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Master's Thesis of International Studies

Manchu Invasion of Joseon:

**Power Shift in East Asia and the Perception of
Zhong-hua (中華)**

병자호란(丙子胡亂):

동아시아의 패권 변화와 중화사상(中華思想)의 인식

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이 논문을 국제학 석사학위논문으로 제출함

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ABSTRACT

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After seven years of the *Japanese Invasions of Joseon (Imjin War, 壬辰倭亂, 1592~1598)*, East Asia went under a dynamic shift in regional order. The Manchurians from the northeastern part of China came into power as a new kingdom (Later Jin, 後金) in 1616, and placed its first monarch Nurhaci (奴爾哈赤) as a Khan – an absolute ruler. Ming (明) was also struggling under the aftermath of *Japanese Invasion of Joseon*, since it was supporting Joseon as an ally, and could not prevent the rise of the Manchurians effectively. In 1636, Later Jin promoted its class from kingdom to an empire (Qing, 清), and ultimately became the new hegemon of East Asia in 1644, by conquering Ming and its territory. Throughout such turmoil of power transition, Joseon was once again located in the middle of two major powers. From late 1636 to early 1637,

Manchurian army came into Korean peninsula, and Joseon surrendered to Qing even before the collapse of Ming. This research is to analyze the causality of *Manchu Invasion of Joseon* through security policy framework and diagnose the inevitability of this event. Through literature review, the paper will strive to define the most determinant factor of *Zhong-hua* (中華, *Sino-centrism*), and based on such background, it will clarify how each of Joseon's regime – Gwanghaegun (光海君) and Injo (仁祖) – perceived the ideology in terms of their foreign policy and conflict management.

Keywords: *Zhong-Hua* (中華), *Sino-Centrism* (中華思想), *Sadae-Jueui* (事大主義), *Gwanghaegun* (光海君), *Injo* (仁祖)

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I. INTRODUCTION

The history of East Asia has a unique narrative. For a long time, it has kept its regional stability under geopolitical hierarchy despite continuous domestic quarrels with some occasional international wars. China, whichever the dynasty was ruling, had always been the uppermost empire setting up the regional rules and cultures, as well as the only inflow tract of outer (Western) cultures to its sub-countries and neighbors. Korea, ever since it was unified into Goryeo (高麗) dynasty in 936, it had not engaged, nor even attempted, to advance into Chinese territory over Manchuria. Such attitude was systemized as the Lee kingdom took over the throne in 1392: Joseon embraced Confucianism as its national religion, as a counter-action of withdrawing from Buddhism – a former national religion of Goryeo dynasty, and manifested itself as a *son* of Ming empire – a *father* that inherited its national ideology.

Amid such balance of order, there was a common idea that was passing throughout the region: the idea of *Zhong-hua* (中華), which is mostly translated as *Sino-Centrism* in English. While these two terms would be perceived as synonyms in casual context, this paper will use a specific term *Zhong-hua*, as it contains rather implicit and comprehensive meanings than *Sino-Centrism*. The English term China is a Westernized pronunciation of Qin (秦) dynasty, a first

imperial dynasty of China under Xi Huangdi (始皇帝) in the 200s B.C.E era. Hence, the term *Sino-Centrism* (which directly means Chinese-centralism), only conveys the nominal sense of its ideology. Whereas *Zhong-hua*, on the other hand, is rather more inclusive: it is a combined word of the territory – *Zhong-guo* (中國), and its civilization – *Hua-xià* (華夏).¹ The idea of *Zhong-hua*, at least in classic time period, had more to do with than simple Chinese-centralism.²

In East Asia, *Zhong-hua* was more of an unbreakable religion than an ideology. With limited knowledge of science, it was a common norm that China was the center of the world, and its emperor of was called *Tian-zi* (天子), which directly translates as ‘*the Son of Heaven*’. Due to such prestige, no ruler around Chinese empire could claim himself to be an emperor, as it would be a revolt

¹ The Chinese term of ‘*Zhong-guo* (中國)’ does not directly refer to the English term ‘China’ as a state or a nation. Contemporary terms *Zhong-guo* and *China* are merely abbreviations of the official name of the state (中華人民共和國, People’s Republic of China), and it originally indicates the broad (and everchanging) continent where the history of Chinese people have gone through. *Zhong-guo* is a political identification of territory, which is a limited definition than Chinese (sub)continent (中華大陸). *Zhong-hua* (中華) contains much wider concept that goes beyond territorial or geographical aspect.

² Frederic P Miller, Agnes F Vandome and John McBrewster, *Sinocentrism*, International Book Marketing Service Limited (2011).

against not only to *the Son Heaven*, but also to the stability of the world. Although the case of Japan has a unique exception to this system, such balance of order had been well-kept within the continent – or between the Chinese empire and the Korean kingdom, at least.

Japan's invasion into Korean peninsula in 1592 was, in this sense, quite unique and unanticipated. Outwardly requesting supplies and the way to Chinese continent, Japan, unified in almost four hundred years, attempted to upset the conventional regional order, and proclaim itself as the hegemon by invading Westward with its standardized western weaponry. Although wars within the continent, which could be categorized as international conflicts, have been continuous, Japan's invasion of Joseon was the first global warfare that involved all three major cultures. The invasion turned into a failure in 1598, and Japan's ambition to become a regional hegemon was oppressed until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Although Japan's trial to subvert the traditional regional order had failed, it did shackle the region and left room for new dynamics in East Asia. Ming, a hegemonic empire of China, had slowly lost its power after its alliance with Joseon against Japan; and Joseon was undergoing a domestic political turmoil over the throne. During this discourse, the Manchurians (or also called the

‘*Jurchens* – 女真族’) were gradually growing its strength. As Ming was losing its control over the territory and other ethnic tribes due to its domestic instability and famines, the Manchurians, once ignored as the barbarians of the north, established a new kingdom, Later Jin (後金), and expanded its territory toward the mainland China.

During this era of power games, Joseon, positioned right in the middle of major powers, strived to do its best as a peripheral state. Joseon was not aware of the military power of Japan in the late 1590s, but knew very well of the hegemonic power of Ming, as well as the rapidly rising power of Qing – the newly established Manchurian empire. While it was clear that Joseon would stand along Ming against Japan, as *father-son states*, the Ming-Qing conflict was a rather more complicated conundrum, as Joseon tried to keep its stability and peace by manifesting itself as a *son* of Ming, and a *little brother* to Qing.³

³ The early Manchurian kingdom, Later Jin (後金), first invaded Joseon in 1627. It was not to force Joseon to succumb, but to make a diplomatic relation as a newly risen legitimate kingdom in the Manchu area. This was the time when the so called ‘brotherly relationship’ was made between the Later Jin (former Qing) and Joseon. For more information regarding the *First Manchu Invasion of Joseon*, refer to: Hyunmo Park, “Political Debates and Foreign Policy Decisions of Chosun Dynasty during Manchu Invasion of Korea 1672,” *The Korean Journal of International Studies*, vol. 42, 4 (The Korean Association Of International Studies, 2002): 217-235.

Throughout thorough discourses and political disputes, Joseon finally decided to maintain its loyalty toward Ming.

Unlike Japan, Qing succeeded in subverting the conventional order of Ming hegemony. And even before Ming's collapse, Joseon had to become the first victim of Qing's retribution. On December 1636, the great army of Qing empire marched into the Korean peninsula, and on late January 1637, the invasion ceased as the king of Joseon succumbs to Qing. This less-than-two-months war became a pivotal point in East Asian history. It was the first official victory of the new empire over a neighboring state, as well as a signal of the rise of new hegemon. After securing its back, Qing advanced into mainland China, and Ming, the last empire established by the *Hans* (漢), finally collapsed in 1644.

How has the definition of *Zhong-hua* changed before and after the rise of Qing? Until the fall of Ming, *Zhong-hua* was almost perceived as a synonym of *Han-centric* China. The concept of *Zhong-hua* had reflected the hegemony of Chinese empire, which was solely pertained by the *Hans*, not only politically or militaristically, but also culturally and diplomatically. It was a combined entity of philosophical identity that gave great privilege and pride to *Han* people; it was the *Hans* who ruled the mainland of China, and other tribes and ethnic groups under their influence were inferior, hence not qualified to claim the

ideology of *Zhong-hua*. The non-*Han*-Chinese, including other ethnic groups neighboring China, were categorized as ‘barbarians’, implicitly discriminating them as uncivilized and inferior.

Joseon, since its establishment, was a loyal kingdom to such hierarchical system. Inheriting Confucianism as its backbone of national identity, the monarchs of Joseon kingdom had been subservient to the *Son of Heaven*. Calling itself as *Xiao Zhong-hua* (小中華, *small China*), Joseon respected China and yearned to be like one, but it well-knew that Joseon could only imitate, and not fully become the *Zhong-hua*. Such ideology was well-reflected throughout its political directions as well, as Joseon also neglected Manchurians in the north as barbarians – primitive tribes who cannot appreciate the culture of Ming, despite its militaristic superiority with strong horse powers and mobility over Joseon.

However, the rise of Qing along with the fall of Ming changed the dynamics of East Asian affairs that had been driven by the conventional *Zhong-hua* ideology. As Qing became the last empire in Chinese history that ruled the region for about three hundred years (from 1616 to 1912), it showed that the qualification of the hegemon in East Asia is not necessarily limited to *Han*-Chinese. Qing proved that the title of *Zhong-hua* can be entertained by any

ethnic tribe or ruler, as long as one has a strong power to overcome and subvert the original power. It had been seemed that the definition of *Zhong-hua* covers various arenas including Confucius philosophy, culture of *Han*, and legitimacy of royal blood – and that was how Joseon had viewed the value of *Zhong-hua* as well. Qing proved that the very core value of *Zhong-hua* lies only with the power, and once called barbarians ruled the *Han* Chinese until 1912.

Conclusively, Joseon could not avoid the traumatic sufferings of two major wars, one from Japan and the other from Qing. While one could claim that it is a tragic fate of peripheral state located in between major powers of the region, other could refute that the war could have been avoided or opted out of via shrewd schemes and strategies. Joseon, with conservative mind of loyalty toward Ming's *Zhong-hua* ideology, confronted both invasions, regardless of results whether it won or lost. The history would give a lesson to those who are engaging a power struggles today, not only to Korea, but also to all the major players in East Asian relations.

This paper aims to answer the question of “why did Joseon face another invasion shortly after the war against Japan?” While modern viewpoints would criticize political decisions of Injo, as he could neither avoid the confrontation with Qing nor win the war, the premise can still be agreed that the ruler would

have not intended to risk its nation or make political decisions irrationally. During the early Joseon period, the universal norm that Ming empire is the hegemon of the region must have been pervasive; and the awe toward Ming's power would have been even strengthened through the experience of *Japanese Invasion*. Joseon was under Ming's eternal debt not only culturally and socially, but also diplomatically and militaristically. Therefore, the paper will strive to comprehend the surrounding situations during Min-Qing transitional period, mainly focusing on Joseon's domestic political perception of world order.

The following chapter will explore the existing studies of East Asia in the sixteenth to seventeenth century, narrating the development of the period. Within this chapter, the paper will mainly focus on the concept of *Zhong-hua*, the ideology of hegemonic China that had kept the regional order of Imperial China and peripheral tributary states system. Many researches support that the *Zhong-hua* ideology had been the backbone of Chinese empires' national identity, as well as the universal ideology of the classic period of East Asia. As contemporary social studies majorly conduct their researches based on democracy and free market system, the *Zhong-hua* was the underlying premise that had been perceived axiomatic during its time. The paper will analyze how such ideology was entertained by Ming and perceived by Joseon, as a term known as *Sadae-juui* (事大主義).

In the next chapter, the paper will focus on two figures: Gwanghaegun and Injo. Gwanghaegun, the fifteenth king of Joseon kingdom, is evaluated as relatively neutral compared to other kings throughout the dynasty. From his predecessor to his successor, he is the only king in the middle who avoided the outbreak of another warfare: as Seonjo (宣祖, the fourteenth king of Joseon) faced *Japanese Invasion*, and Injo (the sixteenth king of Joseon) brought the Manchurian army into the Korean peninsula. Injo, as mentioned briefly, is not free from historical criticism that he could not prevent Joseon from being dragged into another vortex of power struggles. Although he acquired his throne via coup and attained his royal legitimacy from Ming, he is the first king who surrendered to the newly established empire of Qing. Such simple contrast already implies that the two regimes had different approaches toward Ming and Qing, as one could avoid the war and the other could not. The paper will compare the differences in foreign policies of each regime to figure out how had the perception of Ming and Qing changed, and how such changes were politically expressed.

Eventually, this paper will argue that the conventional value of *Zhong-hua* and *Sadae* exceeded the significance of realistic observations, both domestically and internationally. The end of Gwanghaegun's era by Injo's coup and the following pro-Ming policies show that Joseon could not get away from its

founding national identity of *Sadae*, and absolute respect toward *Zhong-hua*. The zeitgeist of Joseon lied under the firm establishment of Ming and *Han* people, and such stubborn flunkeyism even continued after the fall of Ming and during the reign of Manchurian empire. The history of Joseon regime during the Ming-Qing transitional period shows that Joseon valued legitimacy over pragmatism.

The case of Joseon and *Manchu Invasion* give lessons that ideological blindness, which had been accumulated throughout long period of time, is hard to be changed or amended to fit into the everchanging dynamics of power struggles. Collective norms or perceptions do change, of course, but its transformations cannot be as prompt as the change of international affairs. Joseon retrieved back from neutral diplomacy to conventional pro-Ming alliance, and such political detour revealed Joseon's conservative world view constructed for more than two hundred years, which turned out to be the banality of ignorance.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Deconstructing the Concept of *Zhong-hua*

The direct interpretation of *Zhong-hua* (中華) could be translated as either “the glorifying civilization at the center of the world” or “the cultures of China”. Whatever the definition would be, it clearly reveals the pride of China as the leading civilization of the world. Woe Soon Ahn claims that the development of *Zhong-hua* ideology is based on the notion that: 1) *Zhong-hua* is located at the center of universe; 2) it is obtained by the *Hans* (漢族), the rightful heir of *Hua* People (華族) – the first people who settled in Chinese mainland, hence the *Hans* are superior to the others; 3) and the world is divided into two – the world of *Zhong-hua* civilization (中華世界) and the barbaric world (夷狄世界).⁴ For these *Han*-centric minds, Sino-Centrism or *Zhong-hua* has often been referred to as the *Hua-Yi* Ideology (華夷思想), dividing civilized *Han*-Chinese and the uncivilized others.⁵

⁴ Woe Soon Ahn 안외순, “Joseon Jeongi Junhwajueuiwa Naechi-Woegyogwangye 조선 전기 중화주의와 내치-외교의 관계 Sino-centrism of early Joseon and the Relation between Domestic and Foreign Politics,” *Dongbanghak* 東方學, *Eastern Studies*, vol. 31, (August, 2014): 51.

⁵ For more detailed explanation of the terminology of *Zhong-guo* (中國) and *Yidi* (夷狄) refer

It is a common feature for each culture to keep its own pride through myths or legends. However, the ideology of *Zhong-hua* was beyond such ambiguous tales and stayed along with the Chinese people as their vividly existing national ideology. By combining the virtues of Confucianism, *Zhong-hua* gradually grew into a *Han*-centric cultural supremacy, which led to cultural imperialism that the *Zhong-hua* culture is the absolute standard, hence it should be spread throughout the world and embraced by all neighboring civilizations for universal improvement.⁶ Just as the Old Testament Christianity spread from Judaism to universally recognized religion, *Zhong-hua* became the international standard of world view, which later became the fundamental mechanism for East Asian order. From ethno-centric ideology, *Zhong-hua* became the core term that indicates both the hegemony of Chinese empire and the stability of East Asian order as a collective region.⁷

Ironically, or interestingly, the concept of conventional *Zhong-hua* contains both inclusive and exclusive ideologies. The idea of traditional *Zhong-hua* can

to: Han-Kyu Kim 김한규, *Godae Junggukjeok Segyejilseo Yeongoo* 古代中國的世界秩序研究 *Study of Ancient World Order of China*, (Seoul: Iljo-gak, 1982): 10-33.

⁶ Ahn, 51-52.

⁷ Chun-Sik Lee 이춘식, *Junghwasasangui Yihae* 중화사상의 이해, *Understanding Sino-centralism* (Shinseowon 신서원, 2002): 143-148.

be normally divided into three parts: geopolitical centrality (*zhong*, 中), cultural superiority (*hua*, 華), and ethnocentrism (*xià*, 夏).⁸ As such, the idea of *Zhong-hua* began with multi-dimensional meanings, and it has been utilized by Chinese empires for centuries to embrace and exclude their neighboring states as subordinates or barbarians. Each part has its own inclusive and exclusive aspects.

First, directly translating the Chinese characters into modern context, the conventional concept of *Zhong-hua* primarily refers to the geopolitical centrality of Chinese empire in the region. With vast range of territory located in the central area of Asian Continent, Chinese empire had always projected its influence not only through its magnitude of the nation, but also via the significance of its position connecting the East and the West. As Halford Mackinder would have phrased, the Mainland China and the Chinese empire had been the “heartland” of East Asia and beyond.⁹

⁸ Woe Soon Ahn, “[Teukjip: Yishipilsegi Dongasiawa Junghwapaegwonjuui 1] Junghuwajuui Hyeonseong-wonliwa Teuksong [특집:21세기 동아시아와 중화패권주의 1] 중화주의의 형성원리와 특성 East Asia and Sino-centric Hegemony in 21st Century 1] Principles of Sino-Centrism and its Features,” *Oneuleui Dongyang-Sasang* 오늘의 동양사상, *Oriental Ideologies of Today*, vol. 11, (September, 2004): 84-101.

⁹ Halford Mackinder (1861~1947) was an English geographer and known to be one of the

As important as geography is, Chinese empires had maximized its locational benefit in managing the neighboring states, as the regional hegemon. For an inclusive aspect, and also in contemporary analytical language, China was the leading institutionalist building economic web beyond its jurisdiction. It was undoubtedly the hub of international trade as well as the standard state of advanced economy. At the same time, on the other hand, China was also the rule setter that controlled and regulated the bilateral or multilateral relations among the states without its supervision. Such exclusiveness reveals China's intention to persist its influence over the region.¹⁰ According to *Jingbirok*, a

founding fathers of modern geopolitics and geostrategy. He is credited with his novel introduction of new terminologies into the English language: "manpower" and "heartland". While the term "manpower" is widely used in various fields nowadays, "heartland" is a unique term that signifies the importance of occupying the center of continent to command the region amid power struggles. Although his analyses were mainly focused on East Europe (he is also known for proposing the concept of 'Eurasia'), the significance of "heartland" could also be applied to East Asian context, as the Chinese continent composes the major proportion of Asia along with Russia. Moreover, he is famous for his own quote, supporting his idea, of "Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland; who rules the Heartland commands the World Island (Eurasia); who rules the World Island commands the World". For more information, refer to: Halford J. Mackinder, *Democratic Ideals and Reality: A Study in the Politics of Reconstruction* (originally published in 1919).

¹⁰ When the hegemonic state maintains bilateral relations with its partners, it can preserve its foreign relations' influence up to have of all international affairs, whereas if it promotes multilateral cooperation, its influence would be evenly divided into the number of participating states.

memoir of *Japanese Invasion of Joseon (the Imjin War, 임진왜란, 1592-1598)* written by a scholar official Yu Seong-Ryong (柳成龍), Joseon court concerned about Ming empire's suspicion as they met Japanese envoys who persuaded Joseon to normalize the relations and invade Ming together.¹¹ Joseon turned down Japan's proposal, as it kept its loyalty, but did not report Japanese envoys' visit to Ming as well, out of fear that Ming would accuse Joseon.¹² Such episode indicates that the supervision of Ming had been absolute, if not meticulous, and its influence around the region was effective with or without Chinese emperors' direct remark. Based on its geopolitical position as well as its economic power, China – with no doubt – has firmly established its identity of the *center* (*zhong*, 中) of the region.

The second pillar of *Zhong-hua* identity is the cultural superiority. Within the term, *Hua* (華), in direct translation, refers to 'brightness', 'glorification', or 'brilliance'. Therefore, the general interpretation of *Zhong-hua* (中華), in literal aspect, would be "the shining grandeur of central civilization". It well reveals the pride of China's cultural superiority, as a leading civilization in East Asia. It also implies that Chinese culture had been perceived by neighboring states as a

¹¹ Yu Seong-Ryong 柳成龍, *Jingbirok* 懲毖錄 (1643).

¹² Ibid.

“soft-power” that gave Chinese empires legitimacies to affect and influence the region not only politically, militaristically, or diplomatically, but also socially, culturally, and even philosophically.

Such cultural leadership also had its two faces of inclusiveness and exclusiveness. While the Chinese civilization had well gathered the region under its influence – which could be termed in modern language as the “Asian Values”¹³ – and constructed mutually interactive cultures, such as the usage of Chinese characters as the backbone of each language or sharing virtues of Confucianism as moral and social standards, China once again shows its egotism by strongly adhering to its own creations and disapproving other “inferior” cultures. Such attitudes and behaviors are well shown in historical cases such as Korea’s discourse amid the creation of its own writing system, *Hangul* (한글), or inventions of own calendars and astronomical observatory systems under Joseon’s King Sejong’s (世宗, the fourth king of Joseon dynasty) regime in the early to mid-1440s.¹⁴ It could be inferred that while China had

¹³ Lucian Pye, “‘Asian Values’: From Dynamism to Dominoes?” *Culture Matters* (Harrison and Huntington. eds., 2000): 244-255.

¹⁴ Joo-Phil Kim 김주필, “Choi Manli deung Jiphyeonjeon Haksadeulyi Ollin Sangsomungwa Sejongyi Sangsomun Jippiljadeuleul Bulleo Nanun Deahwa’ Juseok ‘최만리 등 집현전 학사들이 올린 상소문과 세종이 상소문 집필자들을 불러 나눈 대화’ 주석

thoroughly strived to share the advanced cultures and technologies with its neighbors, the direction of globalization should only be ‘from China to outwards’ and not the other way around. The value of regional inter-communication, which could be viewed as ‘international interaction’ in modern sense, was a privilege only led by the empire, and it had been monopolized by China for a long time, until the beginning of modern colonial period.

The last pillar of *Zhong-hua* identity is *Xià* (夏), which is not included in the term in visual sense. *Xià* and *Hua* are often perceived as synonyms, under broad cultural aspects, as the character of *Xià* refers to the ‘people’ who established the ancient Chinese civilization as well as the ‘region’ where they had settled. Afterward, it was the *Hans* (漢), who inherited the right to be ‘the people’ of Chinese civilization.¹⁵

Among three major pillars of *Zhong-hua* identity, *Xià* is the most exclusive element that composes the philosophy, although it is not expressed in the term. It had functioned as bedrock of Chinese empires’ tributary system, *Han*

Annotation of ‘Memorandum Written by Choi Man-Li and Scholars of Jiphyeonjeon, and the Dialogue between Sejong and the Writers of the Memorandum,’” *Eomunhaknonchong* 어문학논총 *Collection of Language and Literature Writings*, 36 (2017): 101.

¹⁵ Ahn, “*Teukjip: Yishipilsegi Dongasiawa Junghwapaegwonjuui I*,” 85-88.

Chinese's ethnic superiority over neighboring 'barbarians', and their pride of legitimate heir of cultural privilege. Such hierarchical class divisions among ethnic groups was even more concrete during the ancient period, as the notion of nation, state and people were vaguely mixed. Under the context of East Asian history, it was a common norm that the states had been established based on keen ethnic connections, and the concept of borderlines between states were limitedly acknowledged. There were Great Walls, castles, and fortresses to secure the soil and defend the people from enemies, but their functions were limited only under militaristic aspects, and the division of states were mainly drawn by natural environments, such as rivers or mountains. Such development would have given various groups of people to stand more toward ethnic affiliation over physical distinction or identification by one's nationality. The multi-ethnic demographics could have only been tolerated by the empires, but under implicit discrimination between the majority and the minority. Under *Zhong-hua*, the Chinese empires had widely included various ethnic groups under their commands, but the ruling class had been exclusively fixed – the *Han-Chinese*.

As such, *Zhong-hua* is a complex terminology that contains various meanings in numerous aspects. While it is an enormous philosophy that covers throughout the whole continent, it is also an invisible insignia that divides

ethnic groups into superior and inferior. The following chapters will look through the characteristics of Ming and Joseon, analyzing how the empire and the kingdom perceived the ideology within its system, and apply them into the timeline of *Manchu Invasion* and Joseon's political discourse during then.

***Zhong-hua* of Ming: Right for *Han*'s Hegemony**

Among major states during the classical period, Ming would be the most suitable state that fits all the qualifications of *Zhong-hua* empire. It restored the *Han*-centric empire after the reign of Yuan (元) dynasty, ruled by the Mongols, at the center of mainland China, and improved its influence over the region and beyond with cultural advancement. Until *Japanese Invasion into Joseon* in the 1590s, Ming was undoubtedly the hegemon of East Asia that sufficed all three categories of *Zhong-hua*.

Geographically, Ming retrieved the central area of Chinese mainland that had been occupied by the Mongols. From Beijing in the North to South China Sea in the South, from Chengdu in the West to the Yellow Sea in the East, Ming recovered the conventional territories of former *Han* empires – or even more. With its vast territory and wealth, as well as securing the most important trading position connecting the East and the West, Ming – once again – had spread its

influence politically, economically, and culturally throughout the region.

However, the biggest significance of Ming dynasty is that they revived the conventional *Han* Chinese's empire over Mongols. The Yuan-Ming transition was the power struggle between the Mongols and the *Hans*, and it was more than an ethnic competition or power struggles between two states.¹⁶ It was a dual to decide which ethnic group is worthy enough to rule the world. No matter how the war had ended, the winner would have achieved the title of hegemon, with no doubt, and the defeated would have been perished. Zhu Yuanzhang (朱元璋), the founder of Ming dynasty as well as the first emperor – known as Hongwu (洪武帝) – believed that the right of *Zhong-hua* belongs only to the *Hans*, and the war against the Mongols was a fight of reconstructing traditional, and original (as the *Han* Chinese would define), ideals of *Zhong-hua* empire.¹⁷ Consequently, as mentioned, the defeated Mongols were pushed away from the mainland China, and again succumbed to Later Jin (future Qing empire), the northern kingdom established by the Manchurians.

¹⁶ Feng Zhang, "Rethinking the 'Tribute System': Broadening the Conceptual Horizon of Historical East Asian Politics," Yongnian Zheng ed., *China and International Relations: The Chinese View and the Contribution of Wang Gungwu* (Routledge, 2012): 89.

¹⁷ David M. Robinson ed., "The Ming court and the legacy of the Yuan Mongols," *Culture, Courtiers, and Competition: The Ming Court (1368–1644)*, Harvard University Asia Center (2008): 365–421.

After the establishment of Ming, the Hongwu emperor strived to eliminate all the cultural remnants of the Northerners. He banished all the rituals from the North – including hairstyle, the dress code, and any other aspects that would remind Mongolian culture – and promoted traditional *Han* customs. He revived the national examination system for recruiting court members and bureaucrats, and evaluated them based on their knowledge on Confucianism.¹⁸ Many of social and political guidelines returned to those of Song (宋), the former *Han*-centric kingdom before Yuan, and the early establishment of Ming dynasty stood upon a firm social transitions of rejecting Mongolian aspects within their lives.¹⁹

Feng Zhang introduces Ming as the first empire to develop a single pattern of tributary system with all its neighbors, which indicates that Ming – among all dynasties in Chinese history – had put the most effort to construct a Sino-centric regional order system.²⁰ Given that his argument would be plausible, it could

¹⁸ Johannes Sebastian Lotze, [PhD. Thesis] *Translation of Empire: Mongol Legacy, Language Policy, and the Early Ming World Order, 1368-1453*, Manchester (UK: The University of Manchester, 2017).

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Feng Zhang, “Regionalization in the Tianxia? Continuity and Change in China’s Foreign Policy,” Emilian Kavalski ed., *China and the Global Politics of Regionalization* (Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2013): 19.

be inferred that Ming was the most successful *Zhong-hua* state throughout the history of China, as an empire that solidified its hegemony not only within the Chinese terrain, but also beyond its borders that reaches around the whole Asian region. The early Ming majorly strived to build a socialized community, where Ming emperor stands on the center as the *Mandate of Heaven* (*Tianzi*, 天子), and the surrounding states acknowledge its supremacy via tributary system. He claims that such socialization was possible under the traditional world view of *Tianxia* (天下) – which directly refers to “all under heaven” in English – and Ming tried to retrieve its hegemonic title, of the “overlord of *Tianxia*”.²¹

Moreover, Ming’s reclaim of *Zhong-hua*, or the hegemony of East Asia, was not merely ideological, but significantly realistic as well. In his other article, Zhang argues that the early Ming had to face numerous security threats on its border frontiers, which would include the Mongols in the North, late Goryeo before Joseon’s establishment in the East, and the pirates from Japan in the South.²² Hence he argues that Ming’s foreign policies, in practice, were also quite realistic and strategic, as most modern-day analogy would view them.

However, although Ming’s growth in power can be viewed in security

²¹ Ibid., 21.

²² Feng Zhang, “Rethinking the ‘Tribute System’”: 86-87.

aspect under realism, its foreign policies toward its neighbors does not apply beyond ethnic division between the *Hans* and the non-*Hans*. First, Zhang himself does apply the premise that Ming's tributary system is based on solidifying *Hans*' superiority and persuading neighboring states to acknowledge it. Although he analyzed the history based on the state-level, the state title is only applied to Ming – a newly established *Han* empire against Yuan – and indicated the surrounding entities based on their ethnicities – Mongolians, Koreans and Japanese.²³ Though it is understandable to mix the concepts of ethnic group and state, as states in classical East Asia tended to form based on their ethnic kinships, it implies that it is difficult to observe the East Asian history purely through modern spectrum of state-based level of analysis without considering the ethnic elements. While Zhang strived to analyze the tributary system of imperial Ming via modern perspective of international relations, it does not clearly distinguish the state and social groups, hence vaguely mixes the concepts of realists' aspects of inter-state relations and constructivists aspects of ethnic identifications. If Zhang's analysis of Ming's hegemonic order under *Tianxia* is combined with Ahn's definition of *Zhong-hua*, it can be inferred that the superiority of Ming, is equivalent to that of *Hans* – the rightful

²³ Ibid.

heir of Xià (夏) civilization.

Second, while Zhang emphasized that Ming aimed to ‘socialize’ with neighboring states,²⁴ numerous counterarguments claim that the structure of tributary system was highly hierarchical, that suppressed multilateral cooperation and enhanced Chinese empires’ influence over the region. Se-Hyung Yoon and Young-Rok Cho argues that the conventional world view of East Asia had been defined under the ideology of *Hua-Yi* (華夷).²⁵ The term *Hua-Yi* is usually regarded as the synonym of *Zhong-hua* or Sino-Centrism, but it has its own significance as the term itself emphasizes the ethnic distinction between the *Hans* and the non-*Hans*. While *Zhong-hua* is more prone to imply the supremacy of Chinese civilization and Sino-centrism stresses the centric aspect of Chinese cultures, *Hua-Yi* focuses more on hierarchical relations

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Se-Hyung Yoon 윤세영, “17segicho Sahaengroke Natanan Myeongnara Malgieui Wuigi Sanghwang 17세기초 사행록에 나타난 명나라 말기의 위기상황 Critical Situation of the Late Ming Dynasty Appearing in the Beginning of the 17th Century Envoys Visit Record,” *The Korean Literature and Arts*, Vol 15, Institute of the Korean Literature and Arts (Soongsil University, 2015): 79; Young-Rok Cho 조영록, “Joseoneui Sojunghwagwan – Myeongcheonggyochegi Dongasamgukeui Cheonhagwaneui Byeonhwareul Joongshimeuro 조선의 소중화관 – 명청교체기 동아시아의 천화관의 변화를 중심으로 Joseon’s *Sojunghwa* ideology – Focusing on the Changes of Three East Asian Sates’ World View during the Ming-Qing Transition Period,” *Yeoksahakbo* 歴史學報, 149 (1996): 106.

between the *Hua* – the civilized Chinese – and *Yi* – the uncivilized barbarians.

Yoon argues that Ming's foreign relations, especially with Joseon, were highly affected by this *Hua-Yi* ideology, and such hierarchical and distinctive relations were structuralized through the 'investiture-tribute' system – where the emperor of Ming acknowledges the kings of Joseon as legitimate recognitions, and the newly nominated kings would pay tributes to Ming for its benevolence.²⁶ Such diplomatic relations indicate that Ming's eagerness to 'socialize' was more focused on establishing a hierarchical relationship, rather than a bilateral or mutual relations. The acknowledgement of a king of its neighboring state implies that the tributary states – like Joseon – are not advanced enough to choose their own ruler independently, and the supervision of the advanced empire is a mandatory procedure for the stability of the states and the region.

Lastly, there was a traditional military strategy of Chinese empires, known as '*Yiyizhiyi* (以夷制夷)'. It first appeared in the *Book of the Later Han* (後漢書), and it literally means 'to prevent barbarians with other barbarians'.²⁷ Ever

²⁶ Yoon: 79-80.

²⁷ Ye Fan 范曄, "Biographies of Deng Kou 鄧寇列傳," *The Book of the Later Han* (後漢書), Vol. 16 (445).

since the *Han* dynasty, Chinese empires had practiced such strategies to distract the barbarian aggressions and maintain its stability. Although distractions could also be regarded as contemporary military tactics among alliances, China's view on distracting enemies were more focused on substituting other state's power instead of its own, rather than searching for cooperative military movements. It implies that the traditional China's views on foreign policy and alliance system is based on the overlord-subordinate structure, and the practice of military strategies were heavily driven by such perspective, letting other allies – the tributary states – to take the risk of war before it approaches the empire.²⁸ It shows that, under China's traditional security viewpoint, the empires had put the stability of its own reign as its top priority before cooperative military movements to effectively win the war.²⁹

In terms of national identity, Ming believed that the identity of *Zhong-hua* can only be accomplished by the *Han* people, and the construction of *Han* identity was built by standing against the Yuan (Mongolian) culture. Naturally, Ming developed its cultural strength within *Han* people exclusively – the

²⁸ Sanping Chen, *Multicultural China in the Early Middle Ages* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012): 99.

²⁹ Ibid.

rightful heir of *Xià* Chinese, as they would have proclaimed.³⁰ The establishment of Ming empire reinforced the ethnic kinship among the *Hans*, which led to the cognitive causality that the “*Hans*, by rejecting the Mongols, are the one and only people who can cherish the true *Zhong-hua*.”³¹ It suggests that, among three pillars of *Zhong-hua* ideology, Ming valued its ethnocentric pride the most, synchronizing the ideology with ethnic identity.

Joseon’s Perception of *Zhong-hua*: The Courtesy of *Sadae*

In-Sung Jang divides the concept of Joseon’s *Sadae* into three categories: the ideological (*Sadaejuui*), the institutional (tributes and installations), and the practical (*Sadae* policy).³² He points out that *Sadae* of Joseon is an example of the expansion of China’s *Zhong-hua* ideology, that entered and affected different layers of other states’ national system. As Joseon manifested its loyalty toward Ming, it embraced Ming empire’s *Zhong-hua* ideology, as the courtesy of *Sadae* (ideological); Joseon had paid respects toward Ming through active

³⁰ Robinson. 367-368.

³¹ Lotze. 144-151.

³² In-Sung Jang 장인성, “Reconsidering the Concept of *Sadae* in China-Korea Tributary Relations,” *Concepts and Contexts in East Asia*, No.3, Hallym Academy of Sciences (December 2014): 60.

involvement into the Tributary system (institutional); and Joseon's identity of *Sadae* (loyalty) toward *Zhong-hua* (Ming) was nationally projected through its policies (practical).³³ He also argues that the system of *Zhong-hua* and *Sadae*, which could be viewed as Joseon's over-dependence on Ming in contemporary perspective, and the idea of 'self-reliance (*Jaju*, 自主)', which sounds much more autonomous and independent than *Sadae*, are not contradictory but interrelated under classical period world view.³⁴ *Zhong-hua* was not only a national ideology that strengthened the hegemonic influence of Chinese empires, but also a transnational world view that gave international legitimacy to states within the system, as well as stability under imperial umbrella in security aspect.

During the Ming-Qing transitional period and the menace of *Qing's Invasion*, Joseon's definition of *Zhong-hua* was limited only to that of *Han's*, and the promotion of Manchurian state into an empire was a difficult incident for Joseon to digest. The dispute between *Cheok-Hwa Party* (斥和派), the pro-Ming hardliners, and *Ju-Hwa Party* (主和派), the pro-neutrality (not necessarily pro-Qing) moderates, within the Joseon polity during the time of

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid., 84.

Manchu Invasion well displayed the discourse regarding the dilemma of following either *Sadae* to Ming or (unconventional) practicality of opting out from power struggles. Between fidelity and pragmatism, Injo, the king of Joseon by then, chose *Sadae* over diplomatic neutrality, and had to face a tragic outcome. While the *Ju-Hwa Party* members, prominently led by Choi Myung-Gil (崔鳴吉), emphasized the significance of survival, with or without its national code of *Sadae*, Kim Sang-Heon (金尙憲) and the following *Cheok-Hwa Party* members claimed that they would rather choose demise over disgrace, which was to make peace with the Manchurians. Injo, who had been acknowledged as a legitimate king of Joseon over Gwanghaegun – his predecessor – by Ming, was not free from his liability, as much as the threat from the north was imminent. Ultimately, he chose Ming over Qing, and the aftermath of his decision brought even more disgraceful surrender to a new emperor.

Although the development of the *Manchu Invasion of Joseon* elaborates that there had been different thoughts over the regional affairs within Joseon court, the result clearly indicates that Joseon had a deeply rooted loyalty toward Ming, which is toward the *Han's* cultural supremacy – to be more precise. Regardless of Injo's decision, Joseon had never been free from Ming's

influence, ever since its establishment. It was not because of Ming's independent power, but more because of Joseon's proactive loyalty toward the *Hans*.

By the time when Ming dynasty was established in China, in 1368, Goryeo (高麗) kingdom was ruling over the Korean peninsula, and had been under Yuan's intervention. Although the Mongolian empire was collapsed, the remaining forces of Yuan dynasty stayed in the northern part of China – the Manchuria region – and kept causing military quarrels both against Ming and Goryeo. During this time period, a party called *Shinjin Sadaebu* (新進士大夫, *Neo-scholar officials*) emerged as a new power to counter-balance the conventional court structure of Goryeo.³⁵ The new party constructed their ideological cornerstone over Neo-Confucianism, which stood strongly against conventional Buddhism, the national religion of Goryeo, and called for political restoration via scholastic – not religious – minds.³⁶

³⁵ The term *Sadae* within *Shinjin Sadaebu* is different from the *Sadae* (事大) – the loyalty. *Sadaebu* is a combined term of *Sa* (士, *scholars*) and *Daebu* (大夫, *political officials*). Although the *Sadaebu* of Joseon followed Neo-Confucianism and emphasized loyalty toward Ming, as its cultural parent state, the two terms indicate different meanings within overlapping arenas of political scholars and admiration toward *Han*'s cultural supremacy.

³⁶ Beom Jik Lee 이범직, “Sarim Seryeokeui Deungjang 사림세력의 등장 Rise of *Sarim*

Naturally, Goryeo was divided into two factions, not only within the politicians, but also within the military officials. Moderate *Sadaebu* Jeong Mong-Ju (鄭夢周) claimed to protect the throne and only restore the political structure, while a hard-liner Jeong Do-Jeon (鄭道傳) claimed that the renovation could not be achieved without overthrowing the throne as a whole. Between the military officials, Yi Seong-Gye (李成桂) who had been against the Goryeo bureaucrats for preventing him from further promotions due to his background,³⁷ stood along with the radicals, whereas Choi Young (崔瑩) strived to protect the realm despite corruption. As Yuan was fading and Ming was rising, Goryeo's fate was also at its stake.

faction,” *Korean History (New Edition)*, Vol. 28 (National Institute of Korean History, 2002): 141-142.

³⁷ Yi Seong-Gye had complex background of various nationalities. In 1318, Yi Seong-Gye's grandfather Yi Chun (李椿) defected to Yuan receiving official position. In 1356, however, Yi Seong-Gye's father Yi Ja-Chun (李子春) re-defected back to Goryeo and served as a military officer defending the northern borders, which was against the Yuan force. Yi Seong-Gye, therefore, could not have avoided criticisms from Goryeo's conservative politicians denouncing his background of former Yuan national, and had been kept away from promotions despite his performances as a soldier. For more information, refer to: Byeong-ho Park 박병호, “Yangbangwanryo Gukgaeui Seonglip 양반관료 국가의 성립 The Establishment of Noble Bureaucrats' State,” *Korean History (New Edition)*, Vol. 22 (National Institute of Korean History, 2002): 14.

Eventually, Jeong Do-Jeon and Yi Seong-Gye pulled together to overthrow the Goryeo kingdom and raised a coup against the throne. In 1388, Yi returned his army, disobeying the royal order to attack on remaining Yuan troops in the northern border, marched toward Kaesong (開城), the capital city of Goryeo, and took control over the nation.³⁸ Later in 1392, Yi Seong-Gye put himself on a throne and proclaimed a new kingdom of Joseon (朝鮮).

The national identity of Joseon was established by rejecting the customs of Goryeo, same as Ming rejected Yuan and Qing rejected Ming. Jeong Do-Jeon and other radical *Sadaebu* members proposed three political basics to Yi Seong-Gye as the fundamentals of Joseon's national identity. The three basics were 'to praise Neo-Confucianism and suppress Buddhism (*Soongyu-eokbul*, 崇儒抑佛)', as Buddhism had been an old national religion of Goryeo, 'to set agriculture as the central industry of national economy (*Nongbon-juui*, 農本主義)', and to pay loyalty toward Ming, the redeemed *Han* empire (*Sadae-juui*, 事大主義).³⁹ As such, Neo-Confucianism and *Sadae* were the backbones of

³⁸ Ibid., 14-19.

³⁹ Seong-Mu Lee 이성무, "Taejo, Yeokseonghyukmyungeulo Joseoneul Changeophada 태조, 역성혁명으로 조선을창업하다 Taejo Establishes Joseon via Dynastic Revolution," *Joseon Gukwangjeon 조선국왕전 朝鮮國王傳 Tales of Joseon Kings* (Chunga Books 청

Joseon's establishment, and they had been preserved through the whole dynasty.

Even after Joseon surrendered to Qing empire, many of Joseon scholar officials, mostly conservatives, adhered to Neo-Confucianism and *Sadae* ideology. The conservatives believed that the *Han*'s empire would rise up again over the reign built by the barbarians, and claimed that Joseon should inherit the legitimacy of *Zhong-hua* ideology until the return of the *Hans*. They denied to acknowledge Qing as the new *Zhong-hua* empire, and referred Joseon as *So-Jung-Hwa* (小中華, *Xiao Zhong-hua*), a 'small (小) *Zhong-hua* nation'.⁴⁰

The fall of Ming by Qing brought a great turmoil to Joseon the most, among many states around China. While there had been several precedents that the *Han* kingdoms collapsed by the barbarians, such as the history of Mongols' Yuan (元) empire over Song dynasty, no kingdoms in Korean peninsula prior to

아출판사, May 2012): 15.

⁴⁰ The *Xiao Zhong-hua* (小中華) ideology is an extended version of *Zhong-hua* ideology, a nationalism featured into non-Chinese cultures. In Joseon, after surrender to Hong Taiji, many conservative politicians still valued civilized culture of *Han* Chinese as their priority, and degraded Qing based on their ethnic background. They believed Joseon was the second in regional order next to Ming, above the Jurchens, the Manchus and other northern barbaric ethnic groups, hence the fall of Ming would give Joseon a right to succeed the legacy of *Zhong-hua*. For more information, refer to: *Guksagwannonchong* (國史館論叢), vol. 76 (National Institute of Korean History, 1997): 255.

Joseon had paid as much respects and tributes to Chinese empires. Goguryeo had continuous conflicts with Tang (唐) empire as a rival,⁴¹ and Silla's (新羅) relation with Tang during the Three Kingdoms period in Korean Peninsula (*Samguksidae*, 三國時代) was rather a strategic alliance for wars.⁴² Goryeo also paid tributes to Song (宋) empire, but their relationships were rather reciprocal, as Song exported advanced cultures, while Goryeo assisted Song militaristically by preventing aggressions of the Khitans (契丹族) and the Jurchens in the north.⁴³ The relation between Ming and Joseon, on the other hand, had been more hierarchical, within unbreakable tributary system.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Woo-Keun Han 한우근, *The History of Korea* (Seou: Eul-Yoo, 1970): 75-89.

⁴² Ki-Hwan Lim 임기환, "The Interstate Order of Ancient Northeast Asia: Focusing on the 4th-7th Centuries," *The Journal of Northeast Asian History* 4-1 (2007): 31-39.

⁴³ Song is evaluated by modern day historians as a relatively weaker empire than other *Han* empires such as Han (漢), Tang (唐), or Ming (明). Among many empires in Chinese history, Song is regarded as the most scholastic and culturally rich dynasty, while its military strength was not as mighty as other dynasties. Although Goryeo served Song as its overlord empire, under widespread diplomatic convention of tributary system, it was more of an engagement into international system seeking for diplomatic benefits, not an unconditional allegiance toward the empire. For more information, refer to: Jong-Woo Na 나종우, "Daewoegwangye 대외관계 The Foreign Relations of Early Goryeo," *Korean History (New Edition)*, Vol. 15 (National Institute of Korean History, 2002): 284-300.

⁴⁴ Ahn, "Joseon Jeongi Junghwajuuwa Naechi-Woegyogwangye": 51-54.

Joseon, as it perceived itself as the rightful (secondary) heir of true *Zhong-hua*, considered itself to be the protector of Ming's legacy. In 1705, Joseon installed a shrine called Daebodan (大報壇) in Chang-Deok Palace (昌德宮) and commemorated Emperor Wanli (萬曆帝) – the emperor who sent military troops to support Joseon during *Japanese Invasion* – and Emperor Chongzen (崇禎帝) – the last emperor of Ming dynasty.⁴⁵ The ceremony in palace meant a national commemoration of former Ming emperors, which expresses both domestically and internationally that Joseon would still pay its loyalty toward the perished empire and is the only legitimate successor of Ming, the true *Zhong-hua*.

The history shows that Joseon's *Sadae* ideology is strongly based upon conventional *Zhong-hua*, the *Han*-centric world view. Joseon actively followed and obeyed Ming, as an inferior civilization blessed by the *Hans*, but also thoroughly ignored other ethnic groups as inferiors, despite their superior militaristic powers. Joseon's standard of defining advanced civilization was solely based on cultural aspect; in other words, the closer the nation is to Ming

⁴⁵ Kyo-Bin Kim 김교빈, *Daebodansayeonseol 대보단사연설*, 大報壇事筵說 *Manuscript of the construction of Daebodan recorded in chronological order from January 10th to February 19th (1705)*; *Encyclopedia of Korean Culture*, “Daebodan 大報壇 대보단” (URL: <http://encykorea.aks.ac.kr/Contents/Item/E0014410>).

culturally, the higher the class it gets. Although the Joseon people were not the *Han* Chinese, as the Manchurians, they justified their legitimacy by their efforts to embrace, nurture and adhere to the original value of *Zhong-hua*. Joseon, especially by the conservative scholar officials, had strived to assimilate itself to Ming China, via absolute respect toward the *Han* Chinese and national loyalty of *Sadae*. The unconditional admiration toward the *Han* people and the endless contempt against the Northerners – even after the brutal defeat – reflect that Joseon values *Hua* (華) the most, among three major pillars of *Zhong-hua* ideology.

So far, the paper has laid out the conventional concept of *Zhong-hua*, deconstructing the ideology into three major categories, and viewed how Ming empire and Joseon kingdom perceived it within their own national ideology, custom and practice. While there are various arguments and voices on the concept of *Zhong-hua*, or Sino-centrism, and the histories of Ming and Joseon, it could be easily agreed without major counterargument that the Ming empire strived for the reconstruction of *Han*-centric *Zhong-hua* hegemony in the East Asian region, while Joseon depended upon Ming's power and influence for its international legitimacy (recognized under the Sino-centric world order) and its

supremacy over surrounding barbarians (based on the Sino-centric standard), regardless of other ‘barbaric (as Ming and Joseon would phrase)’ states’ acknowledgements. In general, Ming and Joseon had kept their loyal relations of overlord-tributary state hierarchy, and it was the fundamental element of both states’ foreign policy.

The following chapter will take a deeper look into specific time period of Joseon dynasty: the first period from the end of *Japanese Invasion* and the reign of Gwanghaegun (1598~1623); and the second period of Injo’s reign and until the end of Manchu Invasion (1623~1637). While the two kings were still within the frame of conventional *Zhong-hua* and *Sadae*, each king had different political approach towards the hegemonic power of Ming and the rising power of Qing. The paper will analyze each king’s foreign policy and compare how different approaches under the same national identity had practically affected the history of Korean peninsula.

III. ANALYSIS

Joseon after Japanese Invasion: the Boongdang Politics

Joseon's Faction Politics (*Boongdangjeongchi*, 朋黨政治) has long history with complex divisions. The origin of *Boondang* politics goes back to the Goryeo-Joseon transitional period. The aforementioned history of the fall of Goryeo and the rise of Joseon was, in political perspective, a shift from conventional of military-bureaucrat bipolar system to a scholastic polity system. Under the value of Confucianism, the new political faction of *Shinjin Sadaebu* strived to reform the nation not only politically, but also economically, socially, and culturally – as the politicians re-designed the political structure and national economic system as they yearned, whereas the scholars implemented the ideological value of a new Confucianist state within the system.⁴⁶

The *Hungu faction* (勳舊派) and the *Sarim faction* (士林派) were the two major factions of early Joseon politics. The *Hungu* members were mostly the descendants of the bureaucrat families, who stood against Goryeo polity and supported Yi Seong-Gye as founders of Joseon. The *Sarim* members, on the other hand, were mostly the regional landlords who came into the central

⁴⁶ Beom Jik Lee, Byong-ho Park

politics with their academic intellects. Although the *Shinjin Sadaebu* tried to reform Goryeo, either totally or partly, and viewed Goryeo court as a conservative state, the *Hungu* faction – to *Sarim*'s view – was also a stagnated political entity who became conservative within Joseon's system. For centuries, the two factions had struggled to occupy the high ground, and it was the *Sarim* faction that was suppressed for most of the time.

After long history of political power struggles, the *Sarim* finally seized its power during the reign of Seonjo. Myeongjong (明宗, predecessor of Seonjo, born in 1534) sat on his throne at the age of eleven (1545), and his authorities as a king were mostly occupied by the conventional politicians. As he grew up, he struggled to seize his own power, and attempted to embrace officials from *Sarim* faction, as to counter-balance the power against the conservatives. Although Myeongjong's effort to strengthen the *Sarim* faction was not completed during his lifetime, his son succeeded such will and put *Sarim* faction over the bureaucrats. Since then, *Sarim* faction seized the central power of Joseon polity and became the strongest and the biggest clan of scholastic politicians.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ For further information about Joseon's political history of struggles between Hungu faction and Sarim faction, refer to: Man-Jo Jeong ed., "Sarimeui Deuksewa Boongdangeui

After the *Sarim* faction occupied the Joseon court, they began to discuss how to deal with Myeongjong's maternal relatives. When Myeongjong sat on the throne at his early age, his mother – Queen Moonjeong (文定王后) – took over the authority as a practical ruler, and brought her relatives into central politics. Such politics under nepotism was called *Cheokshin Politics* (戚臣政治, *relative politics*),⁴⁸ and Joseon's polity was soon consumed by the Queen and her relatives who suppressed the *Sarim* members, as they continuously criticized political nepotism.⁴⁹ After long period of oppression, the *Sarim* faction strived for retribution, so as they could effectively prevent political opposition and secure their influence.

The division of factions was triggered by the position in Joseon court called Yijojeonlang (吏曹銓郎), an official title where one has the authority to

Choolhyeon 사람의 득세와 붕당의 출현 Rise of Sarim and the Emergence of Boongdang Politics,” *Korean History (New Edition)*, vol. 30 (National Institute of Korean History, 2002): 13-66.

⁴⁸ Woo-Ki Kim 김우기, *Joseonshidae Cheokshinjeongchi Yeongoo* 朝鮮時代 戚臣政治 研究 (Jipmoondang 集文堂, 2001).

⁴⁹ Jae-Hee Lee 이재희, “Joseon Myeongjongdae Cheokshinjeongchieui Jeongaewa Geu Seonggyeok 조선 명종대 척신정치의 전개와 그 성격 Development and Features of Cheokshin Politics during Joseon under Myeongjong”, *Hanguksaron* (韓國史論) vol. 29, (Seoul National University, 1993): 57-123.

recommend, promote, or even downgrade the officials within the government. In modern days, it would be an equivalent position as the department of human resources in organization. Within the political arena, the power to manage the titles and positions of the government was the most efficient leverage to deal with the political opponents, and further provides a stronger influence. Within the *Sarim* politicians, there had already been indications of division – based on where each group gathered (and this is the reason why the factions are mainly named by the directions) – and it grew into political conflicts as time went by.

The hard-liners, called the *Easterners* (東人), claimed for a full retribution against the former *Cheokshin* politicians. They were strongly against the nepotist politics, and wished to reform the government without family kinship, but only with deep minds of intellects. While the *Sarim* scholar officials in general valued Confucianism, the Easterners valued transparency of the government and firmly criticized corruptions caused by political nepotism. The most significant figure of the Easterners was Kim Hyo-Won (金孝元),⁵⁰ who was recommended as a new *Yijojeonlang* in 1572.⁵¹ Kim represented the

⁵⁰ The name *Easterners* (*Dong-In*, 東人), originated from Kim Hyo-Won's residence, as it was located in the eastern part of Seoul.

⁵¹ Don Kim 김돈, "A New Analysis of the Personal Relationship between Shin, Eui-Gyeom and Kim, Hyo-Won 선조대 심의겸, 김효원의 갈등요인 검토," *History Education* 歷

relatively young (or radical to some extent) group within the *Sarim* party, who had less connection to the *Cheokshin* politicians. Despite some arguments and disagreements from the opposing side, Kim finally acquired the position in 1574.⁵²

The *Westerners* (西人), on the other hand, were rather moderate toward their political foe compared to the Easterners. For Westerners, their primary Confucianist value was harmony, and believed moderate approach toward the *Cheokshin* politicians would cause less political discourse and promote further stability. Naturally, the Westerners were rather more opened to former *Cheokshin* politicians, as long as they shared the same academic viewpoint. The most representative figure within this faction would be Sim Eui-Kyeom (沈義謙). Although he was a former *Cheokshin* politician, based on his background that he himself was a younger brother of Queen Insun (仁順王后, mother of Seonjo), he was a well-respected scholar official among the Westerners.⁵³ Sim was a leading opponent of Kim Hyo-Won becoming an *Yijojeonlang*, but such appeal turned into a failure, as Kim took the position. In 1575, a year after Kim

史教), vol. 79 (The Korean History Education Society, 2001): 39-43.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid., 49-50.

took the title, Sim recommended his younger brother, Sim Chung-Kyeom (沈忠謙), as the successor. Kim Hyo-Won got upset by this proposal and claimed that the position should not fall under the former *Cheokshin*'s hands.⁵⁴ This political discourse gave birth to the faction politics of mid-Joseon, which continued in more complicated forms.

The two factions kept check and balances to each other for a while. However, in 1589, the Westerners seized the power as Jeong Yeo-Lip (鄭汝立) and the Easterners were accused for conspiring a rebellion.⁵⁵ After years of political suppression, the Easterners had their revenge, and captured the power away from the Westerners by accusing them for wrongfully plotting to kill

⁵⁴ Ibid., 44-52.

⁵⁵ *Jeong Yeo-Lip's Treason Plot Incident (Jeongyeolip Moban Sageon 정여립 모반사건*, or also known as *Gichukoksa*, 己丑獄事) was the case of the Westerners accusing Jeong Yeo-Lip and the other Easterners that they were plotting a mutiny against the throne, based on their radical ideologies. Starting from 1589, the interrogation and execution of the related suspects continued until 1591, and many Easterners were victimized during this time. However, there was no clear evidence that Jeong and his followers were actually planning for a riot; it could have only been inferred from the fact that they had rather radical minds that were not quite the same as the conventional ones. For more information about the *Incident*, refer to: Hang-Nyeong Oh 오향녕, "Gichukoksaeui Bigeukjeok Sageongwa Gieokdeul 기축옥사의 비극적 사건과 기억들 The Memory of the trial in 1590 or 1591," *Han'guk Inmulsa Yon'gu 한국인물사연구 Study on the Korean Historical Figures*, Issue 23 (2015): 245-280;

Seonjo's favorite son and set the other prince as an heir.⁵⁶ After this case, the Westerners lost their strength and the Easterners recaptured the power within the court, becoming the major voice of Joseon's politics.

However, the Easterners were once again divided into two factions – this time not about how to deal with the *Cheokshin* politicians but with the Westerners. The *Northerners* (北人) were strongly against the Westerners, whereas the *Southerners* (南人) were relatively moderate. The Northerners were a small group of radicals, who opposed any faction that stood against them, while the Southerners were rather tolerant toward the *Sarim* politicians and believed the unity of *Sarim* is a crucial condition for their political security. The leading figures of the Northerners would include Yi San-Hae (李山海), who

⁵⁶ As the early history of Gwanhaegun reveals, Seonjo had to go through a complex discourse as he did not have a son with royalty, but only had the sons from concubines. Choosing an heir was always an important issue in Joseon, especially when it was difficult to choose the one without legitimacy. In 1591, Yi San-Hae (李山海), who was the Youngeuijeong (領議政) – the highest official of the council – as well as the *Northerner*, accused Jeong Cheol (鄭澈) for conspiring of killing Seonjo's loving new-born son, and trying to set the prince on his will. Jeong Cheol was let go of his position, and the other Westerners were downgraded to menial positions in the suburban area. For more information about this *incident* (*Geonjeoeuisageon*, 建儲議事件, *The Case of the Royal Heir*), refer to: *Veritable Records of the Joseon Dynasty* (*Joseon Wangjo Sillok*, 조선왕조실록, 朝鮮王朝實錄), Seonjo (宣祖), vol. 25 (24th year, March 14th), Gi-Myo (己卯); *Ibid.*, (June 23rd), Byeong-Jin (丙辰).

contributed to push away the Westerners from the central arena, while the Southerners can be characterized by the scholars such as Yu Seong-Ryong and Yi Hwang (李滉) – who both strived to search for peaceful polity rather than radical animosities.

As such, the *Boongdang* politics was settled and developed as it combined two related fields of political motivation and academic pursuits. The dimensions were even more divided as the new school of thought emerged, or sometimes merged when the political interests were to be met. At the beginning, when the *Sarim* politicians came into power, they were rather more academic than political. However, as time went through and they too were revealed to various political interests, the factional division began to take more political cause rather than academic objectives. Many historians criticize that the faction politics broke the integrity of the unity of Joseon court and weakened the national strength at the verge of two series of war. While it is true that the divisions and conflicts caused many unpleasant incidents that involves not only retribution but also brutal killings, it was the only possible way within the Joseon polity to diversify the voices and appeal with logic and the power of the majority. And during Seonjo's regime, such system was fixed as Joseon's own political feature.

The *Boongdang* politics ultimately became the bedrock of mid-Joseon's faction politics. For a long time, the Northerners did not advance into central influence, as their attitudes were quite radical and far from embrative, both against the *Cheokshin* politicians and the opposing faction of the Westerners. Within Joseon's political framework, the reign of Gwanghaegun gave Northerners an opportunity to come into power, and the *Injo Restoration* was a case of Westerners revolting against the Northerners, which brought the Westerners back to the center of the court, and the Southerners as the peripheral faction of Joseon's polity. The complexity of domestic politics was an implicit cause of the impending War – the war against the new empire.

Gwanghaegun's Regime: Neutral Diplomacy

The history of Chinese empires had always been a continuum of endless power struggles. Ever since the Chinese continent was first unified into *Qin* (秦) by Xi Huang-di (始皇帝) in 221 B.C.E, emperors had struggled to secure their thrones not only by centralizing the power into monarchy, but also by suppressing the possibility of the rise of new powers in the neighboring regions. Even if a certain period is named under a specific dynasty, it does not mean that there was no other states or rivals that intimidated the empire. It was the fate

that all empires had to bear, and Ming – also – was not exceptional.

The Manchurians reunited as a state power under Nurhaci (奴爾哈赤) in 1616, who had been a leader of his clan in the beginning, but later became a new ruler of China. Inheriting their ancestral kingdom of Jin (金), which occupied and ruled the northern part of Chinese continent during Song (宋) dynasty in the twelfth century, Nurhaci named its reunited nation the *Later Jin* (後金).⁵⁷ Before the establishment of Jin, Manchurians had been a stateless ethnic group with various sub-clans, living outside of Ming's territorial boundary, but under its direct and indirect jurisdiction. Nurhaci's father, Taksi (塔克世), and grandfather, Giocangga (覺昌安), had pledged their loyalties to Li Chenliang (李成梁), a Ming general who was in charge of securing the Manchu area, and guaranteed their clans' safety in return. However, both Nurhaci's father and grandfather died amid the battles against other Jurchen (Manchu) tribes under Ming's order, and historians say that it was since his father's and grandfather's death when Nurhaci had sworn to destroy Ming one day.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Song dynasty lasted from 960 to 1279; whereas the kingdom of Jin was founded and collapsed between 1115 and 1234.

⁵⁸ Mark C. Elliott, *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial*

In 1618, two years after the Later Jin kingdom was established, Nurhaci officially claimed for the war against Ming. For eight years, Later Jin continuously attacked Ming army, but did not fulfill Nurhaci's life-long dream of collapsing the whole empire. In February 1626, Nurhaci had to face its first defeat at the Battle of Ningyuan (Níngyuǎn Zhī Zhàn, 寧遠之戰), and was wounded by a cannon shot. Eventually, Nurhaci succumbed to his wounds from the battle and died in September, 1626. His wish for the conquest of China was not fulfilled by himself, and Nurhaci's eighth son, Hong Taiji (皇太極), succeeded the mission.

Later Jin continuously grew around Manchuria, and in 1636, Hong Taiji changed the nation's name from Later Jin to *Dai Qing* (大清) empire. The change of name and declaration of an empire meant the promotion of its ruler's status from king (Khan) to emperor. While both terms would be used as an absolute authority of sovereign power in modern vocabulary, emperor – *Huang-di* (皇帝) in Chinese – had significance not only in terms of its authority, but also in terms of its divinity.

King, a monarch of its given territory, had authority only within its

China (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001): 397.

jurisdiction which could be clearly marked by the borderlines. Each king strived for more power by gaining territories via wars, but one did not claim himself to be an emperor, which had much higher and wider meanings. The kings in China were more of governors of their land, and their authorities came from practical roles as the ultimate ruler of the region.

Emperor, however, was beyond practicality of a ruler. Emperors of China were called *Tian-zi* (天子), which directly means the ‘son of heaven’. Its royalty reached beyond Chinese continent and was maintained and protected through its tributary system. The position of heaven’s son was not a simple matter that anyone can claim, even if one ruled vast amount of territory. Even the clothing differed, that the king could not wear emperor’s *Dragon Robe* (袞龍袍), as dragon was only permitted to the imperial royalty.⁵⁹ As there could not be two

⁵⁹ The royal clothing of imperial China had several features to be remarked: first, the Crown (*yánmiǎnliúguān*, 冕旒冠) was rectangularly shaped (*yán*, 延), with twelve marble frills (*liú*, 旒) in the front and the back (The twelve frills were only for emperors; ordinary kings’ crown had nine frills); second, the Robe was designed as a wide dress, and the garment spread wider at the bottom; finally, the robes were embellished with golden dragons, the emblem of royalty. For more information regarding the meanings of Imperial dressing, refer to: Valery M. Garret, *Chinese Clothing: An Illustrated Guide* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Ibid., *Chinese Dragon Robes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Sophie Volpp, “The Gift of a Python Robe: The Circulation of Objects in “Jin Ping Mei,”” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 65 (1), June 2005: 133–158.

suns in the sky, there could not be two ‘*sons of heaven*’ in the world. The title of emperor carried divinity as it was the only link between the world and the heaven, and it was the bedrock of Imperial China’s world view that balanced the order of the world.

Hong Taiji’s declaration of Qing dynasty as well as his self-promotion from a Khan to an Emperor meant the elevation of national status from barbaric state to a civilized empire.⁶⁰ It was also a challenge against conventional *Han* Chinese-centric international order. The declaration of an empire was the declaration of war against Ming, and the power struggle between the two superpowers was inevitable. After all, the East Asia by that time could not admit two empires, and one must have perished for the balance of power and the stability of the region.

⁶⁰ The word Khan is originally a term used in the Mongolian and the West Asian region, and it had almost the same meaning as Emperor in East Asia. During the Yuan dynasty, Mongolian rulers had used the term Khan, and Manchurians inherited such legacy as horse-riding nomads of the North. In the aspect of terminology, Hong Taiji’s declaration of Qing and *Tian-zi* shows the prevalence of *Han* culture throughout East Asia, which was regarded as a superior civilization, like it or not. It implies that even the ruler of newly risen power state had acknowledged the supremacy of an advanced civilization, and the state must have transformed into a conventional imperial structure for its legitimacy as well as international recognition. Like the terms ‘modernization’ and ‘westernization’ have been confused or mixed among the Asian and the third world developing countries, even until today, the standard of advanced civilization had been synchronized with the *Han* culture.

As the war between two empires was imminent, Joseon's fate was also at its stake. Prior to the rise of Qing, Joseon court had appreciation toward Ming empire, as it supported Joseon during the *Japanese Invasion*.⁶¹ Joseon was forever under Ming's debt, and loyalty toward Ming and Ming-Joseon alliance was the very basis of Joseon's national security and foreign policy. Joseon had already pledged its allegiance to Ming, as a *father state*, since the establishment of the nation in 1392, by inheriting Confucianism as national ideology. And after the *Japanese Invasion*, Joseon's *Sadae* toward Ming was ever more strengthened as a national virtue.

The rise of Later Jin, however, was a difficult issue for Joseon. Ideally, Joseon well knew that it should always honor the relations with Ming and stand by its *father state*. However, unlike Joseon's intention, Qing was a novel threat

⁶¹ During the *Japanese Invasion of Joseon* (1592 ~ 1598), Ming empire dispatched army to Korean peninsula twice: first in July 1592, and the second in December 1592. For five years, it was Ming who took charge of the alliance and led diplomatic negotiations with Japan. After all the war ultimately ended with Japan's retreat in 1598, and Joseon was forever in debt to Ming's benevolent support. For more information regarding the *Japanese Invasion*, refer to: Yu Seong-Ryong 柳成龍, *Jingbirok* 懲毖錄 (1643); Kyung Moon Hwang, *A History of Korea* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010): 80-87; James B. Lewis ed., *The East Asian War, 1592-1598: International Relations, Violence, and Memory* (London: Routledge, 2014); Samuel Hawley, *The Imjin War: Japan's Sixteenth-Century Invasion of Korea and Attempt to Conquer China* (Seoul: Royal Asiatic Society-Korea Branch, 2005): 2-72.

to Joseon's beyond ideological spectrum. Geographically, Qing was in Manchu area, right above Joseon's terrain. The location of Later Jin and Qing disconnected the land route between Ming and Joseon, and the communication was only possible via naval route. If the war had happened, either invasion from Qing or Japan, Joseon was not able to expect an instant military support from Ming.

During the time of Later Jin's rise, Gwanghaegun (光海君) was ruling Joseon next to his father Seonjo. Gwanghaegun, the fifteenth king of Joseon, was originally not fit to succeed the throne, since he was the son of Seonjo's concubine and the second born son next to Imhaegun (臨海君). While the royal tradition prevented him from becoming the king in natural process, King Seonjo adored Gwanghaegun, as he appreciated the academics while his brother behaved poorly as a royal blood. Moreover, when the *Japanese Invasion* was ongoing, Seonjo yielded his authorities to Gwanghaegun as an acting ruler, and Gwanghaegun fought against Japan raising his reputation with a leadership, followed by not only the military but also the people. Meanwhile, Imhaegun was captured as a fugitive by Japanese daimyo (大名, military official) Katō Kiyomasa (加藤 清正), and suffered ill after release. Such different performances the two princes showed during the war made Seonjo to prefer his

second son over the first even more.⁶²

Seonjo officially appealed five times to Ming empire, from 1594 to 1604, to acknowledge Gwanghaegun as legitimate crown prince, but denied all.⁶³ Given that Ming claimed “it is right way of a nation to choose the first born son to pass on the throne,”⁶⁴ Huang Xiuzhi argues that the reason Ming rejected Joseon’s requests was because Ming, by that time, was also under political discourse on choosing the successor of Wanli emperor (萬曆帝).⁶⁵ As the Ming court wanted the emperor to choose his first born son as the successor, hence projected such notion to Joseon as well, to maintain political consistencies between two countries.⁶⁶

⁶² Xiuzhi Huang 黃修志, “Joseon between the Imjin War and the Jeongmyo War: Gwanghaegun’s Defending against Book’s Records and International Order in East Asia 왜란 호란 시기 조선 광해군의 서적 외교와 동아시아 질서,” translated by Kyungmin Lee 이경민, *Seokdangnonchiong* 石堂論叢, vol. 65 (2016): 186-187.

⁶³ Ibid., 187.

⁶⁴ *Veritable Records of the Joseon Dynasty*, Seonjo, vol, 181 (37th year, November 25th), Shin-Chuk (辛丑).

⁶⁵ Huang, 188.

⁶⁶ While it was natural to choose the first born son as the crown prince, or the successor to the throne, in classical kingdoms of East Asia, it does not mean that the Ming empire had always forced Joseon to choose the first born son as a successor. When King Taejong (太宗,

Nevertheless, Seonjo died in 1608 and Gwanghaegun took the throne. Knowing that the official recognition of Ming would be a strong political leverage to suppress his opponents, Gwanghaegun strived to acquire Ming's imperial investiture. However, Ming did not accept Gwanghaegun as the new king of Joseon, as "China was strict in distinguishing legitimate son and a son of concubine."⁶⁷ Ming, after continuous appeals, gave its consent, under a condition that Imhaegun should officially report to Ming that he would yield his right to become a king.⁶⁸

At last, Gwanhaegun received the imperial investiture from Ming in the following year of 1609; but it was not solely because of Joseon court's effort. During this time, Nurhaci was gradually growing his power around Manchuria. Although the declaration of Later Jin was announced in 1616, Nurhaci had

the third King of Joseon) appealed to Ming, asking for acknowledgement of his third son – Sejong (世宗) – as the successor, Ming yielded its authority to Joseon and let Taejong to decide: "It is the unchanging duty to select the first born son as a successor, but the fate of a nation is truly upon whether the successor would be benevolent or not. The decision for choosing a wise successor will be left on the Joseon King's decision (立嗣以嫡長, 古今常道, 然國家盛衰實繫嗣子之賢否. 今欲立賢為嗣, 聽王所擇)." *Ming Shilu* (明實錄), Taizōng (太宗), vol. 202 (Yongle 永樂 16th year, July 28th), Bingzi (丙子).

⁶⁷ *Veritable Records of the Joseon Dynasty*, Gwanghaegun's Journal (광해군일기, 光海君日記), vol. 8 (Year of accession, September 16th), Kyeong-Ja (庚子).

⁶⁸ Ibid.

already united the Jianzhou Jurchens (建州女眞) – one of three biggest Jurchen tribes – in 1589;⁶⁹ and while the Ming-Joseon alliance was fighting against Japan, Nurhaci further expanded his territory and finally united the most of the Manchurian tribes and territories even before the establishment of the kingdom.⁷⁰ By the time when Gwanghaegun became the king, the Jurchens were already a big threat – both to Ming and Joseon – and Ming desperately needed Joseon’s support to effectively prevent the Manchurian aggression. Although Ming acknowledged Gwanghaegun’s legitimacy “under the great cause of following the will of the people and revering a wise monarch,”⁷¹ it was rather a strategic move to keep Joseon under its influence. Gwanghaegun’s investiture was, therefore, a result of complex domestic quarrels combined with Ming’s own domestic issues as well as the rise of the Jurchens.

Although he was under Ming’s debt of his kingship and knew that he should honor the virtue of *Sadae* as a tributary state, Gwanghaegun realized the

⁶⁹ Youn-Soon Kim 김연순, “The Combined Process of Nurhaci in Hulun Four Tribes and the Founding of Later Jin,” *Kangwonsahak 江原史學 Kangwon Historical Studies*, vol. 26 (The Historical Society Kangwon National University, 2014): 148.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 156-162.

⁷¹ *Veritable Records of the Joseon Dynasty*, Gwanghaegun’s Journal, vol. 17 (1st year, June 2nd), Shin-Hae (辛亥).

gap between political ideology and militaristic reality, and tried to opt-out from the clash of two empires. During his regime, Gwanghaegun took practical diplomatic policies towards the two superpowers, known as *Gwanhyunghyangbae* (觀形向背) diplomacy.⁷² Although Joseon officially maintained its allegiance toward Ming, Gwanghaegun also kept communications with Later Jin secretly, and appealed Joseon's difficult situation as a peripheral state.

In 1618, when Later Jin declared a war against Ming, Ming officially requested for military support to Joseon as an ally. As mentioned above, Joseon was forever in debt to Ming since the *Japanese Invasion*, and the majority of Joseon court claimed that they must send troops to Ming at once. However, Gwanghaegun was hesitant. He knew that by not supporting Ming, Joseon would lose its trust from Ming; but by supporting Ming, there would be a retribution from Later Jin. Gwanghaegun ordered General Kang Hong-Ip (姜弘立) to lead the troops to the battlefields, but not to engage direct

⁷² *Gwanhyunghyangbae* (觀形向背) means “making future decisions after wait and see the current progress”. It is an idiom used in East Asia for “opting-out the current conflict and take the greatest advantage, or the least loss, in the end”. The *Gwanhyunghyangbae* policy was Joseon's main foreign policy during Qing's early rise.

confrontations.⁷³ The Joseon troops surrendered to Later Jin after the battle of Sarhū (深河戰役) in the following year and explained Joseon's situation of its relations with Ming. Nurhaci understood Joseon's inevitable circumstances of alliance with Ming and offered Joseon to maintain mutual relations with Later Jin.⁷⁴

After a defeat in the battle of Sarhū, Ming was divided into two groups: one argued that Ming should praise Joseon's effort of preventing Later Jin's aggression and reward the families of the victims with silver; the other

⁷³ *Veritable Records of the Joseon Dynasty*, Gwanghaegun's Journal, vol. 139 (11th year, April 2nd), Eul-Myo (乙卯), 4th Article

⁷⁴ Excerpts from *Cheongsago* (清史稿) *Joseonyeoljeon* (朝鮮列傳): "Joseon (朝鮮) was also known as Hanguk (韓國). The king of Joseon in the early days of Qing was Yi Hon (李琿, Gwanghaegun), and he served Ming dearly. In the fourth year of Tàizǔ (太祖, also known as Tianming – 天命, Nurhaci – the first king of dynasty), Yi Hon sent his one of his generals, Kang Hong-lip (姜弘立), to attack Qing, in the courtesy of assisting Ming. They stationed at the field of Huchya (富察), and Kang and his five thousand men surrendered as they were greatly defeated. Tàizǔ ordered Kang to stay, and sent his adjutant Jang Eungkyeong (張應京) and the dozens back to Joseon. In his national literature, sent by Jang and his men, Tàizǔ wrote to Yi Hon, 'When your country was undergoing an invasion from Japan, I know that Ming saved Joseon by sending troops, and you are helping Ming by sending the army in return. This is an inevitable event, caused by circumstances, not by any animosities. I return the military officers and soldiers, as they came only under the royal order. I hope the king of Joseon be more considerate in solving problems amid the time of hardships.'"

suspected that Kang Hong-lip's surrender was strategically intentional, based on the fact that Kang was still with the Later Jin army. However, regardless of the position they stood, both parties had one objective, which was to re-recruit the military forces from Joseon.⁷⁵

Joseon was also under political discourse regarding how to deal with Kang and his family. Conservative scholar officials concerned that Ming would suspect Joseon's loyalty, by the defeat at the battle of Sharū, and thought they should prove Joseon's allegiance toward Ming in any manner. Many of Joseon court claimed that the king should execute Kang's family, as a diplomatic gesture to Ming that Joseon still honors its alliance. However, for Gwanghaegun, Kang was a crucial information source – like an espionage in Later Jin. Gwanghaegun protected Kang's family, and even allowed them to contact with Kang, sending letters and supplies.⁷⁶

While protecting Kang and Kang's family, Gwanghaegun looked for an alternative plan that could weaken Ming's suspicion. He initiated a national

⁷⁵ Myung-Gi Han 한명기, *Gwanghaegun: Takwolhan Ogyojeongchaekul Pyeolchin Gunju* 광해군: 탁월한 외교정책을 펼친 군주, *Gwanghaegun: Monarch of Brilliant Foreign Policy* (Yeoksabipyeongsa 역사비평사, 2011): 232-236.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 237.

project to honor Kim Eung-Ha (金應河), Joseon's general who died in the battle of Sharū. He built a shrine, honoring Kim Eung-Ha's spirit, on the way where Ming envoys pass to meet Joseon's king, as an expression that Joseon honors general Kim's death; hence they still honor the alliance with Ming. Moreover, Gwanghaegun ordered to publish a poetry of Kim's loyalty and bravery, and even exported the books abroad in Manchu area, trying to let Ming know that Joseon is nationally grieving for his death.⁷⁷

Myung-Gi Han evaluates such policies as a deception, a political trick to divert Ming's suspicion away from Kang's (intentional) surrender. However, Han praises such movements, analyzing Gwanghaegun thought that the art of deception is also necessary in diplomacy. He claims that Gwanghaegun was a practical leader, who tried to gather the information as much as possible, understand neighboring countries' moves, and put a realistic decision that would guarantee Joseon's 'survival' amid the struggles between the superpowers.⁷⁸

Gwanghaegun's foreign policy is still praised by modern day historians. Joseon was still restoring its nation from the aftermaths of the *Japanese*

⁷⁷ Ibid., 239-240.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 40.

Invasion, and Gwanghaegun did his best not to get involved in another warfare. His decisions were expressing appreciative gestures to Ming as an ally, while he persuasively well-explained Joseon's situation to Later Jin at the same time. During Gwanghaegun, Joseon kept its neutrality well enough to protect itself from power struggles of two superpowers.

Injo's Regime: Detour to Conventional Alliance

Gwanghaegun's neutral policy between Ming and Later Jin had come to its end by the *Injo Restoration (or Injo Coup)* in 1623. Including complex domestic political conflicts within Joseon's court, Gwanghaegun had difficulties during his reign due to his background, as he was the son of his Seonjo's concubine, who cannot be a legitimate royal spouse. For this reason, Gwanghaegun had not been widely supported by politicians, scholars, and aristocrats. Only one political faction, the Northerners, supported Gwanghaegun, and the political conflicts continued.

Injo (仁祖, who later became the sixteenth king of Joseon), the grandson of Seonjo and his second royal consort, allied with the Westerners, known as the faction of conservative Confucianist that had been suppressed by the Easterners during Seonjo's reign and by the Northerners during that of Gwanghaegun's,

and raised a revolt against the throne. Injo and the Westerners successfully occupied the castle, overtook the throne, and exiled *Gwanghaegun* to Jeju Island. By *Injo Restoration*, Westerners finally seized power in Joseon politics, and withdrew every policy that Gwanghaegun had engaged before.

The most significant political change during Injo's regime was the foreign policy. While Gwanghaegun and the Northerners had strived to protect its security through practical neutral diplomacy, Injo withdrew the political direction and restored national allegiance toward Ming. Westerners, Injo's strongest supporter and the ruling faction of Joseon's court after the coup, were conservative Confucianists who emphasized cause (名分) and fidelity (義理) as their core values, and believed Ming – more precisely speaking, the *Han* Civilization – was Joseon's ideological backbone; hence, it is axiomatic to pledge their loyalty toward the *father state*.

Later Jin was not fond of Injo and Westerners under him. Under '*Hyangmyeongbaegeum* (向明排金)',⁷⁹ Joseon supported Ming's troops by letting them stay in Joseon soil – an island at the northwestern part of the

⁷⁹ *Hyangmyeongbaegeum* (向明排金), which is also referred to as '*Sungmyeongbaegeum* (崇明排金)', means to 'praise Ming, and exclude Jin.' It straightforwardly revealed Joseon's diplomatic stance in terms of the Ming-Qing power struggles under Injo's reign.

peninsula, which was closely located to Later Jin border – and assisted them with supplies. As Later Jin had to face its enemies both in front and the back, Hong Taiji felt the necessity to suppress Joseon first, and eliminate future troubles in advance. Also, Later Jin needed Joseon anyway, since it went through economic difficulties while engaging with Ming, as a trade partner to secure its supplies during the war.

The chance came to Hong Taiji when the troops of Yi Gwal (李适)⁸⁰ – a military officer who attempted revolt after the *Restoration*, but failed – had fled to Later Jin and disclosed the vulnerability of Joseon. They claimed that Gwanghaegun had been wrongfully dismissed from the throne by Injo, hence the Later Jin should march into Joseon, and fix the monarchy. Hong Taiji, who

⁸⁰ Yi Gwal (李适), born in 1587, was a military officer during Gwanghaegun's regime. Although he had made an immense contribution during *Injo Restoration*, he had a conflict with the leading party of the coup and was not compensated enough. In 1624, the year after the *Restoration*, Yi's son and his group were accused of raising a revolt against Injo. As his son was about to be arrested, Yi-Gwal killed the prosecutors sent from the government and raised a rebellion. His riot, however, was suppressed by the central army, and he was killed by his officer during retreat. For further information, refer to: Kyeong Sook Kim 김경숙, "Yi Gwal/李适's Insurrection and the 『Ho'nam Mo'eui-rok/湖南募義錄』 李适의 난과 『호남모의록』," *Soong Sil Sahak 승실사학 The Historical Review of Soong Sil University* (The Historical Association of Soong Sil University 승실사학회, June 2012): 66-68.

could not invade Joseon due to the lack of political cause, caught this moment and decided to march into the Joseon's soil.

The First Manchu Invasion, called *Jeongmyohoran* (丁卯胡亂) under Korean context, took place in January, 1627. The thirty-thousand Later Jin troops crossed the border of Joseon, and marched down to Pyongsan (平山), between Pyongyang (平壤) and Kaesong (開城), within a month. On Ninth of February, Later Jin and Joseon made a treaty, guaranteeing no further military invasion from Later Jin to Joseon, and establishing a brotherly relation between the two countries.⁸¹ On March Third, the treaty was proclaimed effective, and the Later Jin army retrieved back to its soil.

For both countries, the treaty was merely a temporary treatment. Having had the history of Ming's support before, during *Japanese Invasion*, Joseon made a pact with Later Jin only to avoid further military conflicts during the early administration of Injo. Furthermore, Joseon could have preserved its

⁸¹ *The Jeongmyo Treaty* (丁卯約條, *The Promise in Jeongmyo Year*) had five major articles as terms of agreement: 1) the Later Jin army would not march down further than Pyongsan; 2) the Later Jin army would retrieve back to its country immediately after the treaty is enacted; 3) the Later Jin army would not cross the *Aprok river* (鴨綠江, the *Yalu River in Chinese*), the borderline between Later Jin and Joseon; 4) the two countries will establish a brotherly relation; 5) Joseon would normalize the relation with Later Jin, but would not stand against Ming.

neutrality, at least superficially.⁸² Joseon kept paying respect of *Sadae* to Ming as its overlord, while maintaining a non-hostile relationship with Later Jin as well. For Later Jin, the agreement was also merely a provisional truce since it could not divert its military concentrations into two directions. Afterall, Joseon was supposed to be either embraced as its new ally or suppressed as its enemy someday.

The biggest difference between Injo and Gwanghaegun, however, was that Injo officially made a pact with Later Jin. Gwanghaegun had balanced between Ming and Later Jin with practicality; there was no official treaty or agreement made, but only pragmatic conversations with Nurhaci for Joseon's security. The *Jeongmyo Treaty*, on the other hand, had officialized the diplomatic relation between Later Jin and Joseon, which had left political and ideological dilemma within Joseon court afterwards. The *treaty* erased the gray zone of Joseon's position between Ming and Later Jin, where Gwanghaegun had preserved with neutrality or diplomatic ambiguity. After the *First Invasion*, Later Jin concentrated its focus to Ming, and later became the Qing empire. For Joseon, the time to choose between the *father* and the *brother* was soon about to come.

While the new Manchurian kingdom was established and the conflict

⁸² Ibid., the fifth article.

between Ming and Later Jin was heating up, there was an incident in Ming's territory that shifted the dynamics of East Asia. In 1631, Kong Youde (孔有德), a military officer of Ming, raised a mutiny against the Ming government, dissatisfied with underpayment and undertreatment of his troops. Next year, Geng Zhongming (耿仲明), another Ming's military officer, joined Kong and spurred their mutiny against Ming. However, the rebelling army was not strong enough to overturn the whole Ming army, and they defected to Later Jin, in 1633, with one hundred and eighty-five battle ships and thirty *European cannons* (*Hongyipao*, 紅夷砲).⁸³ Hong Taiji welcomed two officers and their troops from Ming extensively. Before then, Later Jin had been relatively weaker than Ming both in terms of military technology and naval power, away from its strength of cavalry forces. The ships and firearms that the defectors brought to Hong was a signal that Later Jin could catch up the military gap between Ming, which would soon become a turnover in power balance. Thanks to the failure of

⁸³ *Hongyipao* (紅夷砲) refers to "cannon of red-headed barbarians". It was first introduced to Ming in 1604, during the fight against the Netherlands (the red-headed barbarians), imported in 1618, and customized into Ming army's convenience in 1621. Later, the cannons were first introduced to Joseon in the *Battle of Namhansanseong* (南漢山城戰鬪) by Qing army in January, 1637.

mutiny, Later Jin grasped its opportunity to reinforce its power against Ming.⁸⁴

During the mutiny, Joseon received calls both from Ming and Later Jin, each making conflicting request: Ming, as an original ally of *father-state*, asked Joseon to join to hunt the defectors; Jin, on the other hand, asked Joseon to join for a fight against Ming, as *brother-states*. The clash between *father* and *brother* was a difficult problem, and Injo could not have chosen the side easily. Meanwhile, Injo received an imperial recognition from Ming of installing his late father, Jeongwongun (定遠君), as a king.⁸⁵ Eventually, Injo, who was indebted to Ming for his father's honor, decided to support Ming over Jin, and Joseon engaged a combat against the troops of Kong and Geng. Although the Ming-Joseon alliance could not seize the defectors, the event showed a clear remark of which side Joseon was on with.

⁸⁴ For more information regarding the *The Wuqiao mutiny* (吳橋兵變), refer to: Kenneth Swope, *The Military Collapse of China's Ming Dynasty* (Routledge, 2014): 96-101.

⁸⁵ During Joseon dynasty, when the reign was succeeded by king's nephew or cousin, the new king's father was called *Daewongun* (大院君). Although they held high rank position within the court, based on their bloodline connection to the king, they were not included in the royal genealogy, as they were not monarchs who ruled the country. In the case of Injo, the recognition of his father as a king, even he had died before, was the imperial acknowledgement of his legitimacy as a king of Joseon. It also implies that the *Restoration* over Gwanghaegun was a justified action that righted the wrong. Ming's recognition of Injo's father was a gesture strong enough to attract Joseon away from Later Jin.

Joseon's decision gave Hong Taiji an impression that Injo would stand along with Ming in the time of war. So far, since Later Jin and Joseon established a brotherly relation in 1627, Joseon had not engaged any physical military action against Later Jin. Even Joseon proclaimed that it would maintain its loyalty toward Ming, Injo was well-informed that Joseon was not as strong as Later Jin to confront a war. The idea of loyalty was more of a political slogan in the time of neutrality. However, Joseon showed that it would choose Ming over Later Jin at critical moments, and this gave Hong Taiji a lesson that he should suppress Joseon before Ming, as to prevent any potentials. Although the Ming-Joseon alliance might have been strengthened by this event, the quivering stability of Joseon's neutrality was slowly cracking, and the original balance of power among Ming, Later Jin, and Joseon was soon about to come to an end.

As mentioned above, Hong Taiji changed his nation's name from Later Jin – a state – to Qing – an empire – in 1636. And on his imperial coronation, all foreign envoys were asked to kneel and bow to Hong Taiji, as a humble gesture of acknowledging a new emperor. However, Na Deok-Heon (羅德憲) and Yi Hwak (李廓), the emissaries of Joseon, stood still. Although they were sent from Joseon as a courtesy to Qing's celebration, they were still Injo's lieges, who kept Joseon's loyalty toward Ming only. For them, there could be one

father state, and it has been Ming for all time. For Joseon, Qing's proclamation of empire meant promotion from *brother* to *father*, which was unacceptable under Confucianists' value, which not only surpassed through domestic and social behaviors, but also laid bedrock of Joseon's philosophy in politics and diplomacies.⁸⁶

Na Deok-Heon and Yi Hwak were brutally beaten up by Qing aristocrats and soldiers. Their clothes were torn, and their hats were broken, which was a disgraceful outcome for Joseon's envoys who had to maintain their outfits neat not only as courtesies of official emissaries but also as a virtue of Confucianism, to keep one's body and mind clean. Their boldness was a provocation to Qing, which the envoys had known, and many of them called for the new emperor to kill them. Hong Taiji, however, showed benevolence of the ruler of an empire. He sent the envoys back to Joseon, with a written letter of Hong Taiji and several other gifts. The incident of Qing's imperial coronation seemed to end with no other retributions.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Myung-Gi Han, "Byeongjahoran Dashi Irki 병자호란 다시읽기 Re-reading the Manchu Invasion of Joseon, 70, Hong Taiji, Hwangjega Doeda 홍타이지, 황제가 되다 Hong Taiji Becomes an Emperor," *Seoul Shinmun 서울신문* (May 7th, 2008); re-edited to *Byongjahoran 병자호란* 1 (Puleunyeoksa 푸른역사, 2013).

⁸⁷ Ibid., "Hong Taiji said, 'this incident is plotted by the king of Joseon to divide relations

Although Na Deok-Heon and Yi Hwak kept their faiths by risking their lives, Joseon court criticized them for bringing Hong Taiji's letter. For conservatives, the fact that they brought the letter itself was more than disgraceful, and they should be punished for such thoughtless deeds. The moderates, however, defended that their lives were at stake, and they had no choice but to deliver the message from Qing to Joseon. After all, the two envoys who kept their national dignity were punished by their own nation and were sent on exiles.⁸⁸

While the incident in Qing's terrain left no other retaliation, the return of the envoys laid a dispute within Joseon's domestic politics. The discourse between the conservatives and the moderates clearly shows the two conflicting

between the two countries. If I kill the emissaries, Joseon king will claim that I broke a pact. I will not kill them out of my trivial anger.”

⁸⁸ Excerpt from *Veritable Records of the Joseon Dynasty*, Injo (인조, 仁祖), vol. 32 (14th year, April 26th), Kyong-Ja (庚子), 2nd Article: “It is highly surprising that Na Deok-Heon and the other (Yi Hwak) did not commit suicide, and honored fidelity. However, the fact that they did not yield can be seen from the letter (別書) of Khan (汗, the Manchurian emperor). What the barbarians claimed rude proves that they kept fidelity by declining to kneel. However, they delivered the letter without hesitance, and hastily returned without the message by throwing it away even after they read it, behaviors which are highly bizarre and upsetting. Although we cannot execute them, who had the record of not yielding, it is unignorable that they insulted the face of king, as envoys (奉使). Please arrest and send them for the justice to be made, at once.” (translated)

views on Ming-Qing rivalry and following world views. Ever since Joseon was established, there had been no other ‘empire’ that had risen and even dared to challenge the Ming hegemony. While the dispute could be seen quite axiomatic and obvious in contemporary eyes, the rise of another empire was unprecedented in Joseon’s diplomatic history and acknowledging Qing as a legitimate empire was a matter of upsetting the whole international system that Joseon had perceived.

The conservatives, known as the *Cheok-Hwa Party* (斥和派), were pro-Ming, or pro-*Han*, traditionalists with strong antagonism against Qing. The most prominent figure among the party was Kim Sang-Heon (金尙憲). He was a hard-liner with a spirit, who claimed that Joseon should rather perish, than to surrender to Qing and beg for mercy. For them, *Sadae* was the backbone of the national identity and believed that the preservation of national values was beyond the lives of individuals. Kim and the conservatives claimed to fight against Qing, as it would be the only way to secure their values and dignities, even if the nation falls.⁸⁹

On the other hand, the moderates, known as the *Ju-Hwa Party* (主和派),

⁸⁹ *Veritable Records of the Joseon Dynasty*, Injo, vol. 34 (15th year, January 18th), Mu-Oh (戊午).

sought for more realistic solutions that could secure Joseon's safety. Although they were Confucianists as well, the *Ju-Hwa* members were rather more interested in relatively "pragmatic" matters, in modern day perspective, and searched for solutions not to engage any military confrontations. Choi Myung-Gil (崔鳴吉), a leading figure within the moderate party, put higher values on reality rather than ideology. For him, the highest priority was the survival of Joseon and its people and argued that the monarch should value the lives of people more than the cause of the nation. Choi and the moderates weighed more on diplomatic negotiations and protection of Joseon's soil, even if the negotiation might end up with surrender to Qing, and – in worst case – termination of relations with Ming.⁹⁰

The conflict between *Cheok-Hwa Party* and *Ju-Hwa Party* was a fight between loyalty and practicality. Both arguments can be evaluated as patriotic, as the *Cheok-Hwa Party* wanted to preserve the fidelity of Joseon and the *Ju-Hwa Party* wanted to search for practical benefits with minimum damage. For

⁹⁰ Excerpt from Gu-Man Nam 南九萬, "Yeongeuijeong Moonchoong Choigongmyunggil Shindobimyeong 領議政文忠崔公鳴吉神道碑銘," *Yakcheonjip* 藥泉集 vol. 17, (1723): "If we cannot strengthen ourselves (自強), nor succumb as the weak, how can we secure our nation? Please, I beg, reconcile with Qing and delay the fight." (Choi Myung-Gil's statement to King Injo requesting for reconciliation with Qing).

the conservatives, negotiations meant surrendering to Qing, which would be an unacceptable disgrace that they would rather choose death. For the moderates, on the other hand, resistance against Qing was equal to the devastation of Joseon, again after the *Japanese Invasion*, and they concerned that the whole nation would face a total collapse. The two parties were putting different values as each of its priority, both of which could not be preserved without the another.

Meanwhile, Qing was pressuring Joseon to modify their relationship from *brothers* to ‘the ruler and the ruled’ (which implies that the previous relation that had been relatively parallel would be converted to more hierarchical structure), and requested military supplies for their conquest of Ming, including golds, horses for wars, and even thirty thousand soldiers. Qing wanted to make sure that there would be no revolt from its back while advancing toward Ming, hence it had to suppress Joseon effectively and completely, either by militaristic action or by a novel diplomatic relationship. In this aspect, the request of Qing was a bait, to confirm Joseon’s position on the Ming-Qing rivalry. If Joseon had yielded, Qing would have strengthened its army along with Joseon as a new ally; if Joseon had declined, Qing would march toward the Korean peninsula before Ming, and prevent any possibility that could happen afterwards.⁹¹

⁹¹ Myung-Gi Han, “Byeongjahoran Dashi Irki, 74, Byeongjahoranyi Shijackdoeida I 병자호란

Injo, between the conflicts of two *parties* as well as under the pressure from Qing, finally chose to hold up his loyalty toward Ming, and let down Qing's request to support its army. Furthermore, he even declined to encounter Qing's royal emissaries nor to receive the letter from Qing's emperor. Such gestures were clear enough to send Hong Taiji a message that Joseon was no longer interested in maintaining friendly relation with Qing, which led the new emperor to decide to conquer Joseon first, not to make any backdrafts in the back during his invasion over Ming.⁹²

Role of Ming in Joseon: Source of Legitimacy

The two kings of Joseon were under similar situation of the vortex of international affairs, but showed different political projections, which led to different outcomes. The mid-Joseon history shows how the nation perceived Ming and Qing, and their limitations to make rational decisions. Although Gwanghaegun strived to maintain neutrality with pragmatic plans and policies, he could not overcome his background and a fact that he killed his half-brother

이 시작되다 I The Manchu Invasion Begins I," *Seoul Shinmun* (June 4th, 2008).

⁹² Ibid., "Hong Taiji, Chimryak Gyeolshimeul Haneuleh Gohada 홍타이지, 침략 결심을 하늘에 고하다 Hong Taiji, swears his decision of invasion to heaven."

and political foes. On the contraire, Injo had a wide support from the court and successfully took over the throne. However, his political range was highly limited within conventional *Zhong-hua* framework, which might have given him the legitimacy, but prevented him from making realistic decisions to avoid the tragic outcome of war.

When Gwanghaegun was officially recognized as the king of Joseon by Ming, he began to strengthen his authority by eliminating any potential bloodlines who could claim for legitimacy of the throne. The first target was Imhaegun, Gwanghaegun's older brother. Although he renounced his right to become a king, backed up by his poor performances during the *Japanese Invasion* and the illness he got out of the captivity by the Japanese soldiers, Imhaegun was the first option that the most scholar officials in Joseon and Ming court considered in a monarch, and he would have always been the potential threat to Gwanghaegun's kingship.

Another target was Prince Yeongchang (永昌大君), the royal late-born son of Seonjo. By the time Gwanghaegun came into throne, Prince Yeongchang was the only royal blood, but he was too young to claim to become a king (Prince Yeongchang was born in 1606, two years before Gwanghaegun became the king). During the early period of Gwanghagun's reign, young Prince

Yeongchang was not of a big problem. He could have been under control as long as his mother, Queen Inmok (仁穆大妃), had been well surveilled.

On the year Gwanghaegun sat on his throne, he sent Imhaegun, Prince Yeongchang and Kim Je-Nam (金悌男) – Prince Yeongchang’s maternal grandfather who had a significant influence on Joseon court – on exiles. Next year, Gwanghaegun sentenced Imhaegun to death by poison.⁹³ In 1613, rumors were heard that several political opponents were plotting a coup against Gwanghaegun, and they would bring Prince Yeongchang on the throne – led by Kim Je-Nam.⁹⁴ Shocked by the stories, Gwanghaegun sentenced Kim Je-Nam to death by poison as well, but he did not dare to kill Prince Yeongchang – the royal blood.⁹⁵ However, in 1614, Prince Yeongchang was secretly assassinated at the age of eight, by a military official who was conspired by Yi Yichum (李爾瞻) – a loyal follower of Gwanghaegun.⁹⁶

⁹³ Huang, 190.

⁹⁴ Myung-Gi Han, “Gwanghaegun: Oegyoewi Bitgwa Naejeongeui Geurimja 광해군, 외교의 빛과 내정의 그림자 Gwanghaegun, the Light of Diplomacy and the Shadow of Domestic Politics,” *Hanguksa Shimingangjwa 한국사 시민강좌 Civil Education of Korean History*, vol. 31 (Seoul: Ilchokak, 2002): 69.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 69-70

⁹⁶ Ibid., 70.

The deaths of Imhaegun, Kim Je-Nam and Prince Yeongchang might have strengthened Gwanghaegun's authority at his early period of regime, but they remained as the permanent defects of Gwanghaegun's moral legitimacy. Under strong Confucianist values, murdering one's family was an unbearable sin, and Gwanghaegun was perceived as a merciless tyrant, who had not ethical standard to hold on to his power. As Confucianism put morality as the backbone of national governance, immorality was a political weakness and Gwanghaegun slowly lost supports from the court. Despite Gwanghaegun's practical foreign policies that kept Joseon safe from the Ming-Qing power game, many scholar officials who had been suppressed by Gwanghaegun suspected his legitimacy, and turned their eyes on to Injo, who had better royal background.

However, history of Joseon shows that immorality of killing families is nothing but political cause to overturn the regimes. As any other royal families in the world history would have experienced, competitions for power among family members were rather common, and Joseon was not an exception. King Taejong (太宗), the third king of Joseon dynasty, was involved in two cases of mutiny, the first in 1398 and the second in 1400.⁹⁷ Throughout the series of mutinies, Taejong killed his brothers and their followers, and Jeongjong (定宗),

⁹⁷ *The First and Second Mutiny of Prince (王子之亂, 1398 & 1400)*

the second king of Joseon as well as Taejong's brother, yielded his throne left the royal court.⁹⁸

Another case was the dethronement of Danjong (端宗) – the sixth king of Joseon – and the enthronement of Sejo (世祖) – the seventh king of Joseon. Born in 1441, Danjong came up into throne in 1452 and was too young and weak to secure his throne with power. Meanwhile, his uncle – Prince Sooyang (首陽大君) – occupied political power over his nephew's weakness, and forced him to yield his throne and became the king (Sejo) in 1455.⁹⁹ For a long time after exiled, Danjong was oppressed by Sejo's followers to commit suicide, so that Sejo could secure his kingship, and died after all in 1457.¹⁰⁰

The two cases show that Joseon dynasty had not already been highly moral in terms of inheriting the throne. Tragic dramas and political plots had always been existence, and ethic standard that had been praised by politicians or Ming

⁹⁸ *Veritable Records of the Joseon Dynasty*, Jeongjong (정종, 定宗), vol. 3 (2nd year, February 4th), Gi-Hae (己亥); Taejong (태종, 太宗), vol. 1 (1st year, June 12th), Gi-Sa (己巳).

⁹⁹ *Veritable Records of the Joseon Dynasty*, Sejo (세조, 世祖), vol. 1 (1st year, June 11th), Eul-Myo (乙卯).

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. 9 (3rd year, October 21st), Shin-Hae (辛亥).

empire was merely a political cause.¹⁰¹ Out of twenty-seven kings within the Joseon dynasty, only two kings were not able to receive their *temple names* (廟號) and ended up with their *prince name* (gun, 君). The two kings – Yeonsangun (燕山君)¹⁰² and Gwanghaegun – were both thrown out from their successors, and their failures as rulers were merely the outcomes of political struggles, which could only be determined if the coup had been successful. Their moral failures were of course the primary reason to downgrade the quality of the predecessor and praise that of the successor, but it was more of political interests that drove Joseon court to lead to overturn the thrones.

Given that the unethical murders had already happened before, Gwanghaegun's moral defections of killing his brothers was only a trigger that gave his opponents an opportunity to stand against the throne. The history

¹⁰¹ Taejong was able to secure the acknowledgement from Ming, as he was an ardent supporter of his father – Yi Seong-Gye – to overthrow Goryeo and establish Joseon. Although Taejong's deeds to become a king was surely brutal and violent, as killing many of his brothers and their followers, Ming would have acknowledged his achievements as the founding member of Joseon, the nation of *Sadae* which follows Ming as the *father state*.

¹⁰² Yeonsangun, the tenth king of Joseon from 1494 to 1506, was infamous for his tyranny and madness. He was thrown away from his throne by his half-brother, Jungjong (中宗), and was sent to Ganghwa island on exile. For more information regarding the history of Yeonsangun, refer to: Gwang-Nam Yook 옥광남, *Yeonsangun Journal* 원을거리만 뽑은 연산군 일기, (Seoul 서울: Haneulgwa Ddang 하늘과 땅, 2006).

shows that Gwanghaegun strived to acquire his authority on his own.¹⁰³ Although he officially requested for Ming's recognition and finally achieved one, his behaviors were mostly based on pragmatic political objectives. Such attitudes can be easily seen from his foreign diplomacy afterwards, from opting out of Ming-Qing power struggles via practical and realistic approaches over Joseon's conventional loyalty of *Sadae*.

On the other hand, Injo's dependency toward Ming could be evaluated as rather more sincere than Gwanghaegun. Such tendency would have been Injo's and the following Westerners' philosophical background, but Joseon's pro-Ming policy during Injo's reign is more about emphasizing political significance of the regime to be contrasted from the predecessor. One of the major reasons that Injo and the Westerners engaged a coup was – as they had claimed – that Gwanghaegun had lost his faith toward Ming, Joseon's overlord, and conspired with Later Jin, a barbaric state.¹⁰⁴ Injo and his followers successfully raised a coup against Gwanghaegun and took over the throne, under the message that he

¹⁰³ Seung Bum Kye 계승범, "Seja Gwanghaegun: Yongsangeul Wuihan Meolgodo Heomhan Gil 세자 광해군: 용상을 향한 멀고도 험한 길 Crown Prince Kwanghae: The Long and Crooked Way to the Throne in Chosun Korea," *Han'guk Inmulsa Yon'gu 한국인물사연구 Study on the Korean Historical Figures*, Issue 20 (2013): 211-246.

¹⁰⁴ Myung-Gi Han, *Gwanghaegun: Takwolhan Ogyojeongchaekul Pyeolchin Gunju*, 252-259.

– the rightful heir of Seonjo – would reclaim the legitimacy of the crown, by sending off the trader and retrieve the trustful relationship with Ming.¹⁰⁵ This naturally led Injo to reject most of former foreign policies, hence strived to stress Injo’s features as a ‘legitimate’ ruler of Joseon.

Politically, Injo and his court had to express their loyalty toward Ming, more excessively than the previous government, which led to the withdrawal from neutral foreign policy. He withdrew from previous ‘opting-out strategy (*Gwanhyunghyangbae*, 觀形向背)’ and tilted toward traditional ‘pro-Ming strategy and anti-Jin (*Hyangmyeongbaegeum*, 向明排金)’ policy. For Injo, the former government was an anomaly of Joseon dynasty, and he strived to reclaim and strengthen the authority of his throne through conventional Ming-Joseon’s overlord-tributary state relations.¹⁰⁶ This implies that even for Joseon, the role of Ming was utilized as a mean of political strategy, supported by the long history of *father-son* relationship. For Injo, Ming was not only a reason that he plotted the coup, but also his political protection that secured his

¹⁰⁵ Myung-Gi Han, “Historical Meaning of ‘Injo Banjeong’ in the Perspective of Sin-Korean Relations in Early Seventeenth Century 대중관계의 관점에서 본 인조반정의 역사적 의미,” *Nammyunghak* (南冥學), vol. 16 (Nammyunghak Yeonguwon 남명학 연구원 Institute of Nammyung Studies, 2011): 260.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

authority as the rightful ruler of Joseon.¹⁰⁷

What Injo had missed to take into his account during the coup was the influence and power of Later Jin during his enthronement. Although Injo strengthened his legitimacy by breaking neutrality and turned into pro-Ming policy, such appearance gave Later Jin – which was already a strong military power by then – a perception that Joseon would no longer be a third party (if not to become an ally) in Ming-Qing competition, which led Hong Taiji to attack on Joseon before marching up to Ming. During the *First Manchu Invasion of Joseon*, there was no support from Ming whatsoever. While history records that the war lasted for about two months (from January to March 1627), the two countries negotiated for peace agreement since February 9th,¹⁰⁸ which implies that the Manchurian aggression only lasted for about a month. Ming was in no position – both in timewise and in geographical perspective – to promptly support, and Joseon had to make a provisional term that did stop the war but could not guarantee peace. Moreover, as previously mentioned, Chinese empires' *Yiyizhiyi* (以夷制夷) strategy was more of utilizing other power to

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 266-267.

¹⁰⁸ *Veritable Records of the Joseon Dynasty*, Injo, vol. 15 (5th year, February 9th), Byeong-Oh (戊午).

protect themselves, not the other way around. This explains why Ming was so excessive in asking for military support to Joseon, but hesitant to send the troops in promptly manner. Despite such developments, however, Injo still maintained his pro-Ming attitudes in terms of dealing with the requests from both Ming and Qing, and it brought another – and even more tragic – war into the Korean Peninsula.

The history of two consecutive but contrasting kings of Joseon during this dynamic period shows how Joseon had perceived the ideology of *Zhong-hua*, the diplomatic significance of *Sadae*, and the source of king's legitimacy. Injo, who sought for his righteousness from Ming, successfully overturned Gwanghaegun, who strived to establish his own legitimacy even by murdering his brothers. It shows the royalty and authority of the king of Joseon depended more on the benevolence of *Zhong-hua*, rather than autonomous improvement. While Gwanghaegun perceived the power of a king as something to be achieved via strenuous competitions and struggles,¹⁰⁹ Injo viewed the throne as

¹⁰⁹ Xiuzi Huang (黃修志) proposes six major reasons why Gwanghaegun had to struggle for his kingship: 1) He was neither a first born son nor a son of a royal consort; 2) Although he had already been appointed as a crowned prince based on his performances during the *Japanese Invasion*, he could not get a full support from Ming; 3) By the time he was about to become a king, he had an older brother from the same mother, and even the royal prince was born, hence his legitimacy for the crown was continuously questioned; 4) He lost

his own right, which had been taken away but then soon to be reclaimed. Under this perception, constructed by strong pro-*Han Zhong-hua* ideology as well as Confucianist values, made Gwanghaegun a failed king – who not only lost humanity but also failed to preserve Joseon's national identity of *Sadae*.

Though the *Injo Restoration* turned out to be a success, and the following Westerners might have claimed that Joseon came back to how it should have been, their conventional (or rather conservative and narrow-sighted) world view brought another tragic outcome in the history of Joseon. Less than a decade after the *First Invasion* had happened, Joseon gave an assurance to the Manchurian (by that time) empire, that there would be no chance that Joseon would stand against Ming, through series of events mentioned before, and Injo – as his grandfather Seonjo – had to be disgracefully recorded as a king who invited the war into the Korean soil, and – this time – lost.

popular support by his immoral misdeeds, such as killing his brothers and sending his relatives on exiles to death; 5) The authority of king in Joseon had already plummeted as the whole nation was devastated out of the tragedy of the *Japanese Invasion*; 6) Joseon was in highly difficult situation during his regime as Later Jin was already a rising power that threatened the hegemonic system of Ming, while Ming also asked for Joseon to send the troops to attack on the Manchurians. (Huang, 213-214.)

*The Second Manchu Invasion of Joseon*¹¹⁰

Hong Taiji, the new emperor of the North, led the army of one hundred and twenty thousand soldiers in person and marched across the Joseon border, on December 9th, 1636.¹¹¹ The army spurred directly to Hanyang (漢陽), capital city of Joseon where the royal palace as well as the central court were located, only within ten days, by evading all the unnecessary battles along the way. In addition, Hong knew that Injo would evacuate to Ganghwa Island (江華島), where Seonjo had retrieved during the *Japanese Invasion*, and sent the troops to block the way. On December 14th, as the route to Ganghwa Island was blocked, Injo sent Choi Myung-Gil to Qing's camp and ordered him to buy some time for evacuation by offering them tributes of foods and drinks. Meanwhile, Injo and his cabinet aristocrats, royal families, and little more than thirteen thousand

¹¹⁰ *Byeongjahoran* (丙子胡亂)

¹¹¹ Detailed dates written on this paper is based on Asian Lunar calendar system. Bumjin Koo argued that the *Manchu Invasion* actually occurred in January 1637, based on modern Solar calendar system. For further information regarding the date gap between Lunar and Solar calendar systems, refer to: Bumjin Koo 구범진, "Yeokbeob Munjewa Hanguksa Seosul 역법문제와 한국사 서술," *Yeoksagyoyuk* (歷史教育) vol. 94, (The Korean History Education Society 역사교육연구회: June, 2005); Hesheng Zheng 鄭鶴聲, *Chin-Shih-Chung-His-Shih Jih-Tui-Chao-Piao* 近世中西史 日對照表 (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company 中華書局, 1981).

soldiers headed toward south, to *Namhansanseong* (*Namhan Fortress*, 南漢山城).¹¹²

Namhansanseong was not an ideal fortress to defend Qing's army effectively. The first weakness of the fortress was the under-preparedness of food supplies. By the time Injo arrived, the fortress had only enough to feed about ten thousand soldiers approximately for two months. While it would have had been sufficient to feed the soldiers only, there were royal bloods, nobles, bureaucrats, and even slaves who followed the evacuation as well. The number of non-military population was more than fourteen thousand, and the food was not sufficient to feed all of them, if the war would last longer than a month.

The second weakness of the fortress was the geographical location. As the name explains itself, the fortress was built above *Namhansan* (南漢山, *the Southern Mountain*). Although the mountainous features would be of advantage to defend enemies with trees and difficult tracks, it also means that the defenders would be isolated within the fortress, if the enemies would not engage, but to surround the whole mountain. Indeed, when the Qing army

¹¹² *Veritable Records of the Joseon Dynasty*, Injo, vol. 33 (14th year, December 14th), Gap-Shin (甲申), 3rd Article: "The King orders Choi Myung-Gil to consolidate relation with Qing, arrives at *Namhansanseong*, and decides to evacuate to Gangdo (Ganghwado)."

arrived at the mountain on December 19th, they did not strain to attack the fortress immediately; instead, they surrounded major gates of the fortress and monitored Joseon's movements.

Qing did attack the fortress in full-scale for two days though. From December 22nd to 23rd, Qing attacked the Joseon army, first day with five thousand men, and the second day with ten thousand. Joseon was able to defend the fortress from Qing with some significant performances, but they were the only victories Joseon had from battles. Hong Taiji realized that the fortress cannot be fallen within short period of time and changed his plan to surround the whole mountain and suffocate Injo and his men. Joseon, absolutely blocked in all directions from outside of the fortress, slowly faced the grim fate of defeat.¹¹³

The last weakness of the fortress was not about the physical features, but about the time. The *Invasion* began in the mid-December and was going to be a war throughout the winter season. With limited food supplies and mountainous landscapes, the piercing cold of winter further discouraged the Joseon army. The slippery roads iced by the snow worsened the road conditions, making it

¹¹³ Na Man-Gap 羅萬甲, *Byeongjarok* 丙子錄, *Record of Byeongjahoran*, Jae-Young Yoon ed. (Jeongeumsa 정음사, 1947).

even more difficult to sneak out or in for supplies. Furthermore, all the Joseon troops coming from various regions to protect their king were defeated by the Qing army, hence Injo could not have a connection whatsoever to the outside of the fortress. The longer the war went on, the sooner the defeat was to approach.

Hong Taiji arrived at Namhansanseong on December 29th with forty thousand additional troops. With the emperor's appearance, the Qing army strengthened its siege around the fortress, and the food supplies of Joseon was running out, without a single possibility of aid from outside. As Qing had to concentrate its military power toward Ming after Joseon, the emperor had no intention to engage further attacks on the fortress and waste his manpower. Hong and the Qing army did nothing but surrounded the mountain, let Joseon army suffer in cold and food shortage, and waited for Injo to give up and surrender.

However, Joseon endured longer than Hong Taiji had presumed. Without any connection to outer forces nor any aid for food, the fortress had been kept locked for about a month. On January 24th, 1637, Qing engaged an artillery attack on the fortress with the cannons that Kong Youde and Geng Zhongming had brought to Later Jin during their defection. The cannons had devastating effects on the fortress, destroying gates and walls to extreme extents, but Joseon

also counterattacked Qing with its own artillery, Cheonjachongtong (天字銃筒). The artillery battle had gone for a whole day, but it could not end the war, leaving only damages on both sides. On January 26th, Hong Taiji changed his plan, sent his troops to raid Ganghwa Island. The Qing army captured the families of royal and noble bloods who evacuated to the Island as fugitives, and oppressed Joseon to surrender. The pressure went on until the 28th, with continuous cannon fires toward the fortress.

Eventually, Injo decided to surrender to Qing, came out of the fortress, and officially surrendered to Hong Taiji at Samjeondo (三田渡), an upper reach area of Han River, on January 30th, 1637. Injo encountered the Qing Emperor, and kowtowed three times to him, with three bows on the ground per each, as a sincere expression of his submission to the conqueror.¹¹⁴ Joseon, which had previously protected its kingdom from Japan for seven years, surrendered to whom they once used to call ‘barbarians’, only in forty-five days since the

¹¹⁴ *The Disgrace of Samjeondo (三田渡之屈辱)*: The courtesy of kowtowing three times with three bows on the ground per each was called *Smbae-gugodurye*(三跪九叩頭禮) in Korean, which was an expression of absolute submission to the ruler. Refer to: *Veritable Records of the Joseon Dynasty*, Injo, vol. 34 (15th year, January 20th), Gyeong-Oh (庚午), 2nd Article: “In 1637, the king paid *Smbae-gugodurye* to Qing’s emperor at Samjeondo, and returned to Changgyeonggung (昌慶宮, one of royal palaces in Hanyang).”

Invasion broke out.

Qing and Joseon agreed to terms of peace, which includes: Joseon would acknowledge the Emperor of Qing as its overlord; Joseon would turn-in the Ming seals of investiture to Qing and terminate the relation with Ming as well as not to use Ming's era name; Joseon would send the first and second son of Injo along with the sons of ministers to Qing as hostages; Joseon would assist Qing with troops and supplies during the quest to conquer Ming; Joseon would support Qing by offering warships on naval battles; Joseon would pay respect to Qing with the same courtesy that it had offered to Ming before; Joseon would not accept refugees from Qing; Qing and Joseon would foster friendly relations by promoting marriages among ministers' families; Joseon would not build, rebuild, or fix castles and fortresses; Joseon would return fugitives back to Qing; and Joseon would fulfill its duty as a tributary state of Qing and offer tributes, effective from 1639.¹¹⁵

For Joseon, surrender to Qing was a disgraceful humiliation, as Joseon's ideological basis had been on Confucianism, which praised the *Han* culture and disapproved the Manchurian's. Joseon court would have had thought that the

¹¹⁵ Jae-eun Kang, *The Land of Scholars: Two Thousand Years of Korean Confucianism* (Homa & Sekey Books, 2006): 328.

victory over Japan was only natural, as Japan had been an inferior civilization with no respect to Ming, and the alliance between Ming and Joseon linked with common philosophy was mightier than anything else. The same would have been applied to the Manchurian people and Later Jin as well, despite their proximity right across the border and their overwhelming military power. Joseon's negligence over the rise of Qing had returned as a total defeat, and the Ming-Joseon alliance that had been kept for more than two hundred years had finally ended.

IV. CONCLUSION

In 1644, seven years after Hong Taiji defeated Joseon, Qing finally collapsed Ming and became the new empire of China. By the time Qing suppressed Joseon, Ming was not in its situation to support Joseon effectively, as it was suffering from its own domestic instability. For about two decades, ever since the Later Jin kingdom was established in 1616 and Nurhaci declared a war against Ming in 1618, Ming had to consume major proportions of its resources concentrating on defending the Manchurian aggressions, and its economy rapidly plummeted. Moreover, Ming faced a number of famines and floods in the late 1620s and the 1630s, hence the peasants and ordinary people of Ming suffered out of hunger and poverty. Naturally, the economic crisis caused social disorders, and some of them had been violently projected via mutinies and rebellions.

When the Qing-Joseon alliance began to attack on Ming in 1638, Li Zicheng (李自成), a leader of rebels who was also known as the ‘Dashing King (闖王, chuǎngwang)’¹¹⁶ was raising coups against the throne. He established a

¹¹⁶ Born in impoverished farmer’s family in Yan’an (延安) prefecture, Li Zicheng first joined the rebellion in 1629. In 1631, Li joined the peasants’ rebel army leader Gao Yingxiang (高迎祥), who had a nickname of ‘Dashing King (闖王, chuǎngwang)’. After Gao’s death in 1636, Li inherited his nickname and led the rebel army. For more information about Li

Shun (順) empire in 1644 and put himself as an emperor,¹¹⁷ as he conquered Yanqing (燕京, also known as Beijing 北京), the capital city of Ming. When the Forbidden City (Zǐjìnchéng, 紫禁城) was fallen by Li's army, Chongzen Emperor (崇禎帝) – the last emperor of Ming dynasty – committed suicide out of disgrace, and the royal bloodline of *Han* Chinese was finally ceased.¹¹⁸

However, Li Zicheng's Shun empire did not last for long. While Shun's attack on Beijing was on its peak, Wu Sangui (吳三桂),¹¹⁹ the military leader

Zicheng, refer to: Roger V. Des Forges, *Cultural Centrality and Political Change in Chinese History: Northeast Henan in the Fall of the Ming*, Stanford (California: Stanford University Press, 2003): 206, 209.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 269-270.

¹¹⁸ Frederick W. Mote, *Imperial China, 900–1800* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999): 809.

¹¹⁹ Wu Sangui (吳三桂) was originally a military general of Ming, who had defended Shanhaiguan from Qing's aggression. When he was noticed that Beijing had fallen by Li Zicheng and the Emperor had committed suicide, Wu surrendered to Qing and opened the gate of Shanhaiguan, inviting Qing army into central China. Historically, Li Zicheng is evaluated as the one who collapsed Ming dynasty, and Wu Sangui is regarded as the one who opened the new era in China. Wu committed suicide in 1681 after attempted rebellion against Qing empire, started in 1673, as the throne tried to reduce the influence of *Han* officials in governance. For further information, refer to: Frederic E. Wakeman, *The Great Enterprise: The Manchu Reconstruction of Imperial Order in Seventeenth-Century China* (University of California Press, 1985): 225-318.

of Ming army, was concentrating his forces in *Shanhaiguan* (山海關) – a fortress that prevented the Manchurian aggressions for a long time – defending the invasion of Qing. After he was noticed that the capital city was fallen by the rebel army, Wu surrendered to Qing, and invited Qing Prince Dorgon (多爾袞) into Ming's soil. Li and the Shun army strived to prevent Qing's invasion into Beijing, but it was too late as the Qing army had already entered China. Qing army, allied with Joseon and escorted by Wu, continued its march toward Beijing, and Li's army, that had been much less organized or powerful as that of Qing, fled from the capital city. Eventually, on May 1644, twenty-eight years after the establishment of Later Jin and eighteen years after the promotion to an empire, Qing finally conquered China, that ruled over the East Asian region for about three hundred years, until the emergence of Colonial Imperialism from the West.¹²⁰

Comparing the two wars in Korean peninsula, Joseon was the 'first step' for rising powers in East Asia to overcome the conventional *Zhong-hua* order and become a superpower. Japan failed to conquer Joseon and withdrew its ambition of advancing into China. Qing, on the other hand, successfully

¹²⁰ William T. Rowe, *China's Last Empire: The Great Qing* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009): 19.

suppressed Joseon – only within forty-five days – and became the last empire of Chinese history. It can be inferred that Joseon, the loyal *son state* of Ming empire, acted as a representative that strived to protect the conventional order in the region, where *Han* Chinese rule the world and Joseon follows the *Hans* as a secondary state. Joseon highly valued its alliance with Ming, and encountered both rising powers before Ming, regardless of its success or failure. It implies the strength and importance of Ming-Joseon alliance in East Asian affairs, which also indicates that the qualification of a rising power to become a hegemon requires a militaristic power to break the chain of the alliance.

In terms of risk calculus,¹²¹ Joseon seemed to weigh more on its fidelity toward Ming over the imminent threat of war against Qing. For Joseon, especially for those who valued the virtue of *Sadae*, Ming empire was a root of its existence, and had considered that they shared a common destiny. The founding fathers of Joseon established a country of Neo-Confucianism, which regards scholastic pursuit as its highest value, hence the conventional scholar officials praised intellects with dignities and despised belligerent physical

¹²¹ In the field of international relations, especially in international security or security policy areas, the Risk Calculus is referred to as a modern concept of measuring multiple factors when a state contemplates to engage military actions (i.e. preventive war, preemptive war, etc.).

engagements – as the sophists in ancient Greece.¹²² Furthermore, Joseon had an unextinguishable debt to Ming over the war against Japan. The precedent that Ming had supported Joseon fettered Joseon court dealing with foreign policy, and it featured as a precondition that drove Joseon more toward Ming in any impending situations at the beginning.

What Joseon bypassed in the risk calculus were the rising influx of Manchurian's power in the region, Joseon's ability to self-defend, and the probability of Ming's support. The promotion from Later Jin to Qing empire had already indicated that the Manchurians were strong enough to claim for the hegemony in the region, and they can – and will – defeat Ming and occupy the Chinese continent. Also, Joseon, after the *Japanese Invasion* and in the period of reconstruction, was not in suitable position to engage another war, especially against an 'empire'. And finally, in geographical aspect, it was difficult – or almost impossible – for Ming to assist Joseon as it had done before. Although Ming could have been able to distract Qing by engaging an attack on its own

¹²² *Sanonggongsang* (士農工商) is a term that describes late Goryeo and Joseon's caste system that distinguishes social classes based on occupation. The scholars (士) are at the top of the order, followed by farmers (農), artisans (工), and tradesmen (商) at the bottom. The system was strengthened as Jeong Do-jeon designed a new kingdom as the nation of 'Confucianism over Buddhism, agricultural economy, and *Sadae* toward Ming'. Such ideological background led Joseon stronger in academics, but weaker in military power.

side, considering that Hong Taiji and his army suppressed Joseon only within forty-five days during the period when there was not enough highly advanced telecommunication system (during which the only way to send the message was by emissaries via naval or land routes), the balance of probability that a prompt military action from Ming against Qing would take place would have been extremely low.

Resultingly, Joseon's risk calculus turned out to be a miscalculation, and had to face a devastating aftermath, kneeling to the barbarian empire. While the contemporary analysis of the war would criticize the narrow-sighted world view of Joseon court, developed over *Sadae* and Neo-Confucianism, the difficult position of Joseon between Ming and Qing and its effort to seek for the most optimal outcome should be comprehended based on its own timeline and world view. Nevertheless, however, it was the Qing army that brought bigger impact on the Korean peninsula than Ming's influence, and Injo is not free from historical criticism of brining another war into Joseon.

The power transition from Ming to Qing in China set up a new definition of *Zhong-hua* in East Asia. Qing, the newly risen empire, was able to overcome conventional hegemon of Ming with its simple definition of *Zhong-hua*. For Qing, *Zhong-hua* meant power, and Hong Taiji only needed a capability to

occupy the mainland of China for becoming a hegemon. Qing's ideology was a power-centric philosophy, which could be viewed as an offensive realism in modern theoretical framework, and proved that the spread of influence – not only politically, but also culturally and economically – could only be achieved above a firm ground of securing the center of the region with power.

Unlike Qing, Joseon kept the value of *Zhong-hua* on conventional Ming dynasty, which was a combination of not only its power, but also its cultural components of Confucianist *Hans*. Such limited perception let Joseon only to concern about the persistence of inheriting the legacy of Ming, but not to prepare for an upcoming war or a back-up plan for their misjudgments in real actions. *Zhong-hua* perceived by Joseon was all about the Ming empire, which is – to be more precise – the *Han* Chinese and its culture. Despite vivid threat of Qing coming down from the north, Joseon's allegiance toward Ming continued, and kept their original notion that the true *Zhong-hua* only belongs to the *Hans*, if not inherited by itself – as a *son state* of *Xiao Zhong-hua* (小中華).

Under such social norms, Gwanghaegun at least tried to alter the notion of *Han*-centric perspective. For him, the security of Joseon was not protected by *Sadae*, but by practicality. His new perception of regional order kept Joseon away from getting involved into the power game. However, as Gwanghaegun

was exiled by Injo and his followers, Joseon went back to its original standpoint of pro-Ming and anti-Qing. The dethronement of Gwanghaegun and the enthronement of Injo reflects Joseon's national inertia that a state cannot easily shift its position within short period. Despite Gwanghaegun's effort, Joseon was not free from conventional perception that the *Zhong-hua* only belongs to the *Hans*, and Qing was nothing but an abnormal barbarian state, which struggled to change the stable order of the region.

By 1637, when Joseon was defeated by Qing, and 1644, when Ming finally collapsed, the conventional perception of *Zhong-hua* ideology within Joseon was proven to be wrong. Some of the conservative scholar officials in Joseon court remained their loyalty toward Ming and the *Hans* even after the era of Qing dynasty, but Joseon never overcome, or fought against the Qing overlord until it was forcefully liberated by Japan in 1895.¹²³ Regardless of the domestic dispute between the conservatives and the moderates in Joseon, Qing ruled the vast territory of Chinese continent beyond original Ming's terrain. By force and power, Qing established a new dynamic of *Zhong-hua*, and its neo-perception of the ideology enabled Qing to take the hegemony in East Asia, which had long been monopolized by the *Hans*.

¹²³ *First Sino-Japanese War* (清日戦争), 1894~1895.

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국문 초록

7년간의 임진왜란(壬辰倭亂, 1592~1598) 이후, 동아시아는 새로운 패권의 변화를 맞게 된다. 중국 동북부 지역의 여진족들이 1616년 새로운 왕조(후금, 後金)를 만들었으며, 건국자 누르하치(奴爾哈齊)를 절대 권력자인 칸으로 추대하였다. 명(明) 또한 임진왜란 당시 동맹국인 조선을 지원한 여파로 흔들리고 있었으며, 이로 인해 후금의 부상을 효과적으로 막지 못했다. 1636년, 후금은 스스로를 왕조에서 청(淸) 제국으로 승격시켰고, 1644년 명나라의 영토를 정복하며 동아시아의 새로운 패권국가가 되었다. 이러한 패권 격변의 시기 속에서, 조선은 다시 한번 두 강대국의 사이에 끼이게 된다. 1636년 후반부터 1637년 초까지 여진족 군대는 한반도를 공격하였고, 결국 조선은 명나라의 멸망보다 앞서 청나라에 항복하게 된다. 본 논문은 병자호란 사건을 안보학적 시각으로 분석하여 전쟁의 불가피성을 진단하는 데에 그 목적이 있다. 선행연구를 통해 중화사상(中華思想)의 가장 핵심적인 요소를 정의하고, 이를 바탕으로 당시 조선의 두 왕이었던 광해군(光海君)과 인조(仁祖)가 대외정책과 분쟁해결의 측면에서 어떻게 중화라는

사상을 인식했는지를 밝히고자 한다.

주제어: 중화 (中華), 중화사상 (中華思想), 사대주의 (事大主義),
광해군 (光海君), 인조 (仁祖)