the spectacle in detail and expresses a keen yet patronizing interest in the locality’s “traditional reverence for archery and riding”; he also mentions with a hint of regret that a demonstration of hunting in the Wihwado style, which he did not get to see, was supposed to be even more exciting to watch.⁶⁸ None of these diversions serves to quell his anxiety about the river crossing or his homesickness, however. With the cold wind blowing from the north and the horizon of “barbarian mountains” (胡山) making him feel more lonesome than ever, he wonders out loud: “How else is one supposed to feel, having left one’s home and country far behind?”⁶⁹ His wording insists that he is already a long way from home *and* Korea despite having yet to cross the Yalu River, which again implies a differentiation between the geopolitical and the cultural border.

As for the military attire Sŏ changes into on the day of the river crossing, he makes no mention of it making him feel any stronger or more courageous. He merely observes that apart from the interpreters and officers in charge of supplies, all members of the embassy were in military uniform, and that the higher ranking

⁶⁸ Sŏ Yumun, *Muo yŏnhaengnok*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip* Vol. 62, pp. 477-478: 정·부사와 부윤으로 더불어 강무당에 모여 본부 장교와 기생을 모두어 말을 달리며 칼 쓰기를 시험하니 . . . 궁마를 숭상하는 풍속을 가히 알리라. . . 진실로 기이한 장관이라. . . 위화도사냥이 가장 쾌하사 오늘 구경에 비기지 못하리라 하더라.

⁶⁹ Sŏ Yumun, *Muo yŏnhaengnok*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip* Vol. 62, p. 479: 내일은 장차 도강할지라, 손의 마음이 자못 수절하더니, 이날 추위 심하여 삭풍이 길이 부니, 귓가에 풍수 소리와 눈앞의 호산이 다만 회포를 도울 뿐이라. 가국을 멀리 떠난 사정이 어찌 이렇지 않으리오.

officers wore blue overcoats and the lower ranking officers red overcoats.⁷⁰ In other words, not everyone changed into military clothing, and those who did were dressed according to their respective positions within the embassy. While it is still possible to interpret the change of dress as a transformation, the transformation does not appear to have resulted in a complete obliteration of social distinctions, as Eggert suggests. Rather, it may have helped to put into effect a new hierarchical organization upon which the embassy would operate, and as I discuss in a later section, this new system becomes more evident when the embassy progresses to the palisade gate.

b) Leave-taking

Embassies were bade farewell on the river shore by relatives, friends, and the people of Ŭiju, and here, Eggert notes, “sentiments of lingering and attachment... now find wide coverage.” Indeed, Kim Ch’angöp provides a poignant description of the leave-taking:

My brother left before us and crossed the frozen river on a sled. On the other side, he sat for a moment on an elevated spot to watch the *kisaeng* racing their horses and retrieving banners in a dazzling display of horsemanship. Once across the first branch of the river, we come to the next branch. When this part of the river is crossed, we enter another land. My nephew had to leave us here and turn back; my heart ached with sorrow many times over... Beyond this point, reeds taller than men crowded either side of our path. It is said that among those traveling for the first time many shed tears here. As for those remaining behind on the frozen river, they are said to always lose their composure at the sight of the embassy’s fluttering blue parasols disappearing over the horizon.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Sö Yumun, *Muo yŏnhaengnok*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip* Vol. 62, p. 481.

⁷¹ *Kim Ch’angöp, Yŏnhaeng ilgi*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip* Vol. 32, pp. 367-368: 伯氏先行，以雪馬渡江，少坐岸上，觀妓輩馳馬拔旗，行過小西江，到中江，過江則彼地也，濟侄至此落歸，別懷一倍悵黯，前導亦盡落，只有軍牢一雙，軍官一雙，引路一雙，日傘一柄耳，中江以後，蘆葦夾路，其長過人，到此，初行之人多墮淚，送者在江上望見，青蓋翩翩，須臾而滅，亦無不銷魂云。

In relating his own sadness to the collective memory of past travelers and farewell bidders, Kim alludes to a larger master narrative of border crossing, one which equates crossing the Yalu River with leaving home. It can be said that Pak, too, reenacts this master narrative, as he describes his feelings of gloom and homesickness on the day of the river crossing:

Though crossing the raging river still posed a danger, the day of departure had finally arrived and there was nothing we could do but leave. Gazing into the distance, I had a sense of steaming heat. Quietly I turned away, looking back and trying to remember my home. The distant cloud-shrouded mountain seemed so far away that I could not help feeling sad, and the momentary urge to return home crept in. But to tell the truth, I had thought of this adventure as my ‘grand tour’, and often told myself it was a trip I must do at least once in my lifetime. But the realization that the day had finally arrived now made this life-long yearning less important in my mind.⁷²

The above passage constitutes one of the rare instances where Pak goes into any detail about his private emotions. It is also the one point in his journey through the border region where he refers to his home with such a strong sense of attachment and longing, which lends further support to the Yalu River’s apparently unique, unequivocal meaning.

Hong Taeyong, on the other hand, creates the impression that leaving home needed not be such a sad and solemn affair. Whereas in a section titled “Notes along the Road” (沿路記略) in his *Tamhŏn yŏn’gi*, he states only that there were five customs checks in Ŭiju and that the Yalu River had frozen over so completely as to resemble land,⁷³ in his *Ŭlbyŏng yŏnhaengnok*, he describes the euphoria that came over him when his horse set foot on the river’s frozen surface:

⁷² Choe-Wall, *Jehol Diary* p. ; Pak Chiwŏn, *Yŏrha ilgi*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip* Vol. 53, pp. 254-255: 加以霖雨江漲, 益生躁鬱, 及此期日倏屆, 則雖欲無渡, 不可得也, 遙瞻前途, 溽暑蒸人, 回想家鄉, 雲山渺漠, 人情到此, 安得無憮然退悔, 所謂平生壯遊, 恒言曰不可不一觀云者, 眞屬第二義, 其曰, 今日渡江, 云者, 非快暢得意之語, 乃無可奈何之意耳。

⁷³ Hong Taeyong, *Tamhŏn yŏn’gi*, Vol. 5, pp. 38-39.

The Yalu River, also known as Three Rivers on account of its three branches, was all ice at this time... Though saddened beyond words to be leaving my home and country, I was living a dream. Here I was, a mere student of the Confucian classics, riding a military horse and having my lifelong wish fulfilled in one morning! I found myself waving one arm in the air in exhilaration and triumph. As if that wasn't enough, from atop my horse I burst into a madman's improvised song.⁷⁴

Strikingly reminiscent of the lines “As no one knows the gladness in my heart / I sing alone a madman's song” in the *hansi* “An Impromptu Song at Naksöjae”

(樂書齋偶吟) by Yun Söndo (1587-1671),⁷⁵ Hong's self-fashioning as unconventional and undeserving suggests that few others, if any, shared in his celebratory mood. His intense excitement is explained as a reaction to his unexpected good fortune, a personal circumstance that was probably deemed unsuitable for inclusion in the more public text of the *Tamhön yön'gi*. What we can gather from Hong's two versions, then, is that the meaning conventionally attached to the Yalu River may have remained more or less fixed, but, as with most conventions, it was open to interpretation and subversion. Hong's *Ŭlbyöng* version not only illustrates the personal significance that crossing the Yalu River held for Hong, but it also serves as a noteworthy counterexample to Eggert's claim that the experience of crossing the Yalu River was one of helpless suffering for late Chosön travelers.

No Man's Land

Although the no man's land on the other side of the Yalu River may have marked the start of unfamiliar territory for the Chosön traveler, its physical proximity to Chosön territory allowed for certain comparisons to be made with regard to the

⁷⁴ Hong Taeyong, *Ŭlbyöng yönhaengnok*, pp. 35-36.

⁷⁵ Wön Yong-mun, ed., *Yun Söndo*, p. 52.

natural landscape. Or, as Eggert puts it, the travelers experience a “discontinuity of civilization” that is countered by the “continuity of physical space.”⁷⁶ Hong Taeyong observes: “As the mountains, waters, and trees of this vacant land were like those of our Eastern Country, the path before us looked bright and beautiful.”⁷⁷ Likewise, Kim Ch’angöp is reminded of Korea’s Kwanak Mountain upon seeing the Songgu mountain range (松鶻山);⁷⁸ when Sö Yumun sees Jinshi Mountain (金石山), he also thinks of Kwanak Mountain.⁷⁹ Meanwhile, Pak Chiwön discovers that “the Aici River is as wide as our Imjin River.”⁸⁰ Such continuities may have initially comforted and attracted favorable attention from the writers, but the perils and discomforts of spending the night in this part of the border region soon become the focal point for Kim Ch’angöp and Hong Taeyong. Kim writes of the inescapable cold, the risk of tigers, and the loud blaring of trumpets that would keep more than just the frontier guards awake through the night;⁸¹ Hong admits to being so perturbed by the frontier guards’ loud trumpets and warning cries that he “did not dare sleep a wink.”⁸²

Whereas Eggert suggests that “the continuity of the landscape becomes a symbol for cultural continuity,”⁸³ I have found that by the second day in the wilderness, the travelers tend to become more critical of their surroundings. Certain geographical features, especially those of an impressive nature, begin to attract scrutiny and undercutting remarks. For example, Fenghuang Mountain, which would become visible in the distance during the last leg of the journey through no man’s

⁷⁶ Eggert, “A Borderline Case,” pp. 72-73.

⁷⁷ Hong Taeyong, *Tamhön yŏn’gi*, Vol. 5, 39.

⁷⁸ Kim Ch’angöp, *Nogajae yŏnhaeng ilgi*, 23c.

⁷⁹ *Muo yŏnhaengnok*, p. 34.

⁸⁰ Choe-Wall, *Jehol Diary*, p. 13; Pak Chiwön, *Yŏrha ilgi*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip* 53: .

⁸¹ Kim Ch’angöp, *Nogajae yŏnhaeng ilgi*, 23d.

⁸² *Tamhön yŏn’gi*, Vol. 5, p. 39.

⁸³ Eggert, “A Borderline Case,” p. 73.

land, is met by most of the writers with varying degrees of ambivalence. Kim Ch'angöp compares the size of the mountain to that of “our Surak of Yangju” but concludes that its unusual appearance is “quite unlike anything in our country.”⁸⁴ Hong considers a few other possible Korean counterparts—“our Tobong, Kūmgang, Ch'ōngnyang, Wōlch'ul, all famous for their strange appearance and towering height”—but, like Kim, decides that none of these can compare to Fenghuang's “countless pointed peaks... like ten thousand flaming torches blazing up to the sky.”⁸⁵ Pak, on the other hand, goes to even greater lengths to qualify his assessment of the mountain's obvious stature and charm:

I am gazing at faraway Fenghuang Mountain. From such a distance it seems to rise up from level land as if it were a statue chiselled out of stone. Or like an upright finger on one's palm or a half-open lotus flower bud... However much I try, I cannot find the words to describe this mountain scenery adequately. The only drawback is that the mountain lacks rigor of clarity and brightness... The divine spirit and bright vitality of the Seoul Mountains is naturally different... I have to admit, though, that the Fenghuang Mountain is superior in being extraordinarily high and of exceptional appearance. Nevertheless, it does lack the gloss that fills the air around the mountains of Seoul.⁸⁶

Pak was clearly impressed by the imposing height and appearance of Fenghuang Mountain, but he repeatedly cites the mountains of Seoul to point out where it falls short. His measured description of a sight that could have elicited effusive expressions of wonder and admiration reflects his self-positioning as a Seoul man.

The impulse to cite native counterparts that could equal or surpass Fenghuang

⁸⁴ *Nogaejae yōnhaeng ilgi*, 24d.

⁸⁵ *Tamhōn yōn'gi*, Vol.5, p. 104.

⁸⁶ Choe-Wall, *Jehol Diary*, pp. 19-20; Pak Chiwōn, *Yōrha ilgi*, in *Yōnhaengnok chōnjip* 53: 望見鳳凰山，恰是純石造成，拔地特起，如擘掌立指，如半開芙蓉，如天末夏雲，秀峭戍削，不可名狀，而但欠清潤之氣，嘗謂我京道峯三角，勝於金剛 何則，金剛即其洞府所謂萬二千峯，非不奇峻雄深，獸挈禽翔，仙騰佛跌，而陰森渺冥，如入鬼窟，余嘗與申元發登斷髮嶺，望見金剛山，時方秋天深碧，夕陽斜映，無干霄秀色，出身潤態，未嘗不為金剛一歎，及自上流舟下，出頭尾江口，西望漢陽，三角諸山，摩霄出青，微嵐淡靄，明媚婀娜，又嘗坐南漢南門，北望漢陽，如水花鏡月，或曰“光風浮空 乃旺氣也”（旺氣者 王氣也），為我京億萬載龍盤虎踞之勢，其靈明之氣，宜異乎他山也，今此山勢之奇峭峻拔，雖過道峯三角，而其浮空光氣，大不及漢陽諸山矣。

Mountain points to certain relations of power and desire coming into play even in the representation of a natural landform on foreign territory.

Following in a similar vein, the no man's land's geographical contiguity to Chosŏn territory could also give rise to musings on the territorial boundaries of former times. This tendency is evidenced most strongly in Pak's account, where Pak takes a moment to survey the no man's land from a hilltop:

This is the perfect place for a large market town or even a prefecture. But everybody has neglected it and left it vacant. It is said that, during the Koguryŏ Kingdom, the capital was close by. So this would have been the citadel of Koguryŏ. During the Ming dynasty it became the Zhenjiang Prefecture. However, when the Qing displaced Liaodong the people of Zhenjiang left the district, unhappy at being ordered to have their long hair shorn. Some went to General Mao Wenlong, and others came to Korea... a majority of those who went to Mao Wenlong were killed during the war of General Liu Hai. Thus for the last hundred years this land has been deserted.⁸⁷

In addition to identifying the place as once belonging to Koguryŏ, Pak claims that its later inhabitants were Ming loyalists who chose to either fight against the Manchus or flee to Chosŏn during the first spate of Han Chinese-led rebellions in the 1620s.

These assertions provide the grounds for the no man's land's existence: the land was simply deserted and left vacant to signify defiance of Qing rule. It is worth noting that Pak's explanation differs from those offered by Kim Ch'angŏp and Hong Taeyong, both of which cite border defense as the main objective. Kim states:

"From the palisade gate to the Yalu the land was kept vacant, a neutral territory that no one was to inhabit, probably to deter criminals from fleeing one country to the other."⁸⁸ Likewise, Hong writes that "the stretch of land before the palisade gate,

⁸⁷ Choe-Wall, *Jehol Diary*, pp. 19-20; Pak Chiwŏn, *Yŏrha ilgi*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip* 53: 土地肥沃, 可以耕墾, 溟江以西, 鴨綠以東, 無與此比, 合置巨鎮雄府, 彼我兩棄, 遂成閒區, 或云 高句麗時亦嘗都此, 所謂國內城, 皇明時爲鎮江府, 今清陷遼, 則鎮江民人, 不肯剃頭, 或投毛文龍, 或投我國, 其後投我者, 盡爲清人所刷還, 投文龍者, 多死于劉海之亂矣, 其爲空地, 且將百餘年, 漠然徒見山高, 而水清者是也.

⁸⁸ *Nogajae yŏnhaeng ilgi*, 24a.

measuring one hundred *li* or so, was kept empty to put some distance between the two countries' boundaries."⁸⁹ Whereas Kim and Hong portray the no man's land as a mutually beneficial defensive measure, which seems to imply mutual suspicion between the two countries, Pak's explanation serves to disempower the Qing court altogether by downplaying its part in the no man's land's existence. Pak's domesticating gesture does not end here, but rather becomes even more salient as he progresses further into the Liaodong region.

Pak's preoccupation with territorial boundaries continues past the no man's land and resurfaces in Fenghuang, just beyond the palisade gate:

The scholars of our country knew only the present P'yöngyang so that, when they were told that Kija set up the capital in P'yöngyang, they believed it was their P'yöngyang... The scholars did not know that Liaodong was originally Korean territory and that many tribal states such as Suksin, Ye, Maek and Tong'in used to belong to Wiman Chosön... Alas, posterity did not clarify boundaries such as these... Through these misplaced assumptions, Korean territory was instantly shrunk without anyone lifting a finger to preserve it.⁹⁰

Unlike Kim, who stops at a similar spot and expresses his doubts about the land once belonging to Korea, Pak makes a significant break in his narration so that he may re-erect the territorial boundaries of old based on relevant passages from the *Han shu*, *Tang shu*, *Jin shu*, and *Weng xian tong kao*.⁹¹ His digressive attempt to resize Korean territory can be interpreted as a domesticating method in the strongest sense. In supplanting existing geopolitical boundaries with former, alleged ones to form a

⁸⁹ *Tamhön yön'gi*, Vol. 5, p. 39.

⁹⁰ Choe-Wall, *Jehol Diary*, p. 40; Pak Chiwön, *Yörha ilgi*, in *Yönyaengnok chönjip* 53: 然吾東之士只知今平壤言箕子都平壤則信 言平壤有井田則信 言平壤有箕子墓則信 若復言鳳城爲平壤則大驚 若曰 遼東復有平壤 則叱爲恠駭 獨不知遼東本朝鮮故地 肅慎濊貊東彝諸國盡服屬衛滿朝鮮 又不知烏刺寧古塔後春等地本高勾麗疆 嗟乎 後世不詳地界 則妄把漢四郡地盡局之於鴨綠江內 牽合事實 區區分排 乃復覓涇水於其中 或指鴨綠江爲涇水 或指清川江爲涇水 或指大同江爲涇水 是朝鮮舊疆 不戰自蹙矣。

⁹¹ Choe-Wall, *Jehol Diary*, pp. 40-44; Pak Chiwön, *Yörha ilgi*, in *Yönyaengnok chönjip* 53:

larger Korea, not only does Pak exhibit a strong patriotic tendency, but also, for the duration of his digression at least, travels figuratively on domestic soil.

The Palisade Gate

At the palisade gate, the third and final demarcation of the Üiju-Fenghuang border region, travelers are offered first glimpses of the other country and the people who inhabit it. Whereas the passage through no man's land appears to have entailed mostly confrontations with the natural environment and related territorial issues, the final threshold here takes on the significance of a racial, cultural, and civilizational demarcation line. By this stage, Eggert claims, "the travelers are less distinguished from each other by rank than they are distinguished from their surroundings by being Korean," and they soon find themselves entangled in various misunderstandings and awkward situations.⁹² It certainly seems plausible that by this stage the travelers would be less concerned about their respective ranks than about their becoming foreigners or, as the Chinese would call them, *pianbangren* (people of the periphery), but Sō Kyōngsun's account suggests otherwise. On the same day his embassy reaches the palisade gate, Sō complains about the food that is brought to him by the embassy's head stableman (*madu*). He says to the *madu*: "I may come from a poor household and have had to scrape by, but the food on our table has always consisted of white rice and at least two accompanying dishes. Even our table is of the high-leg kind, so how can you treat me this way, giving me something too pitiful to even call food in our country?"⁹³ The *madu* snickers at Sō's complaint and reminds him: "Our

⁹² Eggert, "A Borderline Case," p. 74.

⁹³ Sō Kyōngsun, *Monggyōndang ilsa*, p. 273: 余家至貧，雖朝不食夕不食，飯必炊白米，饌必排數楮，床必有高足統營盤矣，汝之待我，今不如我東炭幕七分床乎。

provisions of Chosŏn rice and Chosŏn dishes were all carefully measured before getting loaded into carts. The military officials and the interpreters, down to the lower ranking officers, are all given a ration of one dish each; if we bend the rules even just a little, we will soon run out of food and will need to rely on our emergency provisions of silver.”⁹⁴

The *madu*'s response clearly demonstrates that there remained a strong sense of order and hierarchy within the embassy, which would have been necessary to ensure the tribute mission's successful completion and the safety of the travelers. The *madu* proceeds to explain to Sŏ that the rice he is being served may be of a poorer quality than Chosŏn white rice, but that it is also cheaper and incurs no import duties. Faced with no choice but to put up with the meager rations, Sŏ ends the discussion with a lament: “Oh rice! Oh rice! It is rice that has truly defeated me. This rice is simply inedible.”⁹⁵ Unlike his struggle with cheap rice, Sŏ's first sighting of the palisade gate proves disappointingly uneventful and anticlimactic. Sŏ writes:

I had thought the palisade gate would be like the grand entrance to a fortress or palace, but what I saw on this day was truly underwhelming, even from the perspective of someone coming from a small country. So, I thought to myself: “Our countrymen always speak of Beijing as some place grand, but now that I have seen what the palisade gate is really like, I can guess how Beijing will be.”⁹⁶

Sŏ's estimation that the palisade gate was nothing to write home about serves as a reassurance, both to himself and to his readers, that there was no reason for a “small country” such as Chosŏn to be considered inferior to the geographically larger China.

⁹⁴ *Monggyŏngsang ilsa*, p. 273: 朝鮮米，朝鮮饌，俱爲較量上使道往還朝夕支供，載車而來，自軍官，譯員至于伴尙，皆是老米飴一櫟饌，苟違此式，少不擲節，不得不貸用不虞備銀子。

⁹⁵ *Monggyŏngdang ilsa*, p. 274: 米哉米哉，米眞負老，老米飯果難堪。

⁹⁶ *Monggyŏngdang ilsa*, p. 270.

Whereas Sŏ negotiates the underlying power struggle in this swift and succinct manner, other accounts betray more conflicting emotions in their longer deliberations.

Kim Ch'angŏp describes his first impressions when the palisade gate is opened at the instruction of the Fenghuang magistrate:

In the afternoon the palisade gate was opened and hundreds of Manchus came rushing through. Much to my surprise, most of them were large in stature and many splendidly dressed — not at all like the three barbarians I had first come across [in the no man's land].

Two local interpreters ordered their attendants to bring floor cushions for the chief and deputy envoys. The interpreters came to greet the seated envoys and then withdrew to take their positions alongside the other local officials. We presented them with rice wine, dried fruits, and dried pheasant meat among others, but the barbarians only held their cups and did not put it to their lips. Our interpreter told us that they would only drink after the envoys had taken their first sip. The two envoys reluctantly raised their empty cups in salutation.⁹⁷

Far from revising his preconceptions and placing Manchus on equal footing as Koreans, Kim continues to refer explicitly to the local Fenghuang officials as “barbarians” (*hoin*) and maintains in his description a sense of hierarchy and difference. The Manchus' robust appearance, splendid dress, and polite comportment sit uncomfortably with the Korean envoys' reluctance to drink with the local officials; whether Kim had intended to depict an unusual Manchu custom or the envoys' unwillingness to associate with the Manchus remains unclear. What Kim does make apparent, on the other hand, is his reaction to the assault of the new and unfamiliar on the other side of the palisade:

From this day on, everything that we saw and heard was new and strange to us. I was so overwhelmed and confounded that I could not speak. Only the sound of a cock's crow was just the same as in our country, which I found very amusing.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ *Nogaejae yŏnhaeng ilgi*, 24b-24c.

⁹⁸ *Nogaejae yŏnhaeng ilgi*, 25a.

Kim claims to have been in such a state of disorientation that only the familiar sound of a cock's crow managed to catch his attention and provide some comic relief. That the only perceivable similarity between Chosŏn Korea and Qing China could be found in nature suggests that his bewilderment was largely in response to the man-made aspects of his environment. Still, the narrative focus on Kim's emotions, rather than on what he had actually witnessed and experienced, casts a shroud of mystery over his first days in Qing territory. We are left with the impression of an "otherly," topsy-turvy world, where the only things a Chosŏn Korean might be able to make out are the barbarism of its people and the sound of a cock's crow.

In contrast to Kim's claim that "everything" was a source of confusion, Pak Chiwŏn provides a less exaggerated and more nuanced account of his first impressions:

On looking through the palisade from outside, I saw many private houses built with five high crossbeams and reed-thatched roofs with strapped ridges. They were straight as a die and it looked as if both streets were lined by the ink-brush. Unlike the perimeter willow fencing with its street gate, the boundaries of the houses are brick walled... Whichever way you looked at the houses there was nothing primitive about their construction. . . .

This palisade is only at the fringe of the eastern border of China. Suddenly my spirit was down when I imagined what it would be like in the busier parts, with their bustling streets. My whole body was throbbing with the thought that I might call a halt here in my journey, even turn around and go home. That moment I reflected on deeply and concluded that this was because I was, fleetingly, a jealous-minded individual... Now I am in a foreign country and have not even seen one ten-thousandth of it. I could not find the reason for harbouring such a foolish emotion as jealousy.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ Choe-Wall, *Jehol Diary*, p. 23; Pak Chiwŏn, *Yŏrha ilgi*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip* 53: 復至柵外，望見柵內，閭閻皆高起五櫟，苦艸覆盖，而屋脊穹崇，門戶整齊，街術平直，兩沿若引繩，然墻垣皆甄築，乘車及載車，縱橫道中，擺列器皿，皆畫瓷，已見其制度絕無邨野氣，往者洪友德保，嘗言大規模細心法，柵門天下之東盡頭，而猶尚如此，前道遊覽，忽然意沮，直欲自此徑還，不覺腹背沸烘，余猛省曰，“此妒心也，余素性淡泊，慕羨猜妒，本絕于中，今一涉他境，所見不過萬分之一，乃復浮妄若是，何也，此直所見者小故耳，若以如來慧眼，遍觀十方世界，無非平等，萬事平等，自無妒羨。

With his expectation to see signs of the Manchus' barbarism overturned by the sophistication of their architecture, Pak finds himself disheartened and apprehensive about what the rest of his journey has in store. He is quick to chide himself for feeling jealous, deeming it foolish and unreasonable, but then turns to his servant Changbok for a second opinion: "How would you feel if you were born in Qing China?" he asks, to which Changbok replies, "I would not like it because Qing is a barbarous country, Sir."¹⁰⁰ Pak writes no more on the matter. We are left with a tense balance between Pak's conscious efforts to be rational and his biases as a Korean, which Changbok's reply serves only to complicate. Letting Changbok have the final word seems to imply some reluctance on Pak's part to question the prejudice that had triggered his negative emotions in the first place; as the passage stands, the presumed barbarism of the Manchus remains largely up to the readers to interpret and judge for themselves.

If we turn now to Hong Taeyong, who has been missing from the present discussion, we are presented with a vastly different account of the people and sights encountered at the palisade gate. Hong leaves little to the imagination, as he offers a vivid description of almost every type of person and thing observable at the gate and in its surrounding areas:

As the palisade gate is located in a desolate and impoverished borderland, the inhabitants of this area are crude and savage. They rely solely on Chosŏn for their livelihood: whenever an embassy arrives, they ask much higher prices for all their goods and charge a lot more for accommodation as well. They maintain neighborly relations with the people of Ŭiju and stay well informed of our country's affairs; their opportunistic nature and crafty ways are just as they are the norm in our country...

[In Fenghuang,] a great many shops lined the market streets with hardly any space in between them. Items such as chairs, desks, and signboards were all so beautiful that they dazzled before our eyes, while

¹⁰⁰ Choe-Wall, *Jehol Diary*, p. 23; Pak Chiwŏn, *Yŏrha ilgi*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip* 53: 顧謂張福曰“使汝往生中國何如”對曰“中國胡也 小人不願.”.

carts and horses congested all the roads. Clearly, this was a vibrant, prospering border town. . . .

All the Beijing government officials stationed here in Fenghuang and all the merchants coming from near and far were self-serving, despicable celebrities. The Shanxi merchants were the only exception. Gentle and generous-hearted, they were hospitable and warm towards others; their good manners meant they would also bring out tea and fruit. The Beijing officials, on the other hand, would sit with their legs stretched out before them, behave arrogantly, and yell at every whim, making them quite unapproachable.¹⁰¹

Hong could have been describing a different place altogether. Notwithstanding the numerous generalizations he makes about the different social and ethnic groups, his account of the border town emerges as the most comprehensive, balanced, and vivid; the evident care he has taken to capture the town's essence, its vibrancy and diversity, makes this example rather difficult to attribute to either othering or bordering.

I am hesitant to interpret the above passage strictly in terms of domesticating or foreignizing, because Hong seems to have been primarily concerned with informing his readers in the fullest and most accessible manner possible. Even in the supposedly “crude” and “savage” border people Hong finds something of the Chosŏn character and spirit, whether for the sake of a balanced description or an intelligible one, and among the generally greedy and arrogant he still finds a group deserving of a kinder appraisal. The territorial and cultural boundaries between Us and Them are thus blurred by the complex web of interdependence and exchange represented at the two countries' borders, which constitutes something of an anomaly when compared with the other four *yŏnhaengnok* texts.

Despite intimating at the outset that her study would demonstrate how and why later Chosŏn travelers perceived crossing the Ŭiju-Fenghuang border region as “suffering an osmosis,” Eggert proves more concerned in her final analysis with

¹⁰¹ *Tamhŏn yŏn'gi*, Vol.5, 40-41.

behaviors and attitudes that may be attributed to “the nature of any border: its existence in and through the minds of people alone.”¹⁰² Her somewhat abrupt shift of focus to the imaginary nature of borders may be attributed to the influence of Van Gennepe’s model, which dictates that rites of territorial passage, in their final stage, serve to incorporate travelers into the new world they have entered. Eggert equates this incorporation with the Chosŏn travelers’ realization, whilst still in Fenghuang, that “all these misunderstandings [encountered in Qing China] were of a mainly linguistic nature,” and that what was more important was the “common cultural sphere” to which both Chinese and Koreans belonged.¹⁰³ Accounts of the onward journey from Fenghuang suggest, however, that such misunderstandings did not stop once Chosŏn travelers were past the border region, nor were they interpreted in more or less the same way. Various processes of differentiation can be said to characterize the travelers’ subsequent encounters, which also makes Van Houtum and Van Naerssen’s notion of bordering as an “ongoing strategic effort” more applicable.

In the next chapter, I examine examples of bordering in the narrative context of Liulichang, a district of Beijing, where travelers’ drawing and redrawing of boundaries may be understood as acts of self-fashioning that took the imagined geography produced by *yŏnhaengnok* as their main referent.

¹⁰² Eggert, “A Borderline Case,” p. 77.

¹⁰³ Eggert, “A Borderline Case,” p. 75

Chapter Five

Books and Mirrors: Images of Liulichang in *Yŏnhaengnok*

The frequency and regularity with which the Chosŏn court sent diplomatic missions to Qing China meant that hundreds of Chosŏn Koreans would set foot in Beijing every year, but most of them were of non-*yangban* origin, tasked with serving embassies in menial and technical roles or engaged in trade activities. It was not uncommon for such individuals to make the same journey up to dozens of times over the course of their working lives, thereby accumulating a wealth of firsthand knowledge about Qing China, but they themselves left relatively few written records. As the production of *yŏnhaengnok* was confined to senior envoys and military aides, most of whom were first-time visitors, the novelty of the *yŏnhaeng* experience was continually reinforced and fueled discussions of how best to capitalize on this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. There was one question that travelers would get asked again and again: what did you see in China that was most impressive?

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, Liulichang became one of the “great sights” (*changgwān*) that Chosŏn travelers would commonly cite. By then, this street of shops selling mostly books and antiques had grown considerably in size and stature, becoming a top Beijing destination for domestic and foreign visitors alike; it was regarded as a commercial, recreational, and cultural space unlike any other in Beijing, owing to its many bookshops and scholarly clientele. Liulichang appears in more than seventy *yŏnhaengnok* from the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, providing the setting for various scholarly exchanges and acts of self-fashioning. This chapter investigates the possible impetuses behind Chosŏn Koreans’ apparently sustained interest in Liulichang and, in particular, draws attention to the influence of *Pukhak* thought, the formalization of the *yŏnhaengnok* genre, and the

crystallization of Liulichang's image into a popular stereotype that would cause knowledge of the actual place to stagnate.

With respect to the theme of bordering, Liulichang represents an interesting case of familiarization via repeated exoticization: I argue that Liulichang became a familiarly, and necessarily, exotic place in the Chosŏn public imagination, in part because of a cultural ambivalence towards commerce. As a general rule, self-identified Confucians hesitated to publicly endorse mercantile and consumerist activities, as these economic behaviors were believed to encourage self-interestedness, frivolity, and deviations from the ideal sociopolitical order;¹ Liulichang, in embodying and giving robust expression to such un-Confucian values and practices, naturally demanded tact and critical distance of its narrators. However, as will hopefully become clear over the course of this chapter, there were other, subtler reasons why Chosŏn travelers' representations of Liulichang tended to reproduce the same details and themes, as opposed to adding to the store of knowledge about Liulichang. I begin with a brief discussion of Liulichang's historical development and then devote the rest of this chapter to tracing the history of the Liulichang that Chosŏn Koreans experienced, represented, and imagined.

Liulichang's Rise in Historical Context

Liulichang, originally the site of a glazed tile factory erected by the Ming court, became one of Beijing's busiest shopping districts and a new center of the

¹ Calls for a market economy were voiced by Chosŏn government officials from early as the fifteenth century, in response to the government's failed attempts at introducing paper money and copper coins, but these were often met with reservation and disapproval for moral reasons. Sin Sang, for example, who visited Ming China in 1433 and was impressed by the presence of active markets even in smaller towns, proposed opening additional markets outside of the capital; King Sejong agreed, but not without first expressing his fear that there would be more pleasure-seekers and profiteers as a result. See *Sejong sillok* 59:8b-9a (1433/01/18).

Qing book and printing trade in the mid- to late eighteenth century. Early Qing merchants used to only flock to Liulichang for the annual Imperial Factory Opening Fair, which was held from the sixth to the sixteenth of the first lunar month and catered mostly to the moneyed Beijing gentry. Books and antiques were the most popular sale items, given their close associations with status and prestige; precious stones and fineries came in a close third. As Susan Naquin observes, the Fair was best known for selling “goods for whom buyers were both sufficiently rare and sufficiently numerous to sustain this kind of once-a-year occasion.”²

Booksellers, printers, and vendors of other literacy-related goods and services began setting up permanent shops in the area, however, when their customer base came to include sojourners taking the civil service examinations or awaiting official appointments, Confucian-educated Manchu princes, and an increasing number of private scholars who, funded by themselves or by wealthy merchant-class patrons, had taken to “evidential research” (*kaozheng xue*) as a mode of inquiry into the authenticity and original meaning of the classical canon. The initial growth of Liulichang into a marketplace for books was thus in response to the relative peace, Manchu acculturation, and economic boom of the Qianlong era (1736-1795) and the intellectual turn from Neo-Confucian metaphysics to classical philology that such circumstances enabled. If veritable *kaozheng* scholarship required investing in numerous books, editions, and artifacts, more and more of Beijing’s intellectuals, aspiring scholar-officials, and amateurs were now in a financial position to do so, and they created a demand to which the market was quick to respond. In addition to drawing in book merchants from further-flung corners of the empire, Liulichang became the site where some unsuccessful civil examination candidates would also

² Naquin, *Peking: Temples and City Life*, p. 628.

seek alternative employment, drawing on their connoisseurship to sell books, artworks, and antiques instead of only looking to try their luck again at getting a political career off the ground.³

When, in 1772, the Qing imperial court initiated its own book collecting project for the compilation of the *Siku quanshu*, Liulichang was well positioned to meet the needs of the imperial editorial team and proceeded to cement its reputation as a “premier book emporium” of the Qing empire. The *Siku quanshu* project, employing 18 editors-in-chief, some 400 editors, and 3,841 copyists, sought to consolidate and distill all of the empire’s existing texts into a single collection that would be housed in the imperial library and also duplicated for distribution to the public. From the project’s inception, the imperial editors capitalized on the expertise and resourcefulness of Liulichang book merchants: they visited Liulichang daily to peruse the latest acquisitions, make purchases, and seek advice on rare editions and their availability.⁴

As might be said of any state-run effort to take stock of and control knowledge, the *Siku quanshu* project also developed a darker side in the form of a literary inquisition--the censorship and proscription of books that were deemed seditious and hurtful to the imperial authority of the Qing—and here, too, the involvement of Liulichang merchants was significant. Private book collectors in Beijing, as with all book-owning individuals throughout the empire, were required by imperial command to disclose the contents of their personal libraries and make them available for use by the *Siku quanshu* compilers. To avoid attracting any negative attention in the process, many such book owners got rid of the more questionable of

³ Guy, *The Emperor’s Four Treasuries*, p. 46.

⁴ Reed, “Dukes and Nobles Above, Scholars Below,” p. 83

their possessions by selling them to Liulichang merchants—an option that would not have been so readily available just a couple of decades earlier. Interestingly, booksellers did not come under as much fire for stocking suspicious titles, as long as they had not authored or published the books in question themselves; moreover, if a Qing censor wished to strike off a book from a bookseller's catalog, he had to buy the book first.⁵ Such leniency towards booksellers allowed the book trade to thrive even at the height of the literary inquisition and ensured that the relationship between Liulichang and the imperial city would remain one of cooperation and mutual benefit.

Christopher Reed notes that in the years leading up to and during the compilation of the *Siku quanshu*, Liulichang became the subject of a series of eyewitness accounts, the earliest and most notable of these being Li Wenzao's (1730-1778) *Liulichang shusi ji* (Record of the Liulichang bookstalls). Li, a native of Shandong, had spent five months in Beijing in 1769 waiting to be appointed to an official position. Afterwards, on his way to occupy a magistracy in Enping, he is said to have used his insomnia one night to record his recollections of Liulichang, the bookshops he had frequented, and the types of books sold at each of them. In addition to describing over thirty individual bookshops and their owners, Li peppers his account with references to shops that sold stationery, archery bows, and medicine and those that “repaired teeth, lips, [and] eyes”; if bookshops were Liulichang's main attraction, there was evidently no shortage of sideshows to catch the eye of even a self-professed bibliophile such as Li.⁶

⁵ Brook, “Censorship in Eighteenth-Century China: A View from the Book Trade,” pp. 191-194.

⁶ Reed, “Dukes and Nobles Above, Scholars Below,” pp. 87-88.

Eighteenth-Century Representations of Liulichang

Chinese visitors to Liulichang were not the only ones to discuss its bookshops and its scenes of bustling activity, abundance, and innovation; Chosŏn visitors did, too. The earliest mention of Liulichang in the *yŏnhaengnok* corpus can be found in Yi Ŭihyon's account of his second visit to Beijing in 1732, the *Imja yŏnhaeng chapchi*. Not having seen Liulichang himself, Yi only recounts being told "by everyone" that Liulichang was a site of variegated commerce where "the country's buying and selling of all manners of skills and crafts" took place.⁷ The next mention of Liulichang appears in Yi Ŭibong's *Pugwŏllok* of 1760, where Yi cites Liulichang as the busiest marketplace in Qing China and a most marvelous sight for Chosŏn travelers to behold.⁸ Yi claims not to have recognized much of the merchandise on display there, however, and so provides few other details.⁹

Liulichang would only begin to take concrete shape in the Chosŏn popular imagination through Hong Taeyong's detailed description, a few years later:

Liulichang is a glazed tile and brick factory. All the blue and golden hued tiles and bricks shone and sparkled like glass, which is why the colorful tiles and bricks used in this country are commonly referred to as 'liuli' [i.e., 'yuri' in Korean]. The 'chang' refers to all government-run workshops and factories. This particular factory is located five li southwest of Zhengyang gate, and the street running alongside it has been made into a shopping thoroughfare. It is said that because gateways signaged as 'Liulichang' were erected on either end of the street, 'Liulichang' came to refer to the shops and stalls [rather than the factory].

On this shopping street, there are many books, steles, pots, porcelains, and antiques. Vendors of collectible items are all educated men from the southern provinces; many of the people one encounters here, in fact, are looking to take the civil examinations and obtain government posts. It is not unusual, therefore, for a celebrated scholar to be spotted among the pleasure-seekers on this street. The street is roughly five li long. Its buildings and balustrades may not be as

⁷ Yi Ŭihyon, *Imja yŏnhaeng chapchi*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip* 35, p. 489: 琉璃廠者, 市肆別稱, 其國賣術求售之處諸品, 皆俗故云爾.

⁸ Yi Ŭibong, *Pugwŏllok*, 1:31; 1:49.

⁹ Yi Ŭibong, *Pugwŏllok*, 2:62.

splendid as that of other shopping districts, but it is chock full of the precious, the grotesque, the strange, and the exquisite; its location is also charming and quaint.

Inching along the street, I felt as though I had entered a treasure market in Persia. Despite spending an entire day there, I was so overwhelmed by the beauty and splendor of the place that I could barely take pause to peruse a single object.

There are seven bookshops. Inside, bookcases more than ten levels high span three walls; on each shelf the books are neatly arranged and each book is marked with a paper tag. Each bookshop, I reckon, must have tens of thousands of books. Trying to make out all the titles is a most dizzying experience for the eyes. Similarly, stepping into the shop of mirrors can be so startling and mystifying that not one visitor walks in there without displaying a change in their demeanor. Hanging mirrors cover the walls and standing mirrors are displayed below. The big ones measure two to three cha and the small ones four to five ch'i. Standing in their midst is like being followed and spied upon by myriad manifestations of oneself; it takes a long time to regain one's composure.

I do not know just how many hundreds or thousands of shops and stalls occupy this street. Likewise, I do not know what vast amounts of resources have gone into producing their goods. But how is it that life's necessities, the things people need to serve their elders in life and honor them in death, are nowhere to be found? There are only strange talents and extravagant objects on display to tempt and corrupt the mind. With the proliferation of such strange and curious things, the culture of learned men suffers. This is why China has been unable to rise again and reclaim its former glory. This is a lamentable thing.¹⁰

Hong Taeyong managed to visit Liulichang on more than several occasions during his stay in Beijing, which entailed sometimes bribing and at other times evading the Qing petty officials (K. *sōban*, C. *xuban*) in charge of overseeing the Chosŏn

¹⁰ Hong Taeyong, *Tamhŏn yŏn'gi*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip* Vol. 49, p. 217: 琉璃廠者，琉璃瓦甃之廠，凡青黃雜彩瓦甃，皆光潤如琉璃，故御用諸色瓦甃，皆以琉璃稱焉，凡工役之廨，謂之廠，廠在正陽門外西南五里而近，廠夾道而為市鋪，東西設閤門，扁曰琉璃廠，蓋因以為市號云，市中多書籍碑版鼎彝古董，凡器玩雜物為商者，多南州秀才應第求官者，故遊其市者，往往有名士，蓋一市長可五里，雖其樓欄之豪侈，不及他市，珍恠奇巧，充溢羅積，位置古雅，遵道徐步，如入波斯寶市，只見其瓌然爛然而已，終日行不能鑑賞一物也，書肆有七，三壁周設懸架為十數層，牙籤整秩，每套有標紙，量一肆之書，已不下數萬卷，仰面良久，不能遍省其標號，而眼已眩昏矣，其鑑鋪始入門，無不驚疑失色者，其有提紐者，周懸于壁，有臺架者，陳于壁下，大者數三尺，小者四五寸，入其中若有千百分身，從壁牖而窺望，怵怵惚惚，良久不能定也，蓋此夾道諸鋪，不知其幾千百廩，其貨物工費，不知其幾巨萬財，而求諸民生養生送死之不可闕者，無一焉，只是奇伎淫巧奢華喪志之具而已，奇物滋多，士風日蕩，中國所以不振，可嘅也已。

embassy's day-to-day activities. Even though in his final assessment of Liulichang Hong associates its vibrancy with a culture of excess and disregard for traditional values, he appears to have been drawn to it nonetheless—if not for its shops and merchandise, then for the people he could meet and interact with there. It was in Liulichang, for instance, where Hong engaged in a number of brush talks with Imperial Academy students and shopkeepers, observed firsthand the recreational activities of Qing commoners, and even picked up new zither playing techniques; such experiences would serve as fodder for other topical sections in his travel account, whereas here, in his treating Liulichang more as a physical place than as a social space, they are barely alluded to.

A striking feature of Hong's description of Liulichang is his reference to Persia. That Hong should liken Liulichang to a place even further afield, a place even more fantastic and elusive to the typical educated Korean, suggests that he was either unable or unwilling to find an analogy close to home. Indeed, in light of Chosŏn Korea's relatively undeveloped market system, Hong would have been hard pressed to come up with a domestic equivalent, but the impulse to distance rather than to domesticate Liulichang for his readers may also have been part of a larger desire to preserve his self-image as a Confucian gentleman and that of Chosŏn as a Confucian state. Given Confucianism's disdain for commerce, Hong may have felt compelled to qualify or even obscure his obvious attraction to Liulichang; his choosing to recount his Liulichang-based social interactions elsewhere, under separate, decontextualized headings, may be understood as his doing just that. Lest his research efforts be mistaken for something more base and materialistic, Hong insists that Liulichang in itself may be a place worth seeing, for knowing's sake, but certainly not for Chosŏn Koreans to try to replicate at home. As for the various

encounters and exchanges he had actively pursued there, we are led to believe that they were not necessarily unique to Liulichang and should rather be judged on their own merits as self-enriching, knowledge-generating activities.

Considering that Hong's description of Liulichang precedes Li Wenzao's *Liulichang shusi ji* by only a few years, we might expect to find many commonalities between them, but we don't. It is worth noting, for instance, the difference in the number of bookshops cited: Hong mentions seven while Li mentions more than thirty. Was it that Hong had seen less of Liulichang or did the bookshops really multiply fourfold in that short span of time? Whichever may be closer to the truth, it is likely that coming across seven bookshops on a single street was already quite novel and impressive to Hong. From his singling out and describing the typical bookshop and mirror shop, on the other hand, we can also detect what Hong believed to epitomize Liulichang—or, at least, his experience of it.

The juxtaposition of bookshop and mirror shop serves as an unlikely comparison that highlights the thoroughly dizzying and bewildering effect of Liulichang on the unsuspecting visitor. The seemingly cosy interior spaces of Liulichang offer Hong little respite from the busyness of the street; much to the contrary, stepping into one of them makes for an even stranger and more estranging experience. Insofar as books and mirrors also function as sources of knowledge and insight, Hong's inability to make full sense of them and use them to further enrich his narrative (Hong could have named some of the books or paused to examine himself in one of the mirrors, for example) points to the very unpredictability of travel, which can catch even the most self-assured and inquisitive traveler off guard. Hong's use of Buddhist imagery to capture both the literal and the psychological experience of being surrounded by mirrors is especially poignant, because it allows us glimpses of

not just his versatility as a writer, but also his vulnerability in such a moment of dislocation, where his penetrating gaze into the external world would unexpectedly, embarrassingly, turn back on his own self and stop him in his tracks.

In introducing readers back home to a new, previously unexplored destination in Beijing, Hong also blazed a trail that travelers long after him would follow when navigating and narrativizing Liulichang themselves. That later *yŏnhaengnok* authors would make many of the same observations as Hong, implying, perhaps, similar sensibilities, reservations, and blind spots, can be somewhat surprising and disappointing to the modern reader; after all, the Liulichang that Hong had seen in 1765 could not have been the same Liulichang that others witnessed some several decades later. Among Hong's contemporaries and immediate successors, at least, there was a discernible effort to build on existing knowledge of Liulichang by offering new information and insight, but this may well have to do with the fact that the authors concerned all belonged to the *Pukhakp'a* and were closely related by friendship and discipleship. They would have been well acquainted with one another's writings and perhaps even motivated by a friendly sense of competition; more importantly, they shared a common belief in the need for Chosŏn Koreans to expand their intellectual and technological horizons if their country was to thrive culturally and economically, hence favoring innovation and change just as much in their literary outputs as in their sociopolitical outlook. Below, I devote my discussion to a few of these other authors whose contributions in the late eighteenth century also helped lay the narratological foundation for nineteenth-century Koreans' experiences and representations of Liulichang: Yi Tŏngmu, Pak Chiwŏn, and Yu Tŭkkong.

Yi Tŏngmu visited Liulichang numerous times in 1778 and was one of the first Chosŏn Koreans to do so strategically, with certain objectives in mind. As he

explains in his *Yib'yon'gi*: on his first excursion to Liulichang, he purchased books, artworks, silks, and antiques, and then on his second, “because Beijing’s bookshops have long been famous,” he recruited the help of two other Korean embassy members to conduct a more thorough survey of the bookshops and find out what book titles and editions were in circulation.¹¹ He and his compatriots managed to compile a list of close to one hundred and fifty books that were either unavailable or hard to find in Chosŏn, which he reproduces in full in his account, along with the names of the bookshops where they could be purchased.¹² As I explain below, this list would have been of considerable interest to readers back home—not only for purposes of cultural comparison, but also for future book purchases at the state and private levels.

Previously, Chosŏn embassy members had depended almost exclusively on the *sŏban* stationed at their lodging to source books to import, firstly, because their established route to Beijing bypassed the traditional hubs of the Chinese book trade, and secondly, because their mobility was strictly regulated once they arrived in Beijing. Hence, at the hands of the *sŏban*, they were often subjected to extortionate prices and limited choice, which in turn impacted on the quantity and quality of their purchases. By the 1770s, however, restrictions on movement around the city had begun to relax; moreover, Liulichang had grown into an attractive alternative to the *sŏban*, but one which needed to be researched and better understood. It is in this light that we can begin to grasp why Yi had thought it necessary to undertake a systematic investigation of Liulichang’s bookshops, and why others in his party were willing to help.

¹¹ Yi Tŏngmu, *Ibyŏn'gi*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip* Vol. 57, p. 278: 燕市書肆，自古而稱，政欲繙閱，於是余與在先及乾糧官，往琉璃廠，只抄我國之稀有及絕無者，今盡錄之。

¹² Yi Tŏngmu, *Ibyŏn'gi*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip* Vol. 57, pp. 278-282.

Only the year before, King Chǒngjo had heard about the *Siku quanshu* project and sought to acquire the full collection, entrusting Deputy Envoy Sǒ Hosu with the task. The *Siku quanshu* had not yet been completed at the time, nor would it ever be made available for purchase; Sǒ spent a hefty 2,150 silver taels to obtain a copy of the *Gujin tushu jicheng* instead, which Sǒ claimed was the *Siku quanshu*'s precursor and prototype.¹³ Having no choice but to make do with Sǒ's less than ideal purchase, the Chosǒn court set about transferring it onto better-quality paper and restoring it to a more suitable condition for storage and use in the then newly established Kyujanggak. The fact that Sǒ had acquired the *Gujin tushu jicheng* through a *sǒban* does not seem to have gone unnoticed, however: the Chosǒn court proceeded to explore other buying options and keep tabs on Liulichang in particular, as evidenced by the first ever descriptions of Liulichang appearing in official records for 1780.¹⁴ What the official records do not tell us, of course, is that the necessary legwork was well underway before 1780, through the efforts of individuals such as Yi Tǒngmu.

The *sǒban*, for their part, did what they could to limit Chosǒn travelers' access to Liulichang, but in order to maintain their share of the book export market, they eventually found themselves having to lower their prices and leaking classified texts, such as history books and military manuals that were intended for Qing eyes only. Such developments serve to remind us that from the standpoint of the Chosǒn court, the importation of books ideally functioned as intelligence gathering while also contributing to the Chosǒn court's domestic civilizing and centralizing efforts. King Chǒngjo, for one, had been intent on creating a new legacy of scholarly patronage that would attest to both his competence as a ruler and Korea's unrivaled

¹³ *Chǒngjo sillok* (177702/24)

¹⁴ *Chǒngjo sillok* (1780/11/27); *Sǔngjǒngwǒn ilgi* 1780/11/05, 1780/11/27, 1781/03/02

commitment to Confucian orthodoxy. It was an undertaking that suited his bookish image, crystallized since his early years as a child prodigy, and one that afforded him control, under a more benign and benevolent guise, over the production and producers of knowledge. His keen interest in the *Siku quanshu*, therefore, which would send envoys sifting through Liulichang on further occasions but to no avail, deserves to be interpreted in light of his political ambitions as much as his famously insatiable scholarly appetite; it illustrates how Chǒngjo's own empire-building, in the intellectual sense, was simultaneously dependent on and in competition with the Qing.

Meanwhile, as alluded to earlier, Chosŏn knowledge of Liulichang is also likely to have facilitated private book purchases on a larger scale than ever before. Chosŏn envoys and merchants had long acted as unofficial book brokers and distributors for the domestic reading public, but they had been up against more or less the same restrictions and obstacles as when making official book purchases. With the advent of Liulichang, however, private needs and interests could be amply catered to alongside public ones, just as Yi Tǒngmu had made purchases for his own personal library and art collection on his first visit. As long as Chosŏn travelers managed to overcome their initial culture shock and knew where in Liulichang to look (to which ends the kind of information provided by Yi would have been vital), they stood a better chance of finding their sought-after items and buying them at more affordable prices.

The influx of privately imported books during these early years of King Chǒngjo's reign may be near impossible to quantify, but it was evidently significant enough to be perceived by Chǒngjo as the root cause of a number of domestic problems threatening the Confucian cause: namely, the spread of Catholicism and the

degeneration of literary styles.¹⁵ From the mid-1780s onwards, Chǒngjo repeatedly issued import bans on what he believed to be heterodox, debasing literature, which included books dealing with the occult and supernatural, late Ming and early Qing literary collections (i.e. compilations of works by a single author), and storytellers' miscellanies.¹⁶

If we turn back to Yi Tǒngmu's list of books and bookshops, then, we can see that Yi had been more inclusive with respect to what he considered useful and appropriate reading, finding no issue, for example, with literary collections (e.g. *Gao Shiqi ji*) or miscellanies (e.g. Wang Shizhen's *Juyi lu* and *Chibei outan* and Niu Xiu's *Gusheng*). His only objection was to two or three bookshops that he had found "indecent" and "not worth looking into";¹⁷ otherwise, his list reflects both a broad conception of useful knowledge and an effort to cater to the possibly diverse reading interests of his readers. Irrespective of his own scholarly preoccupations at the time, which seem to have centered more narrowly on *kaozheng* scholarship, geography books (e.g. *Dushi fangyu jiyao*), farming manuals (e.g. *Wangshi nongshu*), meteorological divination guides (e.g. *Guanxing wanzhan*), and compendia on flora and fauna (e.g. *Piya*) are given equal place on his list with histories, literary collections, poetic commentaries, and books on calligraphy, painting, and music.

It is worth noting that prior to his receiving an official appointment at the Kyujanggak in 1779, Yi Tǒngmu had been better known as the quintessential bibliophile: when he was 21 years old, he had even written a parody of his life titled *Kansŏch'i chon* (Tale of a book-mad fool), suspecting that he would never perform

¹⁵ Evon, "Tobacco, God, and Books," pp. 641-642.

¹⁶ Evon, "Tobacco, God, and Books," pp. 647-648.

¹⁷ Yi Tǒngmu, *Ibyŏn'gi*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip* Vol. 57, p. 282: 此外又有二三書肆, 猥雜不足觀也.

the kinds of feats that biographers preferred to write about. It should come as no surprise, then, that certain parts of his *Ibyŏn 'gi* bear a striking resemblance to Li Wenzao's *Liulichang shusi ji*: both works were informed by a self-defining passion for books, as well as the experience of frequenting some of the same bookshops in Liulichang. Yi, like Li, became a familiar face at Wuliuju, a successful bookshop run by the Tao family, where he also obtained much of his knowledge about the Qing book trade:

I came across a number of bookshops that I had not seen the day before. Tao's shop was bigger than the others and had a sign up that read "Wuliuju." Tao said to me, "A shipment of books from Jiangnan has now reached the town of Zhangjiawan, near Tongzhou, and should be with us by the day after tomorrow. There should be four thousand or so books all in all." I asked to see the list of books contained in the shipment: not only did it have all the titles I had spent all my life searching for, but it had many strange and unusual ones as well. I came to the belated realization that Zhejiang and Jiangsu provinces were the main hubs for books.¹⁸

Unsatisfied with just knowing what more books were to come, Yi returned to Wuliuju three days later and made additional purchases on behalf of the Chosŏn embassy. And when the time came for the Koreans to leave Beijing, Tao arranged for one of his own relatives to transport Yi's purchases as far as Tongzhou; the Chosŏn Koreans were suitably impressed and made sure to spread the word about Wuliuju and its amiable owner.¹⁹

Pak Chiwŏn had heard about Wuliuju when he traveled to Beijing in 1780, and he likens the feeling of seeing the shop with his own eyes to that of being reunited with an old friend.²⁰ Pak could not have seen very much of Liulichang,

¹⁸ Yi Tŏngmu, *Ibyŏn 'gi*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip* Vol. 57, pp. 290-291:

過琉璃廠。又搜向日未見之書肆三四所。而陶氏所藏。尤爲大家。揭額曰五柳居。自言書船。從江南來。泊于通州張家灣。再明日。當輸來。凡四千餘卷云。因借其書目而來。不惟吾之一生所求者。盡在此。凡天下奇異之籍甚多。始知江浙爲書籍之淵藪。

¹⁹ Yi Tŏngmu, *Ibyŏn 'gi*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip* Vol. 57, pp. 298-299.

²⁰ Pak Chiwŏn, *Yŏrha ilgi*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip* Vol. 54, pp. 95-96.

having spent only a few days in Beijing before heading northeast to Jehol, but his treatment of Liulichang is strikingly informative and revealing in its own right. First, Pak provides additional contextual information and a concise summary of the most prominent bookshops:

As Liulichang is located south of Zhengyang gate and extends all the way to Xuanwu gate, it must have been the former site of Yanshou Temple. On his imperial processions north, Emperor Huizong of Song used to stop at the temple with Empress Zheng. Now in its place is a factory where variously colored glazed tiles and bricks are made. The factory is generally closed to the public and exercises an even stricter entry policy during production times. It is said that even its employees are not allowed to come and go as they please; once they have entered, they need to have brought with them no less than four months' worth of provisions. Outside the factory are all shops overflowing with riches and treasures. Among the bigger bookshops are Wencuitang, Wuliuju, Xianyuelou, and Mingshengtang. All of the empire's civil examination candidates and many of China's famous scholars gather and reside here.²¹

Pak then treats Liulichang as a visual stimulus for reflecting on his own position as a stranger in a big and unfamiliar place. By turns he is pensive, hopeful, and lonesome:

I exited Zhengyang gate in a carriage and while passing Liulichang asked how many *k'an* the shops were altogether. "All in all, two hundred seventy thousand *k'an*," was the reply. There are five streets from Zhengyang gate to Xuanwu gate, where treasures from all around the continent are piled high. I climbed to the top of one building and, leaning on the baluster, let out a sigh. How content I would be if I could obtain just an ounce of the world's wisdom! It is a natural human desire to be seen and understood by others; it can be maddening at times when that desire goes unmet. Only after I have observed myself in relation to that which I believe not to be me—and discover that, in essence, there is no such difference—can I expect to grow and continue to make room for further self-cultivation. The sages practiced this Way, which is why they could eschew the material world and yet want for nothing, stand alone and yet fear nothing. . . . I stand here in the middle of Liulichang: the world knows not what to make of this garb and hat, nor has the world ever

²¹ Pak Chiwŏn, *Yŏrha ilgi*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip* Vol. 56, p. 521:

琉璃廠。在正陽門外南城下。橫亘至宣武門外。卽延壽寺舊址。宋徽宗北轅。與鄭后同駐延壽寺。今爲廠。造諸色琉璃瓦甃。廠禁人出入。燔造時。尤多忌諱。雖匠手。皆持四月糧。一入毋敢妄出云。廠外皆塵鋪。貨寶沸溢。書冊鋪最大者曰文粹堂，五柳居，先月樓，鳴盛堂。天下舉人。海內知名之士。多寓是中。

seen this beard or these eyebrows before. No one has ever heard of the Pannam Pak clan, either. Here, I could become a sage, a Buddha, a worthy, or a hero, or I could become a madman like Kija or Jieyu. But with whom might I get to share this profound pleasure?²²

True to his self-conscious, contemplative writing style, Pak takes in the vastness of Liulichang and walks through the thoughts and feelings it provokes in him. Exposure to a wider world, if overwhelming and disheartening at first, pushes Pak to rethink his own sense of place and self. He reasons: having now jumped out of the proverbial well to discover the ocean beyond, should he not make the same leap in self-understanding so that all is not in vain? And yet try as he might to reflect and be favorably transformed, he remains somewhat unconvinced, vacillating between exhilaration and self-doubt, between reveling in the limitless possibilities for self-definition and regretting the irretrievable loss of his former sources of identity and sense of belonging. Ultimately, the feeling of solitude hits Pak the hardest, more so than any abstraction that might connect him with this unfamiliar world and lead him to believe that a similarly vast world of potential resides in him. Ironically, and rather cleverly, though, in wishing out loud for a sympathetic audience, he finds just that—in the reader.

Through Pak's introspective response to Liulichang, we are reminded not to underestimate the cultural shock of such a large and sophisticated marketplace to eighteenth-century Chosŏn Koreans or to be too skeptical about their professed confusion and ambivalence upon encountering it for the first time. Perhaps owing to the fact that not very many Chosŏn elites could make the journey to Beijing more

²² Pak Chiwŏn, *Yŏrha ilgi*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip* Vol. 54, pp. 98-100:

過琉璃廠。問廠幾間矣。有對者曰。共有二十七萬間。蓋自正陽橫亘至宣武門。有五巷而皆琉璃廠。海內外貨寶之所居積也。余登一樓。憑欄而嘆曰。天下得一知己。足以不恨。噫。人情常欲自視而不可得。則有時乎爲大癡猖狂。乃以非我觀我。而我遂與萬物無異。其於遊身。恢恢乎有餘地矣。聖人用是道焉。遯世而無悶。獨立而不懼。...今吾獨立於琉璃廠中。而其衣笠天下之所不識也。其鬚眉天下之所初覩也。潘南之朴。天下之所未聞也。吾於是爲聖爲佛爲賢豪。其狂如箕子接輿。而將誰與論其至樂乎。

than once in their lifetimes, what we do tend to find across *yŏnhaengnok* spanning years, even decades, is the constant reenactment of that shocking first encounter, formalized over time yet perhaps no less “real”; any prior textual knowledge of Liulichang appears not to have acted as much of a buffer.

It would take a more seasoned traveler for Liulichang to be treated as a place of leisurely consumption, rather than as a place that demanded fortitude and resourcefulness of its visitors. Yu Tŭkkong makes an interesting case in point, as he had written his *Yŏndae chaeyurok* based on his second trip to Beijing in 1801. As implied by the title, much of his account reads like a sequel or supplement to previously written *yŏnhaengnok* texts, consisting of observations and findings that could have been elusive to most first-time travelers. On Liulichang, Yu writes:

Cui Qi is the owner of Liulichang’s Juyingtang, and Tao is the owner of Wuliuju. Cui Qi comes from Qiantang and Tao is also a southerner. Tao is an old acquaintance who also has a special history with Koreans, because Koreans have been purchasing many books at Wuliuju from the time Yi Tongmu was in Beijing. Cui Qi, on the other hand, is someone I only got to know through this trip.

Juyingtang kept its books particularly tidy and in good condition. It had a spacious garden out back with a bamboo awning to give shade from the sun, where there was a writing table, modestly equipped, and three or four chairs placed around it. Some of the potted roses were in full bloom. The weather was surprisingly hot and humid for early summer, so I would hire a carriage every day to go to Juyingtang and be rid of my restlessness. There was no greater pleasure than to loosen my hat strings, lean back in a chair, and read whatever I pleased.

From time to time I also went to Wuliuju to chat with Tao. As it was a year of the state examinations, candidates from all the different cities gathered like clouds and would pass through Liulichang. I would converse with them and sometimes find among them a kindred spirit. On a few occasions, the candidates came up to me in droves, and after much ado asking my name, where I was from, and so on, they dispersed.

Cui may be young, but he is a skilled poet with a lofty mind. I asked him: “What made you leave your hometown to come here and sell books?”

“My father told me to.”

“To do what, exactly?”

“I came here for honor and fame five, six years ago. I don’t have the same aspirations anymore and would like to return home, but with this many books, I can’t just up and leave. I will need to figure out how best to dispose of them.”²³

Yu had found a peaceful retreat in Juyingtang and a worthy friend in Cui, and in centering his Liulichang narrative around this shop and its owner, he paints quite a different picture from those of Hong Taeyong, Yi Tǒngmu, and Pak Chiwǒn. Yu populates Liulichang with people rather than treasures and curios, acknowledges yet veers somewhat from the Wuliuju trend started by Yi Tǒngmu, and chooses not to discuss Liulichang’s frightening vastness, in favor of detailing how tastefully Juyingtang was fitted out as to remind one of a scholar’s studio. In short, Yu humanizes Liulichang and domesticates it into a home away from home, suggesting that Liulichang needed not be perceived as such a distant and unfamiliar place.

Few subsequent travelers would follow Yu’s lead and write openly about finding personal comfort and enjoyment in Liulichang. From the early nineteenth century onwards, representations of Liulichang would become more structured and formulaic, giving the impression that they were not all based on firsthand experience but rather modeled after the precedents set by Hong Taeyong, Yi Tǒngmu, and Pak Chiwǒn. In the next section, I tackle the question of why *yǒnhaengnok* authors went on to seemingly prefer convention to originality—reproducing, for example, Hong’s Persia analogy and Pak’s account of Liulichang’s history—in light of the changing significance of the *yǒnhaengnok* genre.

²³ Yu Tūkkong, *Yǒndae chaeyurok*, in *Yǒnhaengnok chǒnjip* Vol. 60, pp. 304-305:

崔琦琉璃廠之聚瀛堂主人，陶生五柳居主人也，崔是錢塘人，陶生亦南邊人也，自前李愬官游燕時及庚戌秋，多購書於五柳居，故陶有舊好，崔則新面也，聚瀛堂特瀟灑書籍，又廣庭起簾棚，隨景開闢，置椅三四張，床卓筆硯，楚楚畧備，月季花數盆爛開，初夏天氣甚熱，余日雇車至聚瀛堂散悶，卸笠據椅而坐，隨意抽書看之，甚樂也，時或往五柳居，與陶生話，係大比之年，各省舉人雲集都門，多游廠中，與之言，往往有投合者，或羣輩沓至，問答姓名鄉縣，擾擾而散，崔生年少，亦能詩雅人也，余問曰，君何故離鄉，在此販書乎，答父命也，余曰，命甚事，答為功名，如今五六年矣，但此時非功名之時，欲捲歸，而書本若是浩大，一時亦難區處，所以躊躇也。

Nineteenth-Century Representations of Liulichang

Chosŏn in the first half of the nineteenth century was beset by a new wave of factionalism, natural calamities, and peasant uprisings, in the midst of which the state's campaign against heterodoxy also took a violent turn. The first large-scale persecution of Catholics was carried out in 1801 on the orders of Queen Dowager-Regent Chŏngsun, which forced the Chosŏn Catholic Church underground but also caused its evangelical efforts to double; further persecutions ensued at the state and local levels and were accompanied by an increasingly heated debate over the place of Western learning in the context of Confucian civilization.

Some historians have suggested that with Catholicism and the West becoming the more frequent objects of vilification in official and public discourses, Qing China came to be viewed differently: any lingering anti-Qing sentiments from the previous century tended to dissipate, allowing *Pukhak* ideas, methods, and attitudes to be absorbed into the political and intellectual mainstream.²⁴ In the interest of bettering the moral and practical lives of the people, the disciples and successors of the *Pukhakp'a* continued to advocate complementing the study of Neo-Confucian philosophy with other disciplines and borrowing culturally from the Qing as far as was expedient; their insistence on this kind of judicious eclecticism went hand in hand with their favorable reception and active pursuit of *kaozheng* scholarship, particularly with respect to epigraphy. Be that as it may, we do not encounter in *yŏnhaengnok* produced during this period so much emphasis on acquiring new information through direct experience as on synthesizing existing knowledge.

²⁴ Noh Daehwan, "The Eclectic Development of Neo-Confucianism and Statecraft," pp. 97-99. See also Roux, "The Catholic Experience," pp. 18-19.

As discussed at the outset of this dissertation, the nineteenth century produced almost as many *yŏnhaengnok* as the previous century and yet none that would prove quite so extraordinary or influential as the three eighteenth-century masterpieces: Kim Ch'angŏp's *Yŏnhaeng ilgi*, Hong Taeyong's *Tamhŏn yŏn'gi*, and Pak Chiwŏn's *Yŏrha ilgi*. Considering how the exemplary status of these three works was confirmed in writing by Kim Kyongsŏn in 1832, we may surmise that through the *yŏnhaengnok*'s increasing consumption and incorporation into the mainstream literate culture, the practice of *yŏnhaengnok* writing came to be recognized primarily as a stage for demonstrating one's erudition and identifying oneself with past travelers who had made the same journey to great fame. In other words, the *yŏnhaengnok* appears to have become more performative than informative in function, a development that coincided with and facilitated the rise of a touristic culture with its own know-hows, must-sees, and must-dos that would promise even the least adventurous of travelers the most satisfying and recognizably "authentic" *yŏnhaeng* experience.

If there was a particular image that nineteenth-century authors were keen to assert of themselves, it becomes strikingly evident in their representations of Liulichang. To begin with Hong Taeyong's Persia analogy: Yi Hongsik points out that the likening of Liulichang to a Persian market recurs in numerous nineteenth-century *yŏnhaengnok*, such as Yi Haeŭng's *Kyesan kijŏng*, Hong Sŏngmo's *Yuyŏn'go*, Pak Saho's *Simjŏn'go*, and Han P'ilgyo's *Susarok*.²⁵ There is little question that Hong's representation of Liulichang continued to resonate with readers despite its diminishing usefulness as a practical guide to Liulichang. As we have

²⁵ Yi Hongsik, "Yŏnhaengnok sojae Pukkyŏng Yurich'ang kirok ūi pyŏnhwa ch'ui wa ūimi t'amsaek," p. 361.

seen with the conventionalization of images related to gender roles and footbinding in the previous chapter, here, too, we are reminded of the role of genre knowledge in shaping individual travelers' understanding of what constituted an appropriate and self-validating response to a particular recurrent theme or topic.

A closer look at the latest of the above-mentioned works, Han P'ilgyo's *Susarok* of 1831, reveals how a nineteenth-century Chosŏn traveler would draw on generic tropes and commonplaces to lend a social intelligibility to his description.

Han writes:

From Zhengyang gate to Xuanwu gate, there are five streets, five *li* in length and all lined with shops, and together they make up Liulichang. All the world's riches and treasures are concentrated in this one area of two hundred seventy thousand *k'an*. Some walls are made of glass, reflecting passersby as mirrors would. The brightly shimmering objects piled high to my left and to my right gave me the feeling of having stepped into a Persian market. With jewels and jade constantly blinding my vision, I did not manage to inquire about the names of various things and get a good look at everything.

Wuliuju is on the first street, as are Xianyuelou, Liuyilou, and Wencuitang; these are all bookshops. I have heard that woodblock engravings made in Liulichang are commonly those of rule books and ancient texts. I have also heard that Liulichang has a glazed tile factory, which is where it got its name.²⁶

We can tell from Han's description how much Liulichang had grown in the sixty-five years following Hong's visit. If anything, the Persia analogy seems to have become all the more fitting, whereas the Liulichang name, now amply embodied by the area's architecture, had become less dependent on its original referent for meaning. Still, the little new information Han has to offer is eclipsed by the all too familiar references to Liulichang's size ("two hundred seventy thousand *k'an*"), dazzling

²⁶ Han P'ilgyo, *Susarok*, in *Yŏnhaengnok sŏnjip poyu chung*, p. 306: 自正陽門外，橫亘至宣武門，有五巷夾路列肆者，凡五里，皆琉璃廠也。共二十七萬間，天下貨寶之叵藪也。往往以琉璃爲壁，人馬之行于其前者，如鏡中看也。左堆右積者，無不玲瓏恍惚，如入波斯之市。惟見珠玉，氣煒煌而已，不暇問其名，不暇窮其觀。廠之初街，有題五柳居者，又牌號先月樓六一樓文粹堂者，皆冊肆也。市中所刻多法書古籍云。或曰，廠中有造琉璃瓦者故名焉。

displays, and famous bookshops. He, like so many others, claims to have been too overwhelmed to collect much concrete or useful information. However frustrating this may be for the fact-seeking (modern) reader, Han himself does not appear to have considered his rehash of earlier representations particularly problematic or inadequate. For Han, reproducing Liulichang's image with his own brush may have been a valuable exercise in itself; inserting himself against this iconic backdrop would have served to authenticate his travel experience just as modern-day tourists get their photograph taken in front a famous attraction to commemorate their trip in a socially recognizable, albeit clichéd, way.

Kim Kyöngsön, writing a year later, effectively blurs all lines between individual experience and collective memory, firsthand and secondhand knowledge, representation and re-presentation:

The tiles and bricks used for building palaces and temples shine and glisten like glass, which is why the imperial office responsible for producing them is called the Glass Office. Behind Luzu Temple there is a wooded hill several hundred paces in diameter, and hidden amongst its trees is the tile factory. It is a very secretive place, all the more so during production times when its doors are closed to the public. It is said that even the factory workers are unable to come and go as they please once they have gone in with four months' worth of food.

The streets between Xuanwu gate and Zhengyang gate are all lined with shops and stalls. The district's western and eastern ends are marked with gateways, and the distance from one end to the other is seven to eight li. Each shop has a red flag with its name written on it in gold, such as Weiwentang, Taixingju, or Mingshengtang. All the jewels, silks, meats, and fruits on display exude such brilliance that every passerby is easily seduced. Shops like these may be a familiar sight all over Beijing, but Liulichang has the best books, steles, pots, porcelains, and antiques and as such is the best known. It is said that some of the merchants here are learned men from the south, and that every so often a famous scholar happens to be among the shoppers and pleasure-seekers that gather here.

A few in our party went to browse some of the shops. One came back and reported:

"We did not manage to see all the named establishments. All the razzle and dazzle overwhelmed our senses, and despite spending an

entire day there, we did not manage to examine a single object very closely. The shopkeeper would show us various goods and tell us the name of this and that, but it was difficult to make out the names and know what each item was used for. Anyone entering a mirror shop for the first time is greatly surprised and disorientated. There are mirrors of all shapes and sizes: hanging mirrors cover the walls and standing mirrors are displayed below. The big ones measure three to four *ch'ŏk*, and the small ones four to five *ch'on*. When you sit surrounded by them, it is as if hundreds of manifestations of yourself are peering in through windows; it is a thoroughly dazzling and maddening sight.”

And another said:

“I went into a bookshop and asked for a cup of tea. Compared to other marketplaces, this place was rather charming and quaint. After sitting in one bookshop, I went to another and then another until I had seen the inside of quite a few. Every bookshop has tens of thousands of books—far too many to attempt an estimate—and takes up an area of two to three *kyŏp*. Bookshelves ten to twelve levels high span three walls; on each shelf the books are neatly arranged and each book is marked with a paper tag. Try as I might, I could not make out any of the titles. I asked to see the shop’s stock list and came across many titles that I did not recognize; my eyes went dim halfway through the list.”

I do not know whether the shops lining this narrow street number in the hundreds or the thousands, or what vast fortunes went into producing all these goods. However, all these things are just strange and deceptive, rather than essential to everyday life. China’s culture of excess is truly lamentable, but such market activity is not without benefit either; this, too, could be a sign of China’s greatness. I have heard that there is also a market fair held in Liulichang every ten days for three days at a time, drawing in even more merchants and goods from all over. At the end of the three days, the fair moves to Longfu Temple.²⁷

²⁷ Kim Kyŏngsŏn, *Yŏnwŏn chikchi*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip*, Vol. 71, pp. 252-255: 殿閣寺刹所用諸色瓦甎，瑩潤如琉璃，故其燔造之廡，俗稱琉璃廡，琉璃廠，路北呂祖祠後，有空園方數百步，園中樹木間，有一公廡，卽燔瓦處也，燔造時多忌諱，禁人出入，雖工匠，皆持四月糧，一入無敢妄出云，出宣武門東南，至正陽門外，將向岳王廟，路經其中，夾路爲市鋪，東南各有里門，西題琉璃廠西邊，東題琉璃廠東邊，自西門至東門，可七八里，每鋪豎紅竿，金書鋪名，如緯文堂，泰興局，鳴盛堂諸號是也，而珠玉緞綵，酒肉果餌，諸般物件，皆左右列肆，瑰麗璀璨，令人眩轉，爲之奪目，蓋北京諸肆，在在皆然，而此廠所儲，多書籍碑版彝古銅與器玩之稍雅者，故名最著，且其坐賈者，間有南州秀才，應第求官者，故遊於市者，往往有知名之士云，聖申與裨譯數人，歷入數鋪，歸傳所見，言入其中，不能遍看其標號，只見壞然爛然，應接不暇，其實終日行，不能賞一物，其所謂雜貨者，形形色色，舉皆珍怪，鋪主引而示之曰，此某物也，此某物也，都不知名爲何物，用之何處，其所謂鑑鋪，始入門，驚怪失色，蓋各樣諸鏡，不知其數，或有提紐者，周懸于壁間，或有屏架者，列陳于桌上，大者三四尺，小者四五寸，人坐其中，有若千百分身，從壁隔而迭相窺望者然，閃怪怵惚，不能定神云，就冊肆覓茶，蓋比他肆稍雅，暫坐亦無可嫌故也，試周覽數鋪，蓋一鋪之儲，

We may be tempted to play the skeptic, to see through the rhetorical framing of Kim's description as reportage and question whether Kim had even seen Liulichang for himself. Before accusing Kim of outright plagiarism, however, it is worth considering that the same details leading us to doubt his credibility may have been put there for quite the opposite effect: to make good on his prefaced promise of a work so replete with information and so faithful in its reproduction of the *yŏnhaengnok* masterpieces as to obviate the need for readers to consult any other *yŏnhaengnok*.

Besides writing within a literary culture where imitation and emulation were far from stigmatized, Kim may have chosen to employ anonymous members of his party as mouthpieces for Hong Taeyong and Pak Chiwŏn to dramatize his intertextual conversation with their works and thereby illustrate their continuing relevance. Alternatively, it could just as well be that he had heard Hong's words uttered by his compatriots, in which case we would be dealing with an example of the *yŏnhaengnok*'s constitutive role in shaping sensory experience and the articulation of it. Either way, it is clear that by Kim Kyŏngsŏn's time, *yŏnhaengnok* authors were less concerned with supplying new facts about Liulichang than with reaffirming what Liulichang was already widely known to be: a familiarly exotic place. This may be because it was through recourse to the familiar that the desire for social recognition and self-commemoration could be most readily met.

已不知爲幾萬卷，屋凡兩重，或三四重，而每屋三壁，周設懸架，架凡十數層，每層皮書，卷秩齊整，每套皆有標紙，俯仰視之，不可領畧，覓其都錄見之，則亦多不聞不見之書，看到未半，眼已眩昏，噫，此夾路諸肆，不知幾千百，其貨物工費，亦不知爲幾巨萬，則皆是奇技淫巧，非民生日用之不可無者，中國之侈風，良足可慨，而以若許多物件，尙有交易之利，亦可見中國之大也，聞廠中有場市之日，每旬七八九連三日開市，非但本廠而已，各處商人，亦多趨市，各種物貨，尤多湊集，市罷後，又設場市於隆福寺云。

One striking development that we can discern in Kim's treatment of Liulichang, on the other hand, is the move towards a positive evaluation of Liulichang and its vibrant commercial activity, which may be attributed to the consumerism that had become integral to the *yŏnhaeng* experience. As Jung Jae-Hoon notes, during King Sunjo's reign (1800-1834), it became common for even "paltry artifacts" acquired in Beijing to make their way into Chosŏn and achieve wide circulation, owing to an amelioration of attitudes towards Qing intellectual and material culture.²⁸ Although the conventional image of Liulichang may have compelled travelers to focus their narrative attention on bookshops and thereby lend a dignified, Yi Tŏngmu-esque air to their shopping activities, their purchases were evidently more varied and motivated by a wider range of agendas than that of the patriotic intellectual.

By the mid-nineteenth century Chosŏn was beset by a confluence of internal crises and external threats, and an isolationist polemic held sway over the political center until the signing of the Kanghwa Treaty in 1876. I would like to consider examples from just two more *yŏnhaengnok* texts, one written at the brink of this transition and the other some time thereafter, which illustrate that Liulichang continued to serve as a site where Chosŏn travelers would showcase their knowledge of the *yŏnhaengnok* tradition and inscribe themselves within it. Perhaps more interestingly, though, the two examples demonstrate not only the tendency of the real and imagined Liulichangs to converge, but also the ability of the latter to stand on its own as a truthful representation.

Yi Hangŏk, on his visit to Liulichang in 1862, writes:

Liulichang is located south of Zhengyang gate. As it stretches as far as Xuanwu gate, it would have been the site of Yanshou Temple

²⁸ Jung, "Meeting the World through Eighteenth-Century *Yŏnhaeng*," p. 67.

during the Song dynasty. All the shops have a dragon sculpture decorated in blue and gold. There is row after row of shops for least ten *li*. With treasures piled mountain-high and tides of people rushing in, my eyes grew wide with surprise and knew not where to rest. It is said that all in all the shops make up two hundred seventy thousand *k'an*. Southeast of Liulichang there is yet another street of five to six *li* with shops standing on either side, including the bookshops Baowentang and Dawentang. All the world's writings and historical exploits are stored here, in hundreds of shelves and pigeonholes. If they could be gathered into a single pile, this pile would probably be as tall as our Namsan. As my good friend Kim back in Ch'ungch'ōng had been looking for geography books, especially the *Digujing* and the *Xiannu neijing*, I looked for these at Baowentang and Dawentang but could not find them. Baowentang and Dawentang are the two of the biggest bookshops around. He must have remembered the titles wrong. Such a pity.²⁹

In contrast to the acute sense of mission with which Yi Tōngmu had scoured Liulichang's bookshops, a more modest desire, to help out a close friend in need, motivates Yi Hangōk to take a closer look at their offerings. Unable to find the titles mentioned by his friend, he concludes that his friend's faulty memory must be to blame; his appeal to the authority of firsthand experience forms part of his larger tendency to set himself apart from his less-traveled peers back home, as someone who has verified with his own eyes the scenes of abundance and splendor with which Liulichang was conventionally associated. Yi Hangōk's emphasis on size and quantity throughout his description of Liulichang, far from exposing a diminutive self as we have seen with Pak Chiwōn, contributes to his self-aggrandizement, and nowhere can we detect the aversion of his more distant predecessors to the unchecked materialism that Liulichang was thought to represent.

²⁹ Yi Hangōk, *Yōnhaeng ilgi*, in *Yōnhaengnok chōnjip* Vol. 93, pp. 87-89: 廠在正陽門外南城下，橫亘至宣武門外，即宋延壽寺舊址也。皆以沉香雕之以龍之像，以金碧繪之以梅菊之色，此廠亦然，彼廠亦然。前後左右之橫連羅列，幾為十餘里。寶貝積如山，人物湊似海，偏穿眼孔，不覺盈視駭矚。而列廠之間數，為二十七萬云。廠之西南，又有冊肆寶文堂大文堂橫列左右，亦為五六里許。天下之遺文古事畢集于此，或數百間炕，或三四百間炕，委積三層之板上，計其委積，合以都聚，足與我東之木菴山齊焉。余於入燕時，湖西金友求地理中地骨經仙女內經等編。故求之于寶大文堂，蓋寶大兩堂，即冊肆之最大處也。而終未求得。無乃錯記而然耶。可歎可歎。

Kwŏn Pogin's *yŏnhaengsi* of 1882, on the other hand, reintroduces the tension between Confucian sensibilities and commerce:

Strewn in piles are a hundred goods,
 On the street outside Wu gate.
 Precious treasures from shining Persia
 And from all quarters gather here.
 The first place to go see when in Beijing,
 This street remains straight and true.
 Bookshops are the easiest to find,
 Their location quite nice and clean.
 The shelved books have tags on them
 And are arranged in an orderly way;
 Despite my usual love for books
 I am busier rubbing my dizzied eyes.
 So many books, so little time
 I glance through one and put it down.
 I remind myself of the proverbial book chest:
 he who reads much but understands little.
 A love for things only saps one's will
 It takes resolve not to stray from the Way.
 From the ground up to the ridge pole and rafters,
 The pure and the profane are all a-jumble;
 Remembering and guarding my old self,
 To no end shall I tidy these corners of my heart.³⁰

A highly stylized Liulichang sets the stage for Kwŏn's apology for the Confucian Way. Every detail provided here serves to establish Liulichang as a familiarly exotic place: it is the Liulichang already existing in the geographical imagination of Kwŏn's implied readers that is invoked as a counterpoint to Kwŏn's self-fashioning as a morally discerning (and well-read) traveler.

³⁰ Kwŏn Pogin, *Ch'ŏnyugo yŏnhaengsi*, in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip* Vol. 94, pp. 140-141: 列隧積百貨，乃在午門街，璀璨波斯寶，輻湊四方皆，入都先往遊，繩直路不差，書肆最易尋，位置頗清佳，插架懸標識，鱗櫛互挨捱，素心愛此物，饞眼眩頻揩，寸晷何能遍，略窺仍降懷，回思書籠誚，愈多愈不諧，玩物反喪志，操約道不乖，矧彼克棟宇，叢沓襍雅哇，徐返守故我，方寸澹無涯。

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