



Discourses of Nation: Tensions in Early Modern Korea-Japan Relations

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**Discourses of Nation:
Tensions in Early Modern Korea-Japan Relations**

A dissertation presented

by

Ilsoo David Cho

to

The Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations

in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
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**Discourses of Nation:
Tensions in Early Modern Korea-Japan Relations**

Abstract

This dissertation reframes the patterns of interaction between Korean and Japanese officials and scholars of the early modern period as a clash and conflict driven by what historian Eric Hobsbawm (1917–2012) referred to as “proto-nationalism,” pre-modern forms of political bonds and identities that may have contributed to the swift rise of modern nationalism as a powerful political force in the modern era. Working primarily through the prism of intellectual history, this dissertation shows that contentious Korea-Japan debates over civilization, mountains, military power, and ancient history, including both direct interactions as well as behind-the-scenes transmissions of ideas through books, not only highlighted the profound differences between the two countries’ proto-national identities, but also worked to strengthen them in response. In conclusion, this dissertation also argue that this long history of proto-nationalist contentions in the early modern period, defined here as the period between the early seventeenth century and mid-nineteenth century, also provides a broad historical context in the rise of Japanese interventionism in Korea during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

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Lastly, I dedicate this dissertation to my maternal grandmother and her fight against the Alzheimer's disease. Until recently, I was able to visit her and talk to her on every trip to Korea. Almost nothing breaks my heart more than the realization that I may not be able to do that anymore.

すべて新なる説を出すは、いと大事也、いくたびもかへさひおもひて、よくたしかなるよりどころをとらへ、いづくまでもゆきとほりて、たがふ所なく、うごくまじきにあらざは、たやすくは出すまじきわざ也、その時には、うけばりてよしと思ふも、ほどへて後に、いま一たびよく思へば、なほわろかりけりと、我ながらだに思ひならるる事の多きぞかし、

-Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長

Introduction

This dissertation aims to reframe the patterns of interaction between Korean and Japanese officials and scholars of the early modern period as a clash and conflict driven by what historian Eric Hobsbawm (1917–2012) referred to as “proto-nationalism,” pre-modern forms of political bonds and identities that may have contributed to the swift rise of modern nationalism as a powerful political force in the modern era. Working primarily through the prism of intellectual history, this dissertation shows that contentious Korea-Japan debates over civilization, mountains, military power, and ancient history, including both direct interactions as well as behind-the-scenes transmissions of ideas through books, not only highlighted the profound differences between the two countries’ proto-national identities, but also worked to strengthen them in response. In conclusion, this dissertation also argue that this long history of proto-nationalist contentions in the early modern period, defined here as the period between the early seventeenth century and mid-nineteenth century, also provides a broad historical context in the rise of Japanese interventionism in Korea during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Proto-nationalism in Korea and Japan

Hobsbawm defines proto-nationalism as feelings of collective belonging, which already existed in the pre-modern times and may have provided foundations for the development of modern nationalism. He criticizes the “constructivist” perspective of nation building and examines the evidence for proto-nationalist forms of collective identification in language, ethnicity, religion, and membership in a lasting political entity.¹ On the other hand, Hobsbawm is part of the mainstream postwar scholarship on nation and nationalism that critically highlighted

¹ E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*. 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 46-79.

the more recent man-made processes of how nations came into being starting in the nineteenth century and rebuked the older premise of primordiality of nations.² Hobsbawm himself noted that proto-nationalism is neither sufficient nor necessary for the rise of modern nationalism. Although Hobsbawm dismisses the causal relationship between pre-modern proto-nationalism and its modern counterpart, he is still reluctant to write off the rich tapestry of pre-modern, proto-national identities and bonds that may have contributed to the rise of modern nationalism and other developments in modern history.

Perhaps reflecting the same circumspect doubt that modern nations may not be entirely contemporary and artificial, a number of scholars, often classified as “primordialists” vis-à-vis the mainstream “modernists,” have argued for origins of nations that predated modernity.³

² For some of representative studies, see Karl Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication: An Inquiry into the Foundation of Nationality* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Technology Press of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1953). Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983). Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983); and *The Invention of Tradition*, eds. Eric J. Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983). The earlier works of scholarship on Korean and Japanese history in the late nineteenth and much of the twentieth century have emphasized the modernist perspective. Takekoshi Yosaburō 竹越與三郎 (1865–1950), for example, wrote of the supposedly abrupt emergence of Japanese nationalism following the appearance of American warship after centuries of feudalism and deeply-rooted rivalry between the domains that functioned as small independent states as something that, “like mists and clouds, [it suddenly] appeared as a phantom” 霞の如く、雲の如く、幻然として現出せる。See Takekoshi Yosaburō 竹越與三郎, *Shin Nihon shi* 新日本史, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Minyūsha, 1891), 18. Likewise, Maruyama Masao 丸山眞男 (1914–1996) and Hashikawa Bunsō 橋川文三 (1922–1983) also emphasized the critical importance of outside impact in locating the rapid formation of Japanese national identity and nationalism in the second half of the nineteenth century. Also see Maruyama Masao 丸山眞男, *Nihon seiji shisōshi kenkyū* 日本政治思想史研究 (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1952), 319-363; Hashikawa Bunsō 橋川文三, *Nashonarizumu: Sono shinwa to riron* ナシヨナリズム: その神話と理論 (Tokyo: Kinokuniya Shoten, 1968). On the Korea side, scholars have traditionally viewed the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895) and the resulting destruction of the tributary system as the primary catalyst in the rise of national consciousness in Korea. Deeply divided between the “squeezers” and “squeezed,” according to historian Vipin Chandra, the attitude of the great majority of Korean people towards their government into the 1890s was one of suspicion and hostility. See Vipin Chandra, *Imperialism, Resistance, and Reform in Late Nineteenth-Century Korea: Enlightenment and the Independence Club* (Berkeley: University of California Institute of East Asian Studies, 1988). Through his classic work, *Korea Between Empires* (2002), historian Andre Schmid also emphasized the critical role played by the vernacular newspapers during the years following the First Sino-Japanese War, particularly the period between 1895 and 1910, in creatively inventing the modern nationalist discourse in Korea. See Andre Schmid, *Korea Between Empires, 1895-1919* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

³ For some of most representative works of this school, see John A. Armstrong, *Nations Before Nationalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986); idem, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); idem, *Ethno-*

According to the “primordialists,” the creation of modern nationalism and national identities are almost unthinkable without their connections to the rich tradition of pre-modern identities.⁴ More recently, a number of European and American historians of Europe have put together an edited volume, *The Roots of Nationalism: National Identity Formation in Early Modern Europe, 1600–1815* (2016), through which they sought to critically reexamine the mainstream “modernist” approach and integrate pre-modern history back into the study of nationalism. The volume’s editor notes:

What connects all contributions [to this volume], however, is their critical attitude towards an exclusively modernist approach that precludes the admission of earlier phases of history into accounts of nationhood and national identity formation. The aim of this

symbolism and Nationalism: A Cultural Approach (London: Routledge, 2009); John Hutchinson, *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism: The Gaelic Revival and the Creation of the Irish Nation State* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1987); and Azar Gat, *Nations: The Long History and Deep Roots of Political Ethnicity and Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

⁴ Perhaps recognizing this dynamic relationship between pre-modern history and modern history, another group of scholars has emphasized certain forms of pre-modern identities in the study of history. Historian David Howell, for example, explored the notion of ethnicity and selective ethnicization of certain marginal groups in the geographical peripheries of Japan as parts of early modern Japanese identity and status system. See David L. Howell, “Ainu Ethnicity and the Boundaries of the Early Modern Japanese State,” *Past & Present* 142 (February 1994): 69-93. --- *Geographies of Identity in Nineteenth-Century Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Analyzing the history of contemporaneous China and Inner Asia, historian Mark Elliott also underscored the critical role of ethnic identity that undergirded the Qing imperial enterprise from its inception in the early seventeenth century, noting, “in its principles the process of ethnicity did not operate all that differently two hundred years ago than it does today.” See Mark C. Elliott, *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 19; As for the case of Korea, John Duncan has argued that the centuries-long existence of unitary state in pre-modern Korea may have fostered primeval “proto-nationalism” in Korea. See John B. Duncan, “Proto-nationalism in Premodern Korea,” in *Perspectives on Korea*, eds. Sang-Oak Lee and Duck-Soo Park (Sydney: Wild Peony, 1998), 198-221; South Korean historian Pak Ch’ansŭng 朴贊勝 examined the gradual strengthening of Korean ethnic identity through his examination of how the monarchy and aristocratic elites of the Chosŏn dynasty (1392–1910) increasingly saw the commoners and even slaves as part of the same ethnic group that they belonged to. See Pak Ch’ansŭng 朴贊勝, *Minjok, minjokchuui* 民族, 民族主義 (Seoul: Sohwa, 2010), 50-61; In addition, John Duncan and JaHyun Kim Haboush noted fragmentary signs of pre-modern Korean identity through events such as the Hideyoshi’s invasions of Korea (1592–1598) that supposedly stimulated hardening of Korean ethnic identity or the mid-seventeenth century ritual controversies that sought to redefine and centralize Korea’s place in the world following the Ming-Qing transition. See John B. Duncan, “The Impact of the Hideyoshi Invasions on Ethnic Consciousness in Korea,” *Kankoku Kenkyū Sentā nenpō* 韓国研究センター年報 6 (March 2006): 35-41. JaHyun Kim Haboush, “Constructing the Center: The Ritual Controversy and the Search for a New Identity in Seventeenth-Century Korea,” in *Culture and the State in Late Chosŏn Korea*, eds. JaHyun Kim Haboush and Martina Deuchler (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2002), 46-90. Also see JaHyun Kim Haboush, *The Great East Asian War and the Birth of the Korean Nation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016).

book is to show that premodern developments are not just introductory to the ‘real thing’ that occurred in the nineteenth century, but integral, vital part of a larger picture.⁵

For the purpose of this study, I focus on a particular, yet fundamental, aspect of proto-nationalism—the self-avowed notion of successorship to the classical civilization of the Axial Age, which served as the prototypical template for the states that came after. In the context of Japanese and Korean history, the model classical civilization of the region is, of course, ancient China. The fundamental values of ancient Chinese political culture—particularly its ethnocentrism, moralism, and universalism—were supposedly recorded for posterity by Confucius 孔子 (551–479 BCE) and others and exerted to much of the known world at the time through the establishments and expansions of the unified Chinese empires of Qin 秦 (221–206 BCE) and Han 漢 (206 BCE–220 CE).⁶ As Lothar von Falkenhausen has shown through the more recent archaeological research in China, the visions of Chinese antiquity that Confucius supposedly recorded in the *Five Classics* 五經 likely suffers from a certain anachronism that involved ideological idealization of antiquity.⁷ This perspective is further corroborated by textual research that questions a direct connection between these works and the historical Confucius.⁸ Regardless of the genesis amnesia and the gap between the ideals and practical applications of such ideals, the basic values of ancient Chinese political culture based on the idealized continued

⁵ Lotte Jensen, “The Roots of Nationalism: Introduction,” in *The Roots of Nationalism: National Identity Formation in Early Modern Europe, 1600–1815*, ed. Lotte Jensen (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016), 14.

⁶ As more recent works of research have shown, the political thought and ideology that guided the unified Chinese empires has significantly evolved over time in order to effectively maintain political order. See Loubna El Amine, *Classical Confucian Political Thought: A New Interpretation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012); Dingxin Zhao, *The Confucian-Legalist State: A New Theory of Chinese History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

⁷ Lothar von Falkenhausen, *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius (1000–250 BC): The Archaeological Evidence* (Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, 2006).

⁸ Michael Nylan, *The Five “Confucian” Classics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).

to guide all subsequent Chinese dynasties regardless of the flexibility in implementations of such ideals.⁹

As for Korea and Japan, the establishment of the Lelang Commandery 樂浪郡 (108 BCE–313 CE) as a Chinese colonial outpost in northwestern Korea provided the critical stimulant that transplanted Chinese ideals to the Korean Peninsula and parts of the Japanese Archipelago.¹⁰ Entrenched along the strategic Taedong River 大同江 basin for more than four centuries, the Lelang Commandery stimulated creations of nascent states in parts of Korea and Japan that internalized such Chinese ideals.¹¹ Extant materials from the ancient “Korean” and “Japanese” states suggest that these states appropriated ancient Chinese political culture for their own use, self-representing their countries as Chinese-style empires based on the same set of ethnocentric, moralistic, and universalist values dating back to antiquity.

For example, the Kwanggaet’o Stele 廣開土王陵碑, erected in 414 CE by King Changsu 長壽王 (r. 413–491) to commemorate the successful rounds of expansionist wars of the Koguryō 高句麗 Kingdom, shows that the kingdom justified its wars as self-righteous wars against barbarians and represented itself as the center of a miniature, hierarchical, international order in accordance with the Chinese model dating from ancient times. After describing its royal lineage

⁹ Yuri Pines, *The Everlasting Empire: The Political Culture of Ancient China and Its Imperial Legacy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012).

¹⁰ Hyung Il Pai, *Constructing “Korean” Origins: A Critical Review of Archaeology, Historiography, and Racial Myth in Korean State-Formation Theories* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2000). For an overview of the history of the Lelang Commandery in more general terms, see O Yōngch’an 吳永贊, *Nangnang-gun yōn’gu* 樂浪郡研究 (P’aju: Sagyejöl, 2006).

¹¹ Joan R. Piggott, *The Emergence of Japanese Kingship* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 1-43; Gina L. Barnes, *State Formation in Korea: Historical and Archaeological Perspectives* (Richmond: Curzon, 2001), 1-53; idem, *Archaeology of East Asia: The Rise of Civilization in China, Korea and Japan* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2015), 309-383. Historian Fukuya Katsumi 深谷克己 emphasizes the lasting impact of this early transference of Chinese political culture to Japan. Also see Fukuya Katsumi 深谷克己, *Higashi Ajia hōbunmeiken no naka no Nihon shi* 東アジア法文明圏の中の日本史 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2012).

as divinely ordained, the legible portions of this stele show Koguryō depictions of their enemies as barbarians, as in the expressions of “barbarous Paekche” 百殘 for the Paekche 百濟 Kingdom of southwestern Korea and “Japanese thieves” 倭賊 for the Japanese. The stele also characterizes the kingdom’s relations with its southern neighbors as inherently hierarchical, using the notion of tribute-receiving from the “barbarians” as a sign of respect and acknowledgement of that unequal relationship. “From the old days, barbarous Paekche and Silla have been subordinate peoples [to Koguryō] and they have been submitting tribute ever since” 百殘新羅舊是屬民由來朝貢.¹²

Some of the earliest Japanese records also suggest internalization of the same political culture and rhetoric. The *Book of Song* 宋書, a historical text covering the Liu Song dynasty 劉宋朝 of southern China (420–479 CE), recorded a document sent by a “king of Japan” 倭王 in 478 CE. This “king,” possibly Emperor Yūryaku 雄略天皇 (r. 456–479), claimed:

From the ancient times, our ancestors have put on armor around their bodies and trekked the mountains and streams without a respite. They conquered the fifty-five countries of the hairy people [most like the Emishi people of northeastern Japan] to the east, subjugated the sixty-six countries of the various barbarians to the west, and crossed the sea northwards and pacified the ninety-five countries to the north.

自昔祖禰躬環甲冑跋涉山川不遑寧處東征毛人五十五國西服衆夷六十六國渡平海北九十五國。¹³

In another instance, according to the Japanese historical text *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 (“Chronicles of Japan,” 720 CE), the Japanese official Iki no Hakatoko 伊吉博德 (?–?) met with Emperor Gaozong of Tang 唐高宗 (r. 649–683) at the Tang capital in 659 CE. In order to make a display that Japan also had subjugated “barbarians,” Iki no Hakatoko presented the Tang emperor a male

¹² *Kwanggaet’o Taewang pi* 廣開土大王碑, ed. Pae Kyōngsōk 裴敬爽 (Seoul: Ihwa Munhwa Ch’ulp’ansa, 2010), 30-53.

¹³ *Song shu* 宋書, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Kyūko Shoin, 1971), 1358.

and a female Emishi 蝦夷 from the Japan's northeast, claiming that the Emishi "pay annual tribute to our country's court" 每歲入貢本國之朝.¹⁴ By showing off its own set of subjugated "barbarians," the Japanese sought to present themselves as a Chinese-style empire in its own right.

Construction of a proto-national identity by way of avowed connections to the classical civilization of the Axial Age is also emblematic of medieval and early modern Europe. Typically described as *translatio imperii* ("transfer of rule"), this notion of successorship was widely utilized by the Europeans of those ages to legitimize their own states by laying claims to the Roman mantle.¹⁵ This idea was augmented by the concomitant notion of *translatio studii* ("transfer of learning"), which signified that the center of political power coincides with the center of civilization and culture.¹⁶ Ernst Curtius and Leonard Tennenhouse note:

The Bible furnished medieval historical thought with yet another theological substantiation for the replacement of one empire by another: "Regnum a gente in gentem transfertur propter injustitias et injurias et contumelias et diversos dolos" (Ecclesiasticus 10:8). "Because of unrighteous dealings, injuries, and riches got by deceit, the kingdom is transferred from one people to another." The word *transfertur* ("is transferred") gives rise to the concept of *translatio* (transference) which is basic for medieval historical theory. The renewal of the Empire by Charlemagne could be regarded as a transferal of the Roman *imperium* to another people. This is implied in the formula *translatio imperii*, with which the *translatio studii* (transferal of learning from Athens or Rome to Paris) was

¹⁴ *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀, trans. and eds. Sakamoto Tarō 坂本太郎 et al, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1965), 339-341.

¹⁵ William Hammer, "The Concept of the New or Second Rome in the Middle Ages," *Speculum* 19, no. 1 (January 1944): 50-62; Jacques Le Goff, *Medieval Civilization 400-1500*, trans. Julia Barrow (Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1988), 171-172.

¹⁶ For some of representative studies, see Karl D. Uitti, *Story, Myth, and Celebration in Old French Narrative Poetry, 1050-1200* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973); Édouard Jeauneau, *Translatio studii: The Transmission of Learning, A Gilsonian Theme* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1995); Karlheinz Stierle, "Translatio Studii and Renaissance," in *The Translatability of Cultures: Figurations of the Space Between*, eds. Sanford Budick and Wolfgang Iser (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 55-67.

later coordinated. The medieval Empire took over from Rome the idea of world empire: thus it had a universal, not a national, character.¹⁷

Developed by Roman poets to account for the transfer of imperial power from Athens to Rome, and imitated by poets over time as learning migrated from Rome to later imperial centers, the first trop under consideration, *translatio imperii*, predicted the westward transfer of imperial authority. During the Middle Ages, *translatio imperii* was used to imagine the transfer of such authority from Rome to Charlemagne's Paris and later to various Italian city-states. By the High Renaissance, poets were already making the case that France, England, or one of a number of other European candidates was the true heir of Roman *imperium*.¹⁸

As John Pocock noted regarding medieval European political culture, "The myth of the Roman empire, translated, universal and persisting to the end of time, was still a necessary component of Latin Christian discourse."¹⁹ But such notion of successorship was not necessarily limited to Christians, as, for example, the Muslim Ottomans also claimed successorship to Rome for a time through its conquest of Byzantium.²⁰ This was true even for states whose territories did not overlap with the extent of the Roman Empire, as Russia also laid claims to the Roman legacy starting in the sixteenth century and reframed Moscow as the "Third Rome" following the fall of the "Second Rome" in Constantinople.²¹ Intellectuals of Great Britain laid claim to the

¹⁷ Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Pantheon Books, 1953), 28-29.

¹⁸ Leonard Tennenhouse, *The Importance of Feeling English: American Literature and the British Diaspora, 1750-1850* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 13.

¹⁹ J. G. A. Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion, Volume Three: The First Decline and Fall* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 145.

²⁰ Franz Babinger, *Mehmed the Conqueror and His Time*, trans. Ralph Manheim, ed. William C. Hickman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 416-418.

²¹ Dimitri Strémooukhoff, "Moscow the Third Rome: Sources of the Doctrine," *Speculum* 28, no. 1 (January 1953): 84-101; Stephen L. Baehr, "From History to National Myth: *Translatio imperii* in Eighteenth-Century Russia," *Russian Review* 37, no. 1 (January 1978): 1-13; Ju M. Lotman and B. A. Uspenskij, "Echos of the Notion of 'Moscow as the Third Rome' in Peter the Great's Ideology," in *The Semiotics of Russian Culture*, ed. Ann Shukman, trans. N. F. C. Owen (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, 1984): 53-67; Andrew Kahn, "Readings of Imperial Role from Lomonosov to Pushkin," *Slavic Review* 52, no. 4 (Winter 1993): 745-768; Alar Laats, "The Concept of the Third Rome and Its Political Implications," *ENDC Proceedings* 12 (2009): 93-113.

Roman legacy, as did those in the newly-formed United States, a country founded within the European tradition yet located an ocean away.²² More recently, historian Caspar Hirschi has even denoted the competitive intra-European claims to the residual rights of the universal Roman Empire during the medieval and early modern periods, particularly its universalist and imperialist culture that viewed its enemies as barbarians, as the pre-modern origins of modern nationalism.²³ In other words, such competitive European claims to the Roman mantle can be described as proto-nationalism.

One could note, of course, that while the empire of Rome was never fully restored by any European power, a number of successor dynasties emerged in China and the lineage of the Chinese Empire remained unbroken into the twentieth century. While that is certainly true, the continued existence of subsequent Chinese dynasties did not forestall the conceivability of Korean or Japanese claims of successorship vis-à-vis ancient China; in fact, the Japanese and Korean states envisaged themselves to be in competition against the later Chinese dynasties for the same claims of supremacy rooted in the ideals of Chinese antiquity. In other words, like the medieval and early modern European states laying claims to the Roman legacy, the Korean and Japanese states laid claims to the idealized Chinese antiquity alongside the contemporary Chinese states.

For instance, the recently discovered epitaph of the Koguryŏ aristocrat Ko Ŭldŏk 高乙德 (618–699 CE), who had fought against the Tang armies during the war before getting captured in

²² Rama Sundari Mantena, “Imperial Ideology and the Uses of Rome in Discourses on Britain’s Indian Empire,” in *Classics and Imperialism in the British Empire*, ed. Mark Bradley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 54-73; Margaret Malamud, “*Translatio imperii*: America as the New Rome, c. 1900,” in *Classics and Imperialism in the British Empire*, ed. Mark Bradley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 249-283; Bente Lucht, *Writing Empire: Latin Quotations in Texts on the British Empire* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2012).

²³ Caspar Hirschi, *The Origins of Nationalism: An Alternative History from Ancient Rome to Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

661, reveals the way some of the people of Koguryŏ perceived the place of their country vis-à-vis Tang China. This epitaph, most likely written by a fellow Koguryŏ man close to Ko Ŭldŏk, describes the fall of Koguryŏ to the Tang in 668 as an event in which “the eastern land [Koguryŏ] returned the heavenly mandate to the western dynasty [Tang China]” 東土歸命西朝.²⁴ The epitaph’s writer is not only refusing to recognize the Tang as the middle kingdom by describing Tang China and Koguryŏ on equal terms as the west and the east, but also noting that Koguryŏ had possessed the heavenly mandate, implying that Koguryŏ existed as the one and only Middle Kingdom prior to its fall. The Japanese also displayed such an outlook, as noted in the well-known message sent to the Emperor Wen of Sui 隋文帝 (r. 581–604 CE) in which the Japanese created the notion of equality between Tang China and Japan by describing the Sui emperor as “the son of heaven where the sun sets” 日沒處天子 vis-à-vis the Japanese emperor who was “the son of heaven where the sun rises” 日出處天子.²⁵

Tang China ultimately defeated both Koguryŏ and Japan in the battlefields, and the Silla dynasty of Korea survived an all-out regional war during the mid-seventh century CE with the aid of the Tang forces. Even after the notion of military competition with China became largely untenable, the Japanese and Korean intellectuals continued to perceive their country to be in competition against the later Chinese dynasties in other ways. Ch’oe Ch’iwŏn 崔致遠 (857–908 CE), for instance, sought to overturn the traditional Chinese perception that all non-Chinese peoples living outside of China in the four directions are barbaric by arguing for the exceptional civilization in Korea. Speaking on the behalf of Silla’s Queen Chinsŏng 眞聖女王 (r. 887–897

²⁴ Yi Sŏngjae 李成制, “Ŭnŭ Koguryŏ mujang ũi kagye wa ildaegi: Saero palgyŏndoen <Ko Ŭldŏk myoji> e daehan yŏkchu wa punsŏk” 어느 高句麗 武將의 家系와 一代記: 새로 發見된 <高乙德墓誌>에 對한 譯註와 分析, *Chungguk kojungsesa yŏn’gu* 中國古中世史研究 38 (November 2015): 181.

²⁵ *Sui shu* 隋書, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Kyūko Shoin, 1971), 860.

CE) at the Tang court, Ch'oe quoted the queen in saying that “this one area [Silla to the east] is different from the other three directions” 顧茲一境異彼三方 because “its rites are the best among all countries and its households keep [the ancient Chinese classics such as] the *Classic of Poetry* and the *Book of Documents* [to study]” 禮義國爲最詩書家所藏.²⁶ Despite the breakouts of rebellions and overall decline of the dynasty by the late ninth century CE, Ch'oe Ch'iwön continued to argue for the existence of grand civilization in Korea, one rooted in the idealized visions of the antiquity.

During the Koryŏ 高麗 dynasty (918–1392 CE), Pak Illyang 朴寅亮 (1024–1096) described the Korea of his dynasty as a reincarnation of ancient China, describing it as the “country of virtuous men” 君子國, with the “wagon of the Yin dynasty [c. 1600–1040 BCE]” 殷輅, “crown of the Zhou dynasty [c. 1046–256 BCE]” 周冕, “sun of Emperor Shun [c. 2294–2184 BCE] 舜日, and “clouds of Emperor Yao [c. 2324–2206 BCE]” 堯雲.²⁷ In addition, Yi Kyubo 李奎報 (1168–1241) noted the exceptional quality and quantity of talented and virtuous men in Korean history as one reason why Korea was competitive vis-à-vis contemporaneous China despite its relatively small size. After looking at a map displaying China and its surrounding countries, Yi Kyubo produced a poem in response. Part of it reads:

萬國森羅數幅牋 All things of the universe are displayed in a few pages,
三韓隈若一微塊 Korea looks like a lump in the corner.
觀者莫小之 Onlookers, do not say that [Korea] is small,
我眼謂差大 In my eyes, [Korea] is quite big.
今古才賢袞袞生 Continuously giving birth to talented and virtuous men in history,

²⁶ Ch'oe Ch'iwön 崔致遠, “Koun chip” 孤雲集, in *Yŏngin p'yojŏm Han'guk munjip ch'onggan* 影印標點韓國文集叢刊, vol. 1 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch'ujinhoe, 1990), 155.

²⁷ Pak Illyang 朴寅亮, “Munwang aech'aek” 文王哀冊, in *Kugyŏk Tongmunsŏn* 國譯東文選, eds. Sŏ Kŏjŏng 徐居正 et al., vol. 3 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch'ujinhoe, 1998), 74.

較之中夏毋多愧 It is respectable even when compared against China.
有人曰國無則非 People say that a country without [talented men] is not a country,
胡戎雖大猶如芥 The barbarians may be large in territory, but they are worthless.²⁸

Regardless of its size, Korea was comparable to China itself through its cultural achievements by its supposedly exceptional men of talent and virtue.

Some were more daring in their assertions. Chin Hwa 陳渾 (c. 1180–1220), for another example, emphasized Korean cultural and civilizational superiority vis-à-vis contemporary China as well as the Jin empire (1115–1234) in the following poem:

西華已蕭索 China of the west has already withered,
北寨尚昏蒙 [Those] north of the stockade [the Jin empire] are still foolishly uncivilized.
坐待文明旦 [As I am] sitting and waiting for the morning of civilization,
天東日欲紅 The sun is about to rise from the heaven's east [Korea].²⁹

Yi Sūnghyu 李承休 (1224–1300) also spoke of Korean superiority over contemporary China in a poem. Part of it reads:

聖朝本是右文朝 The divine dynasty [Korea] has always revered civilization.
文物煌煌掩唐漢 Its brilliant civilization overwhelms that of Tang and Han China.³⁰

As far as Yi Sūnghyu could see, his own country was superior to the later Chinese dynasties of Han and Tang 唐 (618–907 CE) and thereby a better suited successor to the ideals of the ancient Chinese civilization.

The Japanese intellectuals also sought to construct their own proto-nationalist identity in competition with the subsequent Chinese dynasties based on the idealized values of Chinese

²⁸ Yi Kyubo 李奎報, “Tongguk Yi Sangguk chip” 東國李相國集, in *Yōngin p'yojōm Han'guk munjip ch'onggan* 影印標點韓國文集叢刊, vol. 1 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch'ujinhoe, 1990), 469.

²⁹ Chin Hwa 陳渾, “Maeho yugo” 梅湖遺稿, in *Yōngin p'yojōm Han'guk munjip ch'onggan* 影印標點韓國文集叢刊, vol. 2 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch'ujinhoe, 1990), 274.

³⁰ Yi Sūnghyu 李承休, “Tongan gōsa chip” 動安居士集, in *Yōngin p'yojōm Han'guk munjip ch'onggan* 影印標點韓國文集叢刊, vol. 2 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch'ujinhoe, 1990), 401.

antiquity. *Gukansho* 愚管抄 (“Jottings of a Fool”), the work of the Japanese monk Jien 慈円 (1155–1225) written around 1220 CE, is a case in point. Written in the context of a bitter and ongoing conflict involving the imperial court and military warlords that plunged Japan into a destructive civil war, Jien was conscious that the state of Japanese politics and society of his own time lagged far behind the ancient Chinese ideals. After noting the grand ideals of governance dating from the Chinese antiquity, Jien sorrowfully noted:

While I want to speak of the monarchy of Japan in comparison [to the ancient Chinese ideals of rule], in Japan, [such values] do not appear in the proprieties recorded in texts following the *Nihon shoki* to the degree that [such comparisons are] inappropriate.

コノ日本國ノ帝王ヲ推知シテ擬アテ、申サマホシケレド、ソレハ日本國ニハ、日本記已下ノ風儀ニモヲトリ、ツヤツヤトナキ事ニテ中々アシカリヌベシ。³¹

Despite his recognition that Japan of his day did not live up to the ideals of Chinese antiquity, Jien still constructed the concept of Japan as superior to the later Chinese dynasties and thereby worthy of succeeding the ancient Chinese ideals. First, Jien overviewed the history of China from the ancient times to his own time, which showed that chaotic civil wars and even “illegitimate rules” 僞位 by the dynasties founded by nomadic non-Chinese conquerors marred much of Chinese history.³² Jien emphasized the unique Japanese qualities rooted in its foreordained tradition, that “Japan’s customs dating from the Age of Gods prohibit those who are not from the royal family from becoming the country’s king” 日本國ノナラヒハ、國王種性ノ人ナラヌスヂヲ國王ニハスマジト、神ノ代ヨリサダメタル國ナリ。³³

³¹ Jien 慈円, *Gukanshō* 愚管抄, eds. Okami Masao 岡見正雄 and Akamatsu Toshihide 赤松俊秀 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1967), 322.

³² *Ibid.*, 41-43.

³³ *Ibid.*, 328-329.

Based on this understanding, Jien emphasized the divinely ordained relationship between the Japanese imperial lineage and the members of the prestigious Fujiwara clan, who were preordained to work together with the Japanese emperor like the “mergence of fish and water” 漁水合體.³⁴ This idea, of course, goes back to the reason why Jien wrote the book in the first place: he wrote to convince his readers that the imperial court and powerful aristocratic families of Japan should cooperate in order to take the country back to its harmonious, preordained state. In sum, Jien pointed to the unique impossibility of dynastic revolution in Japan and the destined, symbiotic relationship between the Japanese monarchy and his officials as the hallmarks of Japanese proto-nationalist identity that no other country of his day could claim, including contemporaneous China. In this sense, Japan was still the closest thing to the Chinese ideals of ancient times.

Kitabatake Chikafusa 北畠親房 (1293–1354) made the same point in his “Chronicles of the Authentic Lineages of the Divine Emperors” 神皇正統記. The book emphasized, for instance, Japan’s inherent superiority vis-à-vis other contemporaneous pillars of civilization like India and China based on the same idea of Japanese exceptionalism, rooted in the historical understanding that only the Japanese imperial lineage remained uninterrupted from time immemorial. After noting how the histories of India and China are replete with examples of violent dynastic revolutions, Kitabatake emphasized how exceptional and righteous Japan is in that regard:

From the heaven and earth’s creation to this day, our country alone is without unrighteousness in succession of the imperial throne. While the throne was occasionally succeeded through the collateral line within the imperial family, it [eventually] returned back to the main line. This solely has to do with the remarkability of the divine ordinance and why our country is said to be different from other countries.

³⁴ Ibid., 329.

唯我國のみ天地ひらけし初より今の世の今日に至まで、日嗣をうけ給ことよこしまならず。一種姓の中におきてもおのづから傍より傳へ給しすら猶正にかへる道ありてぞたもちましましける。是しかしながら神明の御誓あらたにして余國にことなるべきいはれなり。³⁵

Based on such claims of Japanese exceptionalism, Kitabatake went on to describe how Japan became the reservoir of Chinese antiquity and replaced China itself as the successor of the ideals of ancient China. First, Kitabatake noted how Qin Shi Huang 秦始皇 (r. 247–220 BCE), the first emperor of the Qin Dynasty, sought after the elixir of life in Japan. The Japanese supposedly had asked for the Chinese classics in return, and the Qin emperor “shipped them [to Japan] in their entirety” ことごとくこれをおくる. Later, the Qin emperor conducted his infamous “burning of books and burying of scholars” 焚書坑儒, which resulted in “all texts of Confucius ended up in Japan” 孔子の全經日本にとどまる.³⁶ Despite the lack of evidence in finding the elixir of life in Japan or overseas shipping of ancient Chinese texts, Kitabatake still regarded this episode of transference as the moment when Japan replaced China as the bona fide successor of Chinese antiquity. After noting the famous line from the *Analects* 論語 that Confucius “wanted to live among the nine barbarian groups [of the east]” 欲居九夷, Kitabatake assumed that “Japan must be one of the nine barbarian groups [of the east]” 日本は九夷の其一なるべし. Based on this assumption that even ancient Chinese sages like Confucius came to prefer Japan over China, Kitabatake argued that, unlike the words used for the “barbarians” living in the other three directions, the Chinese word for the “eastern barbarian” 夷 in fact had a positive connotation due to its connection to Japan:

³⁵ Kitabatake Chikafusa 北畠親房, *Jinnō shōtōki* 神皇正統記, ed. Iwasa Masashi 岩佐正 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1976), 24.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 49.

[The character “eastern barbarian”] is using the character “big” and the character “arrow,” because only [the people of] the east possess virtue and long-life.
ただ東は仁ありて命ながし。よりにて大・弓の字をしたがふ。³⁷

Such claims of successorship were also made in Korea leading into the early modern period. The editors of the *Tongguk t'onggam* 東國通鑑 (“Comprehensive Mirror of the Eastern Kingdom”), a supra-dynastic history of Korea completed as a state project in 1485 CE made the following assertion of Korean exceptionalism based on its cultural accomplishments vis-à-vis China that led even the Chinese across different historical periods to sing its praises:

The beauty of our country’s rites and customs became known around the world. Confucius desired to live here, a history of the Han dynasty spoke of the benevolence and virtue [of Korea], the *Book of Tang* glorified [Korea] as the country of virtuous men, the Song dynasty considered us to be a country of rites, music, and civilization. [Ming dynasty prince] Hanxuzi [Zhu Quan 朱權 (1378–1448)] also said that [Korea is] a country of Confucian classics, benevolence and righteousness.
吾東方禮俗之美聞於天下夫子有欲居之志漢史稱仁賢之化唐書美君子之國宋朝以爲禮樂文物之邦涵虛子亦曰詩書仁義之國也。³⁸

The Korean official Ki Taesŭng 奇大升 (1527–1572) also argued for Korea’s exceptionalism based on its cultural accomplishments rooted in the ideals of Chinese antiquity:

Our great country in the east [Korea] is the country that [Confucius] wanted to live in. Every family is [devoted to] Confucius and Mencius, and every household [studies] the Cheng brothers and Zhu Xi. [Korea’s] civil rule shines brightly, and [its people] diligently [read the ancient Chinese classics such as] the *Classic of Poetry* and the *Book of Documents* and enjoy the rites and music [of antiquity].
粵我大東之域矧是欲居之邦家孔孟而戶周程文治炳蔚敦詩書而悅禮樂。³⁹

Following the Manchu conquest of China in the seventeenth century, such assertions of Korean proto-nationalism even took on apocalyptic undertones, as many Korean intellectuals

³⁷ Ibid., 50.

³⁸ *Tongguk t'onggam* 東國通鑑, vol. 1 (Seoul: Kyōngin Munhwasa, 1974), 40.

³⁹ Ki Taesŭng 奇大升, “Kobong chip” 高峯集, in *Yōngin p'yojōm Han'guk munjip ch'onggan* 影印標點韓國文集叢刊, vol. 40 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch'ujinhoe, 1989), 57.

viewed Korea as the only—and perhaps the last—bastion of civilization. For them, it was a possibility that there might never be another successor to the ancient civilization. As Kim Sökchu 金錫胄 (1634–1684) noted in 1681, “Now that China has no ruler, we have become the Eastern Zhou [ancient China] itself” 諸夏無君我爲東周.⁴⁰ Noting that China had been on a consistent decline with “its way of governance since ancient times became corrupted with despotism” 三代以下治道大抵皆是雜霸也, the prominent Korean official Han Wönjin 韓元震 (1682–1751) criticized the state of governance in later Chinese dynasties, stating that “the Han dynasty’s rule intermingled with Daoism” 漢之治雜於黃老, “the Tang dynasty’s rule featured barbarism” 唐之治雜於夷狄, “the Song dynasty’s rule (960–1279) lent itself to overindulgence” 宋之治狃於姑息, and that “the Ming dynasty’s rule (1368–1644) was excessively stringent, causing its sudden fall” 明之治過於嚴急其亡之忽焉.⁴¹

Contrary to the developments in China proper, Han Wönjin notes that the rule of civilization in Korea was flourishing, which enabled the transference of civilization from China to Korea. He considered this the shift in the seat of civilization as cosmic as well as preordained:

Within the universe, the North and the West form a turbid yin energy while the South and the East forms a clear yang energy. This is why, since the Three Dynasties [of ancient China], the governance was impressive and learning flourished in the South and the East. [The Chinese sage] Taibo went south to the Chu and Wu states, and when the Song dynasty moved southward, the rites, music, and civilization also followed [the Song] and relocated. Zhu Xi was also born there, succeeding Confucius. [The Chinese sage] Jizi went eastward to our country [Korea], and the rule of civilization greatly flourished during the time of our dynasty [Chosŏn].

天地之間西北爲陰濁而東南爲陽明故三代以後治道之休明道學之盛皆在東南泰伯南往荆吳而宋室南渡禮樂文物隨遷朱子又生其地以接孔子之統箕子東來我國而至我朝大興文明之治。

⁴⁰ *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* 朝鮮王朝實錄 *Sukchong sillok* 肅宗實錄: 12 卷 7 年 11 月 9 日 (1681).

⁴¹ Han Wönjin 韓元震, “Namdang chip” 南塘集, in *Yŏngin p’yojŏm Han’guk munjip ch’onggan* 影印標點韓國文集叢刊, vol. 201 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe, 1998), 110-111.

The sages, through their wisdom, can foresee the next hundred generations, and this is why Taibo and Jizi left China. They could have gone anywhere, but they must have [gone] to the South and the East, respectively, because they already knew that these places were going to be the seats of civilization. Furthermore, after Zhu Xi, the transmission of the Way ended in China. The barbarians came in and occupied the place where “the Three Emperors and Five Sovereigns” [the mythological rulers and deities of Chinese antiquity] once passed on the rites, music, and civilization, thereby transforming [China] into the land of fur and hide [of northern nomads]. Now, only our country exists [as a civilized nation] under the heavens. Despite occupying just one corner, [our country is] capable of maintaining a civilized rule and sustaining the rites, music, and civilization. [Our country also] produces true Confucians generation after generation. This must be the will of heaven. How could it be an accident?

聖人之智能見百世之後故泰伯箕子之去中國也何處不可往而必於東南者蓋其先知其地之終必爲文明之區也且朱子以後中國道統之傳遂絕夷狄迭爲入據三五相傳禮樂文物之所變爲氈裘之鄉今天之下獨有我國以一隅偏邦能保其文明之治禮樂文物在焉眞儒代作此實天意之所在也豈偶然而然者哉。⁴²

Yun Ki 尹愔 (1741–1826) also makes this point in his writings, arguing that the claims made by the later Chinese dynasties with regard to the legacy of Chinese antiquity ended with the fall of the Ming dynasty. Yun notes that Korea effectively became the last remaining successor of the idealized Chinese antiquity. In terms of civilization, even the notion of competition with the later Chinese dynasties disappeared with the Manchu dynasty’s takeover of China proper:

Come to think about it, there is no place where [the principles of] the *Spring and Autumn Annals* [of Confucius] still exist in China. Even if Zhu Xi rose [from the dead] to write *Zizhi tongjian gangmu* [“Outlines and Details [of the Comprehensive Mirror in Aid of Governance”] again, he would have to end with the Chongzhen Emperor [r. 1627–1644]. The decorous customs of the East [Korea] and the fact that we alone have avoided barbarism in the world correspond to Confucius’s intention to cross the sea and live [in Korea]. This is why [Korea] is referred to as the Eastern Zhou [ancient China]. 顧瞻中州讀無地於春秋則雖使朱子復起而爲綱目亦必絕筆於崇禎而吾東方禮義之俗超然獨免於左衽天下實符夫子浮海欲居之意則是所謂東周也。⁴³

⁴² Ibid., 152.

⁴³ Yun Ki 尹愔, “Mumyōngja chip” 無名子集, in *Yōngin p’yojōm Han’guk munjip ch’onggan* 影印標點韓國文集叢刊, vol. 256 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe, 2000), 321.

The reason Confucius wanted to live [in Korea] is that, through his limitless foresight, he knew of the eventual disappearance of the rites, music, and civilization in China, and their survival within Korean borders.

吾夫子之所嘗欲居者安知非睿視無涯固已知中國之禮樂文物畢竟不在於中國而在於東方之疆域中耶。⁴⁴

As I will show in the subsequent chapters of this dissertation, the Japanese intellectuals of the early modern period also based much of their proto-national identity rooted in the claims of successorship to the idealized Chinese antiquity. However, one could note that the historical existence of Japanese Shintoism based on native beliefs and mythology and the emergence of a scholarly discourse exclusively rooted in the study of ancient Japanese texts, the “national learning” 國學 phenomenon of scholars such as Kamo no Mabuchi 賀茂真淵 (1697–1769) and Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長 (1730–1801) directly contradict my argument and definition of the term proto-nationalism. This issue is even more problematic when one considers the fact that two of the earliest extant Japanese texts, the *Kojiki* 古事記 (“Account of Ancient Matters,” 712 CE) and the *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀, are mytho-historical accounts specifically about how the founding of Japan is completely separate from that of China. Of course, they are also the two most important texts of the Japanese Shintoism and “national learning.” Even early modern European observers of Japan noted the argument regarding the independent founding of Japan. Engelbert Kaempfer (1651–1716), who lived in Japan from 1690 to 1692, recorded the widespread and popular Japanese narratives of their independent origins:

The Japanese are very indignant when one wants to trace their origin back to the empire and blood of the Chinese, or other foreign people, for they want to have their origin in their own small world. Yet they do not wish to have come into being like mice and earthworms appearing out of the soil—as Diogenes the Cynic accused the haughty people of Athens who did not want to owe their origin to any other place or nation—but in a far loftier and nobler fashion. Thus they trace their origins back to the race of the gods and eternity (if I may use these words), even though the gods are not considered eternal but

⁴⁴ Ibid., 334.

were created by the force of the first movement of chaos. They posit two lineages of gods: The first is a race of heavenly spirits or incorporeal gods, who, one after the other, ruled the world, or rather, their country, for an immeasurable number of times and years. The other is a lineage of earthly spirits or human gods, who also ruled the Japanese world one after the other for a long, but definite time and number of years. These begot the third lineage, the people of the Japanese nation.⁴⁵

Despite the existence of such views, I would still argue that such claims of independent founding and the phenomenon of the “national learning” in Japan can and should be interpreted within the bounds of proto-nationalism rooted in the claims of successorship to Chinese antiquity. In his recent book, historian Mark McNally challenges the conventional scholarly perspective that sharply distinguishes “national learning” from Japanese Confucianism and other schools of thought by arguing that all such intellectual trends or “schools” can be interpreted as manifestations of exceptionalism. Regardless of their differences in rhetoric, McNally argues, what they are ultimately arguing for is the same: Japanese exceptionalism.⁴⁶

In this regard, Tsuda Sōkichi 津田左右吉 (1873–1961)’s reading of Shintoism and “national learning” provides important insight. In his “Chinese thought and Japan” 支那思想と日本 (1938), Tsuda argues how truly superficial the Chinese influence has been on the everyday lives of the Japanese people in history. Standing in opposition to the traditional perspective that often emphasizes the profundity of Chinese cultural influence upon Japan, Tsuda sees extremely little in common between the two societies. Contrary to the developments in popular culture, however, when “the Way of the Japanese people has been established in opposition to the Chinese thought” 支那思想に反抗して日本人の道を立てようとしたものに於いて, Chinese

⁴⁵ Engelbert Kaempfer, *Kaempfer’s Japan: Tokugawa Culture Observed*, trans. and ed. Beatrice M. Bodart-Bailey (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1999), 51.

⁴⁶ Mark McNally, *Like No Other: Exceptionalism and Nativism in Early Modern Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2016).

thought proved to be profoundly influential to its development.⁴⁷ Despite the rhetoric of oppositional difference, Tsuda shows that Sinitic Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism deeply influenced the discursive formation of Japanese Shintoism throughout its history.⁴⁸ His argument is further corroborated by the recent academic studies of Shintoism, all of which notes Shintoism's adaptability and malleability in merging with other traditions.⁴⁹

In this sense, Motoori Norinaga's quest to rediscover the ancient Japanese Way through the study of Japanese texts was ultimately a futile enterprise:

As a [system of] thought, Norinaga's the Way of the Gods was hollow and without any content. This is because the Chinese thought, which he consciously excluded [in his work], was present at the basis of his thought.

宣長の神の道は思想としては何等の内容の無い空虚なものであると共に、その思想の根本に彼の排斥して已まなかつた支那思想があるからである。⁵⁰

This is not to say that nothing original came from Norinaga's work. As is widely known now, his unearthing of the concept of the *Mono no aware* as a uniquely Japanese theory of aesthetics opened the way for the reinterpretation of works of classical Japanese poetry and literature as possessing distinctively Japanese cultural values.⁵¹ On the other hand, I also show in chapter five of this dissertation that much of Norinaga's work, particularly his magnum opus the *Kojiki-den* 古事記傳 (“Commentaries on the *Kojiki*”), reaffirms the traditional Japanese understanding of Japan as a Chinese-style empire with subservient tributary states of its own.

⁴⁷ Tsuda Sōkichi 津田左右吉, *Shina shisō to Nihon* 支那思想と日本 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1938), 52.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 53-72.

⁴⁹ For perhaps the best synthesis of scholarship on the history of Shinto, see Helen Hardacre, *Shinto: A History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

⁵⁰ Tsuda Sōkichi 津田左右吉, *Shina shisō to Nihon* 支那思想と日本, 73.

⁵¹ Despite the common and even scholarly inditement of the *Mono no aware* as the *Mono no aware* and the conventional usage of the Chinese character “sadness” 哀 in writing it, Norinaga himself warns against such conventions. See Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長, “Genji monogatari tama no ogushi” 源氏物語玉の小櫛, in *Motoori Norinaga zenshū* 本居宣長全集, ed. Ōno Susumu 大野晋, vol. 4 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1969), 201-202.

Furthermore, Kinryū Keiyū 金龍敬雄 (1713–1782), a Japanese scholar contemporary to

Norinaga, had already argued Tsuda’s point:

The people in general favor the country that they were born in. Because of this, they framed Japan, like China, with a long history dating from the creation in order to make it competitive [with China]. They thereby created strange and unpronounceable names of gods for the “seven generations of heavenly gods” and the “five generations of earthly gods” with, among other things, lifespans of hundreds of millions of years. They have gathered these hollow, foolish, and indistinct falsehoods and created a forgery called “the Age of the Gods” volume [of the *Nihon shoki*].

兎角人ハ我生レシ國ヲ最負スルモノ故日本ヲ唐土ト同ジ様ニ開闢久シク抗セントスル故ニ。天神七代ノ。地神五代ノトテ。奇妙ナ舌モモトヲリカ子ル尊ノ名ヲ作り。壽命ハ百億萬歳ノ。何ノ角ノトテ。空蒙杳冥虚誕杜撰ノ事ヲ取集メ神代卷トヤラン云書ヲ偽作ス。⁵²

Kinryū Keiyū realized that much of the Japanese mythological narratives that the Japanese Shintoism and “national learning” school based themselves on were merely trying to frame Japan as something comparable to China. In terms of competing with China, there is little difference between the scholars of “national learning” and other schools of thought in early modern Japan.

My claim that the early modern Japanese Confucianism and “national learning” may be equally proto-nationalistic is better elucidated by noting how the two emblematic scholars of each school, Ogyū Sorai 荻生徂徠 (1666–1728) and Motoori Norinaga, overlap. This inevitably involves a discussion of the classic work, “Studies in the Intellectual History of Japan”

日本政治思想史研究 (1952) by Maruyama Masao 丸山眞男 (1914–1996). In this work,

Maruyama sought to outline the progressive development of political thought in early modern

Japan by contrasting the differences between Japanese Neo-Confucian scholars, “ancient studies”

⁵² *Shinkoku shinji benron* 神國神字辨論 (Hosei University Research Center for International Japanese Studies Rare Book 5010), 3-4.

古學 scholars like Ogyū Sorai, and “national learning” scholars like Motoori Norinaga.⁵³ In an effort to highlight the supposed novelty of Sorai’s thought vis-à-vis Sorai’s Confucian predecessors as well as “national learning” scholars, Maruyama noted that Sorai had “absolutely denied the very existence of Shinto” 神道の存在それ自體を全く否定した. Unlike earlier Japanese Confucian scholars who sought to equate Japanese Shintoism with Confucianism, Sorai supposedly denied the existence of Shinto itself due to his “intellectual purity” 思想的純粹性.⁵⁴

However, at least one source shows that Sorai also sought to reconcile the narratives of Confucianism based on the ancient Chinese texts and Shintoism based on the Japanese texts. For instance, Sorai provocatively argues for the notion of equivalency between the two by calling both Shinto: “Our country’s Shinto is China’s Shinto” 我國ノ神道ハ即チモロコシノ神道也. Elsewhere, Sorai notes that “in [both] the foreign country and our country, the Way of the Gods and [the Way of] the Sages [can be] considered to be identical” 異國本朝、神聖ノ道ハ同一揆ナリ and that “there is no difference between the kingly way [of China] and the Shinto [of Japan]” 王道神道差別ナク.⁵⁵ On the other hand, despite all of his harangues against what he perceived to be relegable “Chinese thought,” Norinaga was no different than other scholars when narratives connecting Japan to Chinese antiquity appeared to fit his own belief that the Chinese must have considered the Japanese to be exceptionally virtuous. For instance, after noting how

⁵³ For a discussion of the philosophy behind Maruyama Masao’s work on intellectual history, see Yasumaru Yoshio 安丸良夫, *Gendai Nihon shisōron: Rekishi ishiki to ideorogī* 現代日本思想論: 歴史意識とイデオロギー (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2004), 155-202.

⁵⁴ Maruyama Masao 丸山眞男, *Nihon seiji shisōshi kenkyū* 日本政治思想史研究 (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1952), 154-157.

⁵⁵ Ogyū Sorai 荻生徂徠, *Ken’en danyo* 護園談餘 (Keio University Library Rare Book 117@134@1).

Japan was referred to as “the country of virtuous men” 君子國 by the Chinese writers of the Han and Tang dynasties, Norinaga noted that Confucius himself wanted to live in Japan:

As for Confucius’s saying about getting on a raft to cross the sea and wanting to live at [the land of] eastern barbarians, it means that Confucius also wanted to sail for Japan. As for the place where the “virtuous man” lives, [Confucius is] pointing to [Japan’s] Emperor Itoku [r. 510–476 BCE].

孔子ノ、桴ニ乗テ海ニ浮ント云ヒ、九夷ニ居マク欲ストノ玉フハ、孔子モ日本ニ渡ントノ事也、君子居之トハ、日本懿徳天皇ヲ指テ云ナリ。⁵⁶

Furthermore, Norinaga also noted a traditional narrative that Japan was founded by the legendary ancient Chinese sage king Taibo 太伯 (sometimes written as 泰伯), who refused the Zhou throne three times and instead became a king of then semi-barbaric southern China. The *Book of Jin* 晉書, a historical text covering the Chinese Jin 晉 dynasty (265–479 CE), notes that “[the Japanese people] claim that they are descendants of Taibo” 自謂太伯之後.⁵⁷ Such legend also had a parallel in Korea—the Korean intellectuals prior to the modern times had adopted the legend of the ancient Chinese sage Jizi 箕子 and considered him to be the founder of Korea, thereby creating a direct line of connection to Chinese antiquity, which allowed the notion of “transference” of civilization from ancient China to Korea.⁵⁸ Despite the prevalent arguments for the independent founding of Japan put forth by texts such as the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*, the Taibo legend still appears to have circulated in Japan, perhaps reflecting the Japanese desire to also create a direct line of connection to the source of ancient civilization. This does not mean that all or even the majority of Japanese intellectuals entertained this legend—Matsushita Kenrin

⁵⁶ Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長, “Motoori Norinaga zuihitsu” 本居宣長隨筆, in *Motoori Norinaga zenshū* 本居宣長全集, ed. Ōno Susumu 大野晋, vol. 13 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1971), 320.

⁵⁷ *Jin shu* 晉書, vol. 3 (Tokyo: Kyūko Shoin, 1971), 1232.

⁵⁸ For a historical overview of this legend, see Jae-Hoon Shim, “A New Understanding of Kija Chosŏn as a Historical Anachronism,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 62, no. 2 (December 2002): 271-305.

松下見林 (1637–1703), for example, refutes this legend in saying that such claims are implausible given the narratives of the books such as the *Nihon shoki*, which he considered to be more accurate records of history.⁵⁹

On the other hand, the Japanese scholar Hayashi Gahō 林鷺峰 (1618–1688) noted that “Taibo had established the foundation of country [Japan] through his exceeding virtue” 泰伯至德而基我王跡, which, according to Hayashi Gahō, shaped Confucius’s favorable opinions about Japan.⁶⁰ Kinryū Keiyū also argues that Taibo was indeed the founder of Japan, noting that “the claims of Taibo being the founder of our country are not recent” 夫吾國ノ開祖ハ太伯ナリト云事ハ近年言出スコトニ非ズ and that “such claims existed for hundreds and [perhaps even] thousands of years” 千百年已前ヨリ此説アリ. He asserts that Taibo did indeed found of Japan, indicating the mentions of Taibo in Chinese texts and the supposed remnants of ancient Chinese culture manifested in areas such as the Japanese language and arts.⁶¹ Despite his apparent misgivings against China and its civilization, Motoori Norinaga also noted the Taibo legend on one occasion along with the symbolism of the Japanese imperial house, the three imperial regalia of Japan:

As for [Japan] being called “the country of Ji,” it is because Taibo’s surname was Ji. The basis of the three imperial regalia is the three virtues of wisdom, benevolence, and valor, and they stem from how Taibo of Wu declined the throne three times.

姫氏國ト稱スル事ハ、吳ノ太伯三以天下讓トアルニヨリテ也、三種神器ノ本ハ、智仁勇ノ三徳也、太伯ノ姓ナル故ニ姫氏ト云。⁶²

⁵⁹ Matsushita Kenrin 松下見林, *Ishō Nihon den* 異稱日本傳, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1975), 35-39.

⁶⁰ Hayashi Gahō 林鷺峰, *Gahō Rin gakushi bunshū* 鷺峰林学士文集, ed. Hino Tatsuo 日野龍夫, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Perikansha, 1997), 287.

⁶¹ *Shinkoku shinji benron* 神國神字辨論, 5-8.

⁶² Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長, “Motoori Norinaga zuihitsu” 本居宣長隨筆, 320.

As I have attempted to document, proto-nationalism in Korea and Japan, as is the case in medieval and early modern Europe, can be defined as the notion of avowed successorship to the classical civilization of the Axial Age. In laying claims to Chinese antiquity, as I will show, the Japanese and Korean intellectuals often envisaged their countries as direct competitors with the later Chinese dynasties for the mantle of the grand, classical civilization of antiquity. Following the Hideyoshi's invasions of Korea (1592–1598 CE), the Japan-Korea rapprochement starting in the early seventeenth century allowed for the unprecedented level of interactions between the peoples of the two countries, particularly through the occasional dispatching of the large Korean diplomatic missions to Japan.

Historiography of Korea-Japan Relations

Before proceeding into the further discussions of this dissertation's body chapters, I will provide an overview of the historiography of Korea-Japan relations. Modern historiography on the early modern Japan-Korea relations went through significant shifts over time. Prior to 1945, modern Japanese historiography surrounding the relationship between the two countries emphasized Japan's long-term dominance over Korea, rendering the twentieth century colonization as a part of that long trajectory. Within this framework, much of the literature has focused on the structural inevitability of Japan's annexation, which emphasized Japanese dominance and Korean passivity. The relationship was periodically strengthened by the ancient Japanese conquest and support of subservient historical regimes in Korea, the late sixteenth-century Japanese invasions of Korea, and, of course, the Japanese interference and colonization of Korea in the modern times. Nakamura Hidetaka 中村英孝 (1902–1970), perhaps the most

representative historian of the study of Korea-Japan relations prior to 1945, particularly emphasized such long-term trends in history.⁶³

In a sharp break from trends before 1945, the postwar historiography argues that much of the two countries' shared history between circa 1600 and 1868 was characterized by benign and mutually beneficial cultural exchanges. This radical shift in perspective was initially sparked by Japan's defeat and dismantling of its empire following World War II that led intellectuals to question the pillars of the wartime state ideology. This ideological transformation was coupled with a growing awareness of the persisting legacy of colonialism among some liberal Japanese intellectuals. For example, some Japanese intellectuals repeatedly spoke out on behalf of postwar Korean residents in postwar Japan, who, as living products of Japanese imperialism and expansion, constituted disenfranchised pariahs.⁶⁴ Such developments generated profound change in the historiography of Japan-Korea relations.

Perhaps more than anyone else, first-generation Korean-Japanese scholar Yi Chinhui 李進熙 (1929–2012) triggered this transformation by reexamining the history of Korea-Japan relations during the late Chosŏn dynasty and Tokugawa Japan. Through authoring and co-authoring several works, Yi gave new meaning to the two nations' relationship by presenting the

⁶³ Most important of his publications include: Nakamura Hidetaka 中村英孝, *Muromachi jidai no Nissen kankei* 室町時代の日鮮関係 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1934); idem, *Edo jidai no Nissen kankei* 江戸時代の日鮮関係 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1934); idem, *Bunroku Keichō no eki* 文禄・慶長の役 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1935); idem, *Tōa shinchitsujo no kensetsu to kodai tairiku keiei no senshō* 東亞新秩序の建設と古代大陸經營の先蹤 (Keijō: Chōsen Sōtokufu, 1940). Most of his writings have been published in a massive three-volume collection: idem, *Nissen kankeishi no kenkyū* 日鮮関係史の研究 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1965-1969).

⁶⁴ Perhaps the best example is Kajimura Hideki 梶村秀樹 (1935-1989), who dedicated his life to advocacy of the rights of Korean residents in Japan as well as researching the role of Japan in modern Korean history. See Kajimura Hideki 梶村秀樹, *Kaihōgo no zai-Nichi Chōsenjin undo* 解放後の在日朝鮮人運動 (Kobe: Kōbe Gakusei Seinen Sentā Shuppanbu, 1980). Another example is Miyata Setsuko 宮田節子 (1935-), who spoke of her Zainichi Korean friends as “living sources” 生きた資料 in her work on modern Korean history and the role of Japanese empire in Korea. See Miyata Setsuko 宮田節子, *Chōsen minshū to "kōminka" seisaku* 朝鮮民衆と「皇民化」政策 (Tokyo: Miraisha, 1985).

members of the Korean missions to early modern Japan as “cultural ambassadors” 文化使節 who sustained centuries of international peace and friendship.⁶⁵ This interpretation quickly became politically popular in both countries. From the perspective of Japanese history, this understanding allowed postwar scholars to critically objectivize the history of Japanese imperialism and colonialism as a temporal aberration when compared to the much longer pattern of peace. Within this framework, historian Tashiro Kazui 田代和生 revisited the role of trade between the two countries and discovered the disingenuous, yet invaluable, role played by the Tsushima domain 對馬藩 in sustaining the good relationship between the two countries as a go-between.⁶⁶ James B. Lewis spoke of the momentous rediscovery of “a stable, cordial, equal relationship” between the two countries when “Japan did not prey upon Korea militarily or economically, and the Confucian ideal of a self-sufficient, communal society pursuing the arts of civilization stood dominant in East Asia.”⁶⁷

Across the straits in Korea, such an understanding allowed Korean scholars to frame traditional Korea as a supposed bearer and transmitter of high culture to Japan. This perspective enabled the Korean intellectuals to assume a moral high ground in relation to its former colonial

⁶⁵ Yi Chinhui 李進熙, *Richō no tsūshinshi: Edo jidai no Nihon to Chōsen* 李朝の通信使: 江戸時代の日本と朝鮮 (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1976); idem et al., *Edo jidai no Chōsen tsūshinshi* 江戸時代の朝鮮通信使, ed. Eizō Bunka Kyōkai 映像文化協会 (Tokyo: Mainichi Shinbunsha, 1979).

⁶⁶ Tashiro Kazui 田代和生, *Kinsei Nitchō tsūkō bōekishi no kenkyū* 近世日朝通交貿易史の研究 (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1981); idem, *Kakikaerareta kokusho: Tokugawa Chōsen gaikō no butaiura* 書き替えられた国書: 徳川朝鮮外交の舞台裏 (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1983); idem, *Edo jidai Chōsen yakuzai chōsa no kenkyū* 江戸時代朝鮮薬材調査の研究 (Tokyo: Keiō Gijuku Daigaku Shuppankai, 1999); idem, *Wakan: Sakoku jidai no Nihonjin-machi* 倭館: 鎖国時代の日本人町 (Tokyo: Bungei Shunjū, 2002); idem, *Nitchō kōeki to Tsushima-han* 日朝交易と対馬藩 (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 2007); idem, *Shin Wakan: Sakoku jidai no Nihonjin-machi* 新・倭館: 鎖国時代の日本人町 (Tokyo: Yumani Shobō, 2011).

⁶⁷ James B. Lewis, *Frontier Contact Between Choson Korea and Tokugawa Japan* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 2.

master in their intellectual quest for post-colonial nation building.⁶⁸ This is perhaps most evident in the Korean-language translation of “Korean Missions of the Edo Period” 江戸時代の朝鮮通信使 (1979), an edited volume compiled by Yi Chinhŭi and others. The almost comical subtitle of the 1982 Korean-language translation is “We have nurtured Japan” 日本은 우리가 키웠다, which implies that Korean missions made Japan what it is today. An equally ideological statement can be found on the book’s back cover:

From the time when Japan could not establish a unitary state system in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries to the nineteenth century, the Korean missions implanted our culture in Japan for 300 to 400 years. The Korean spirit that they implanted in Japan: that is our ancestors’ history.

14~5 세기 日本이 단일국가체제를 확립하지 못했던 시절부터 19 세기까지 3, 400 년간을 「조선통신사」 들은 우리의 文化를 日本에 심었다. 그들이 日本에 심은 「韓國의 얼」, 그것이 바로 우리 조상의 歷史이다.⁶⁹

As James Lewis also noted, “From the Korean point of view, early-modern contacts serve to remind Japanese of the grand civilization of Chosŏn Korea and of its “civilizing” mission towards the Japanese islands.”⁷⁰

The abovementioned framework has lasted into the twenty-first century. On the Japan side, Nakao Hiroshi 仲尾宏 continues to emphasize the significance of the history of Japan-Korea interactions as a lesson that can help contemporary Japan “understand” 理解 and “coexist”

⁶⁸ Kim T’aejun 金泰俊, *Imjillan kwa Chosŏn munhwa ūi tongjŏm* 壬辰亂과 朝鮮文化의 東漸 (Seoul: Han’guk Yŏn’guwŏn, 1977).

⁶⁹ Yi Chinhŭi 李進熙 et al., *Chosŏn t’ongsinsa: Ilbon ūn uri ka k’iwŏtta* 朝鮮通信使: 日本은 우리가 키웠다, trans. Kim Yongsŏn 金龍鮮 (Seoul: Tongho Sŏgwan, 1982).

⁷⁰ James B. Lewis, 2.

共生 with Japan's closest neighbor.⁷¹ A similar perspective can also be found in Korean-

language scholarship. Historian Kim Hyönyöng 金炫榮 writes:

Recently, diplomatic relations between Korea and Japan have become progressively worse because of Japan's conservative swing under the Abe regime. However, I believe that the friendship between Korea and Japan will eventually recover. This is because, from a long-term historical perspective, times of peace and friendship have outlasted those of conflict between the two countries. The Korean missions to Japan, the topic covered in this book, aptly show how the two countries returned to peaceful relations following the Japanese invasions of Korea, and how they exchanged culture and achieved a mutual understanding of each other. After the Japanese invasions, three Korean envoys went to Japan to reestablish diplomatic relations and repatriate captives. Following the normalization, in addition to the everyday interchanges through Tongnae and Tsushima, and at Japan's requests, the Korean government dispatched nine additional missions [that functioned] as great cultural delegations. These Korean envoys show that, despite being separated by a sea, the two countries engaged in massive cultural exchange in a number of directions.

최근 한·일 간의 외교 관계는 더욱 악화되고 있다. 아베 정권이 들어선 이후 일본의 우경화가 더욱 심각해지고 있기 때문이다. 그러나 한·일 간의 관계는 다시 우호친선을 회복할 것으로 생각한다. 왜냐하면 긴 역사적 관점에서 보았을 때 이웃나라인 한·일 간에는 우호적인 시기가 나쁜 시기보다 훨씬 길었기 때문이다. 이 책에서 다룬 통신사는 임진왜란 이후 악화되었던 한·일 간의 관계가 다시 평화 체제를 회복하고 태평성대 속에서 어떻게 상호 교류하고 이해했는가를 잘 보여 준다. 임진왜란 이후 국교 정상화와 포로 쇠회를 위하여 세 차례 사신단이 파견되었고, 국교가 정상화된 이후에는 동래와 쓰시마를 통한 일상적인 교류 이외에도 일본의 요청이 있을 때마다 대규모의 문화사절단인 통신사를 꾸려서 아홉 차례나 파견하였다. 통신사는 바다를 사이에 두고 떨어져 있던 양국 간의 문화가 대규모로 다방면에서 교류되었다는 것을 잘 보여 준다.⁷²

At the same time, the conventional emphasis on early modern amity and cultural exchange does not explain the Japanese-Korean relationship's sudden turn for the worse following the 1868 Meiji Restoration. This period witnessed an explosion of political discourse in which a number of Japanese policymakers and intellectuals argued for the need for “conquest

⁷¹ Nakao Hiroshi 仲尾宏, *Chōsen tsūshinshi: Edo Nihon no seishin gaikō* 朝鮮通信使: 江戸日本の誠心外交 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2007), v.

⁷² Kim Hyönyöng 金炫榮, *T'ongsinsa, Tong Asia rül itta* 通信使, 東아시아를 잇다 (Seongnam: Han'gukhak Chungang Yōn'guwōn Ch'ulp'anbu, 2013), 4.

of Korea” 征韓 in response to the Koreans’ initial refusal to accept the new Japanese government’s communications concerning an issue of language that posited the Japanese emperor as the principal agent of state. As for this abrupt emergence of calls for interventionism, historian Yoshino Makoto 吉野誠 argued for the widespread growth of Japanese “disdain” 蔑視 toward Korea throughout the early modern period, culminating in the interventionist convictions of prominent nineteenth century historical figures such as Saigō Takamori 西郷隆盛 (1828–1877), Yoshida Shōin 吉田松陰 (1830–1859), and Fukuzawa Yukichi 福澤諭吉 (1835–1901), all of whom argued for interventionism against Korea.⁷³ His perspective is further corroborated, for example, by more recent research on Fukuzawa Yukichi that reveal Fukuzawa’s consistent efforts to influence Korean affairs through both his published writings and secretly supporting certain Korean officials who were deemed to be amenable to his viewpoint that Japan had inalienable interests in Korea.⁷⁴

In a similar vein, historian Ronald Toby noted “the perspective that sees the Edo period Korea-Japan relations as peaceful and equal cannot solve this question [of the sudden rise of Japanese interventionism against Korea]” 江戸時代の日本と朝鮮の関係を平和的で対等だったと見なす考え方では、この疑問は解けない。 After briefly noting the popularity of the

⁷³ Yoshino Makoto 吉野誠, “Fukuzawa Yukichi no Chōsenkan” 福澤諭吉の朝鮮論, *Chōsenshi Kenkyūkai ronbunshū* 朝鮮史研究会論文集 26 (1989): 43-62; idem, *Meiji Ishin to seikanron: Yoshida Shōin kara Saigō Takamori e* 明治維新と征韓論: 吉田松陰から西郷隆盛へ (Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 2002); idem, *Higashi Ajia shi no naka no Nihon to Chōsen: Kodai kara kindai made* 東アジア史のなかの日本と朝鮮: 古代から近代まで (Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 2004), 169-208.

⁷⁴ Yasukawa Junosuke 安川寿之輔, *Fukuzawa Yukichi no Ajia ninshiki: Nihon kindaishizō o toraekaesu* 福澤諭吉のアジア認識: 日本近代史像をとらえ返す (Tokyo: Kōbunken, 2000); idem, *Fukuzawa Yukichi to Maruyama Masao: “Maruyama Yukichi” shinwa o kaitaisuru* 福澤諭吉と丸山眞男: 「丸山諭吉」神話を解体する (Tokyo: Kōbunken, 2003); Takashiro Kōichi 高城幸一, *Seiji hyōronka Fukuzawa Yukichi: Sono Chōsen hyōron* 政治評論家・福澤諭吉: その朝鮮評論 (Tokyo: Bungeisha, 2011); Kim Chōnghak 金鍾學, “Kaehwadang ūi kiwōn kwa pimil oegyo, 1879-1884” 開化黨의 起源과 秘密外交, 1879-1884 (Ph.D. diss., Seoul National University, 2015), 76-84.

legends of Empress Jingū's conquest of Korea and the "success" of the expedition undertaken by Toyotomi Hideyoshi 豊臣秀吉 (1537–1598) in the early modern era, Toby warned of the importance of both "distinctiveness" 特殊性 and "continuity" 連続性 in historical periodization while locating the roots of Japan's interventionism in pre-modern history, noting:

The [traditional] Japanese perception of Korea revealed itself in the form of the Korea conquest debate by the Meiji period. Could we not see the sprout [of such thought] prior to the Edo period, continuously spreading its roots even during the Edo period?
明治期になって征韓論というかたちで発露する日本人の朝鮮認識は、江戸時代以前から萌芽がみられ、江戸時代にも途切れることなくその根を伸ばしつづけていたのではないだろうか。⁷⁵

Jeong Mi Lee's 2008 doctoral dissertation is another example of scholarship that complicates the thesis of amity and cooperation. She did this by revealing the profound discord between how the two sides saw each other, particularly how the two sides employed the traditional "civilized-barbarian" 華夷 dichotomy in perceiving the other side. By particularly examining the historical figures Arai Hakuseki 新井白石 (1657–1725), Amenomori Hōshū 雨森芳洲 (1668–1755), and Sin Yuhan 申維翰 (1681–1752) in the early eighteenth-century, Lee concluded that the long history of interactions between early modern Japan and Korea resulted in the widespread mutual perception of the other as barbaric.⁷⁶

Such arguments are also in line with the more recent scholarly trend in Korea. Initially fixated on collecting and presenting available primary sources on the early modern Japan-Korea interactions, the more recent works have emphasized the ways the Korean missions studied and

⁷⁵ Ronald Toby, "*Sakoku*" to *iu gaikō* 「鎖国」という外交 (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 2008), 333-337.

⁷⁶ Jeong Mi Lee, "Cultural Expressions of Tokugawa Japan and Chosŏn Korea: An Analysis of the Korean Embassies in the Eighteenth Century," (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 2008).

learned about Japan.⁷⁷ Pak Sanghwi 朴尙輝's 2015 doctoral dissertation, in particular, is a magisterial synthesis of this perspective, closely analyzing the ways the Korean visitors to Japan learned about the country. In addition to learning about various Japanese institutions, a main conclusion of Pak's dissertation is that, by the mid-eighteenth century, Korean officials sent to Japan developed a strong sense of cultural affinity and bond with their Japanese counterparts through discussions based on the shared cultural and linguistic medium of literary Chinese and the study of Chinese classics. According to Pak, many Korean scholars believed that the early modern Japanese society was about to “turn the corner” and become more culturally similar to Korea in the future. By noting the eventual propagation of xenophobic Japanese exceptionalism through scholars such as Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長 (1730–1801), Pak concludes that the early modern Korean intellectuals essentially “misread” 誤讀 Japan.⁷⁸ Such misinterpretation of profound discrepancies between early modern Japan and contemporaneous Korea forestalled envisaging the conflict that erupted by the mid-nineteenth century.

⁷⁷ Ha Ubong 河宇鳳, *Chosŏn hugi sirhakcha ūi Ilbon'gwan yŏn'gu* 朝鮮後期 實學者의 日本觀 研究 (Seoul: Ilchisa, 1989); Han T'aemun 韓泰文, “Chosŏn hugi t'ongsinsa sahaeng munhak yŏn'gu” 朝鮮後期 通信使 使行文學 研究, (Ph.D. diss., Pusan National University, 1995); Yi Hyesun 李惠淳, *Chosŏn t'ongsinsa ūi munhak* 朝鮮 通信使의 文學 (Seoul: Ihwa Yŏja Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, 1996); Pak Chaegŭm 朴在錦, “Wŏn Chunggŏ ūi Hwagukchi e nat'anan Ilbon insik” 元重舉의 『和國志』에 나타난 日本認識, *Han'guk kojŏn yŏn'gu* 韓國古典研究 12 (December 2005): 201-230; Ha Ubong 河宇鳳, *Chosŏn sidae Han'gugin ūi Ilbon insik* 朝鮮時代 韓國人의 日本 認識 (Seoul: Hyeon, 2006); Chŏng Yŏngmun 鄭英文, *Chosŏn sidae t'ongsinsa munhak yŏn'gu* 朝鮮時代 通信使文學 研究 (Seoul: Chisik kwa Kyoyang, 2011); Pak Hŭibyŏng 朴熙秉, “Chosŏn ūi Ilbonhak sŏngnip: Wŏn Chunggŏ wa Yi Tŏngmu” 朝鮮의 日本學 成立: 元重舉와 李德懋, *Han'guk munhwa* 韓國文化 61 (March 2013): 179-219; Ha Ubong 河宇鳳, “Wŏn Chunggŏ ūi Han-Il kwan'gyesa insik: Hwagukchi rŭl chungsim ūro” 元重舉의 韓日關係史 認識: 『和國志』를 中心으로, *Han-Il kwan'gyesa yŏn'gu* 韓日關係史研究 50 (April 2015): 35-68; Chŏng Ŭnyŏng, *Chosŏn hugi t'ongsinsaengnok ūi kŭlssŭgi tamnon: Kŭlssŭgi pangsik kwa Ilbon tamnon ūl chungsim ūro* 朝鮮後期 通信使行錄의 글쓰기 談論: 글쓰기 方式과 日本 談論을 中心으로 (Seoul: Hyeon, 2015).

⁷⁸ Pak Sanghwi 朴尙輝, “Chosŏn hugi Ilbon e taehan chisik ūi ch'ukchŏk kwa sago ūi chŏnhwan: Chosŏn sahaeng ūi kirok ryu rŭl chungsim ūro” 朝鮮後期 日本에 對한 知識의 蓄積과 思考의 轉換: 朝鮮使行의 記錄類를 中心으로 (Ph.D. diss., Seoul National University, 2015).

Moving beyond the established theses of amity and misapprehension, I aim to provide an alternative narrative by locating the epicenter of growing conflict between the early modern Korean and Japanese actors in their deep-rooted proto-national identities that became further pronounced through the contacts between the two countries. In doing so, I will look at the history of Japan-Korea relations of this period in four distinct, yet interrelated realms of interactions: their debates over civilization, territory, military, and ancient history. Through such examinations, I present not only the new dimensions in the early modern Japan-Korea relations but also Korean and Japanese proto-national identities and the dynamic, interactional relationship between the pre-modern and modern history.

Sources and Outline

This study relies primarily on individual writings left behind by Korean officials and scholars as well as their Japanese counterparts, often collected and published in forms of “collected works” 文集. I have also paid particular attention to pre-modern Korean travelogues to Japan, most of which are included in a collection titled *Haehaeng ch'ongjae* 海行摠載. There are some travelogues that did not become part of the collection, mostly unpublished rare books, and I have also utilized them. Another group of materials particularly valuable in assessing the early modern Korea-Japan interactions can be found in written records of conversations between Korean officials and their Japanese counterparts, generally referred to as *hitsudan* 筆談 (literally “brush talk”), that were published in Japan. Such materials often include introductions or commentaries written by the editors, which made the publications even more valuable in terms of teasing out the Japanese perspectives on the early modern Korean-Japanese interactions. I

have also paid a particular attention to the works of history that relate to Korean-Japanese relations, and I have extensively utilized them in writing chapters four and five.

Chapter one focuses on the contentious debate over cultural and civilizational superiority, which began with Japanese attempts to frame the arrival of Korean missions as subservient tribute-bearing missions to the middle kingdom. The contentions became two-sided when Korean officials started to reframe their apparently humiliating role in their legitimizing the nascent Tokugawa dynasty as a “civilizing” mission in which they sought to teach and civilize the Japanese “barbarians” through the grand civilization of ancient China, of which Korea had now supposedly become the sole reservoir. Such patronizing attempts drew the ire of Japanese officials and scholars, who sought not only to overturn Korean claims with their own claims of cultural and civilizational superiority based on their own mastery of the ideals of Chinese antiquity, but they also reinforced the notion that the arrival of Korean missions to Japan was a sign of subservience and dependency.

Chapter two discusses the factious discussions of mountains. The mountains in pre-modern East Asia provided enormous symbolism in shaping a country’s sense of collective self, and the discussions of the two countries’ most symbolic mountains stimulated impassioned discourses. The two countries’ intellectuals relied on their respective mountains in creating narratives of superiority and dominance over the other. Through such interactions, early modern Korean officials and scholars forged narratives that positioned Mount Fuji, and Japan at large, as mere offshoots of Korea’s Mount Paektu. They essentially argued that Japan represented a physical extension of Korea. On the other hand, their Japanese counterparts looked to Mount Fuji as the location of the divine source of Japan’s historical domination over Korea, and the mountain provided visible proof of the projection of Japanese power abroad.

Chapter three observes Korean and Japanese discourses regarding military capabilities and history, with both sides seeking to demonstrate that they could or did defeat the other at war. On the Korean side, in an effort to showcase its military power to Japanese audiences, this took on the form of ostentatious demonstrations of Korean martialism and fighting skills in Japan. On the Japanese side, this involved widespread Japanese revisionism of the once-hated tyrannical warlord Toyotomi Hideyoshi 豊臣秀吉 (1536–1598) over the course of the early modern period whose costly failure in his attempt to conquer Korea was reconstructed as the glorious victory of Japan over Korea. As I will demonstrate, the advent of such revisionism stimulated talk of yet another conquest of Korea in the nineteenth century.

Chapter four overviews the contentions surrounding Korean and Japanese interpretations of ancient history. Initially precipitated by the unprecedented introduction of the oldest Japanese historical texts to Korean audiences and vice versa, debates involved the mytho-historical narratives found in the oldest extant historical texts of Korea and Japan. Noting the ideological underpinnings of such ancient texts, I reframe their discussions over ancient history as “rival régimes of truth,” what Bruce Lincoln terms a feud in which each side seeks to defend its own “myths” as facts and discredit the other’s by framing them as fictitious. After discussing the initial reactions to reading the historical texts of the other side, I display the manner in which the Korean side developed a new ideological narrative of the ancient Korean conquest of Japan, which they sought to frame as a historical fact.

Chapter five underlines the early modern Japanese response to the introduction of Korean historical works with a focus on the challenges these texts presented to traditional Japanese narratives, and the responses of Japanese intellectuals to these challenges. I focus primarily on the prominent Japanese scholar Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長 (1730–1801), who launched an

impassioned public defense of Japanese mytho-history through public debates and extensive exegesis of ancient Japanese texts which rearranged Japanese mythology and history into a more defensive form. Contrary to the conventional understanding of his work, I argue that Norinaga sought to reaffirm the traditional historical construction of ancient Japan as a Chinese-style empire that modeled itself as the universal middle kingdom. I interpret Motoori Norinaga as the quintessential proto-nationalist who was seeking to recreate and succeed the ideals of antiquity.

Chapter 1: Debating Civilization: Korea and Japan's Places in the World

One of the most dominant themes of the meetings between early modern Korean officials in Japan and their Japanese counterparts was the contentious debate over cultural and civilizational superiority, rooted in the notion of successorship to the idealized Chinese antiquity. Each side sought to position its own country as more civilized than the other in the context of the traditional East Asian political discourse that dated from ancient China. This began with Japanese attempts to frame the arrival of Korean missions as subservient tribute-bearing missions to the middle kingdom. The contentions became two-sided when Korean officials started to reframe their apparently humiliating role in legitimizing the nascent Tokugawa dynasty as a “civilizing” mission in which they sought to teach and civilize the Japanese “barbarians” through the grand civilization of ancient China, of which Korea had now supposedly become the sole reservoir. Such patronizing attempts drew the ire of Japanese officials and scholars, who sought not only to overturn the Korean claims with their own claims of cultural and civilizational superiority based on the mastery of the ideals of Chinese antiquity, but they also reinforced the notion that the arrival of Korean missions to Japan was a sign of subservience and dependency.

The root of the conflict lay in the context of the rapprochement itself. The foreign policy of early modern Japan has been described as placing “Japan at the center of a regional and international world order,” which involved creating a miniature Chinese-style tributary system vis-à-vis the outside world.⁷⁹ Taking control of the country’s diplomatic relations and obtaining recognition from abroad served to strengthen the Tokugawa rule at home. It allowed the new dynasty to outflank both the Toyotomi house, which competed with the Tokugawa until 1615, and the Japanese imperial court and other warlords who continued to maintain substantial power

⁷⁹ Ronald P. Toby, *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan: Asia in the Development of the Tokugawa Bakufu*, Stanford ed. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), xviii.

and prestige at home throughout the early modern period. In order to force the Koreans into the role of an obedient tributary state, the Japanese used the incessant threat of yet another invasion of Korea. Little more than a year after the war between Japan and Korea ended in December 1598, the Japanese official from Tsushima made threats of another invasion in the second month of 1600:

If there is no response by the fourth or fifth month, a great army will be dispatched for a surprise attack around the time crops ripen in the seventh or eighth month. Your people will not survive.

四五月前更無回答則待穀登熟七八月間當舉大兵襲其不意汝等無噍類矣。⁸⁰

A month later, a group of former Korean captives who had returned from Japan also reported that the Japanese “will re-launch an invasion if peace is not made” 若不許和則再動兵馬云。⁸¹

The incessant threat of invasion continued into 1606, partly explaining why the Koreans ultimately gave in, *faute de mieux*, by sending official missions to Japan. As one senior official noted, “[Japan] has been threatening and overbearing from the outset to now”

自初至今無非恐愒悖慢之辭。⁸²

However, contemporaneous Koreans understood the Japanese motivation behind the rapprochement quite well. In 1606, King Sŏnjo 宣祖 (r. 1567–1608) noted the motivation behind the Japanese rapprochement involved wanting to “boast exaggeratedly into posterity” 誇張後世 by claiming that Korea had “sent officials to beg for peace” 遣使乞和 and that “[Korea] begged

⁸⁰ *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* 朝鮮王朝實錄 *Sŏnjo sillok* 宣祖實錄: 122 卷 33 年 2 月 23 日 (1600).

⁸¹ *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* 朝鮮王朝實錄 *Sŏnjo sillok* 宣祖實錄: 123 卷 33 年 3 月 16 日 (1600).

⁸² *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* 朝鮮王朝實錄 *Sŏnjo sillok* 宣祖實錄: 198 卷 39 年 4 月 5 日 (1606).

for peace by submitting [to Japan] 乞降納款.⁸³ In preparation for the first official postwar mission of 1607, the king said:

Once our country's mission enters their country, they will say that "Korea has submitted a tribute" in order to make an ostentatious display to their countrymen.
我國之使入于彼邦則彼將曰朝鮮入貢而誇示群下者乎.⁸⁴

Korean officials made similar remarks regarding the dispatch of the 1617 mission, the second official postwar mission to Japan. Sim Chip 沈諱 (1569–1644) reported to the court in 1617 that:

[The new Tokugawa shogun] Hidetada wants to receive the [Korean] mission as [a display of] glory to the country in succeeding Ieyasu.
秀忠欲致信使以續家康榮耀國中之爲.⁸⁵

Indeed, the Korean official Yi Kyōngjik 李景稷 (1577–1640) reported from his trip to Japan in 1617 that Japanese warlords and their armies from all over Japan also gathered at Kyoto in time for the arrival of the Korean mission. Considering the arrival of Koreans as helpful to his public display of power and authority, Hidetada supposedly had a "deeply pleased look" 深有喜色.⁸⁶ In this sense, Korea had in fact "functioned as an outside sponsor" 爲其外護 of the new Tokugawa Hidetada regime.⁸⁷ Kang Hongjung 姜弘重 (1577–1642), who was sent to Japan from 1624 to 1625, heard an analogous remark soon after his arrival at Edo. Andō Shigenaga

⁸³ *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* 朝鮮王朝實錄 *Sŏnjo sillok* 宣祖實錄: 199 卷 39 年 5 月 13 日 (1606).

⁸⁴ *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* 朝鮮王朝實錄 *Sŏnjo sillok* 宣祖實錄: 208 卷 40 年 2 月 19 日 (1607).

⁸⁵ *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* 朝鮮王朝實錄 *Kwanghaegun ilgi chungch'obon* 光海君日記 中草本: 111 卷 9 年 1 月 8 日 (1617).

⁸⁶ Yi Kyōngjik 李景稷, "Pusangnok" 扶桑錄, in *Kugyŏk haehaeng ch'ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 3 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch'ujinhoe), 11.

⁸⁷ *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* 朝鮮王朝實錄 *Kwanghaegun ilgi chŏngch'obon* 光海君日記 正草本: 116 卷 9 年 6 月 26 日 (1617).

安藤重長 (1600–1657), the lord of the Takasaki domain 高崎藩 from 1621 to 1657, supposedly told Kang that:

[Tokugawa] Ieyasu destroyed [Toyotomi] Hideyori, took over the entire country, and passed it down to three generations of his descendants. However, because he did not bequeath based on meritorious deeds, the country's people have not yet submitted [to the Tokugawas] from the heart. [The shogun] therefore waited for the arrival of the Korean mission to exaggerate his achievements and overbear the people. As the mission arrived at this time, the shogun became extremely happy.

家康雖克殄秀賴奄有諸道傳子傳孫至于三世而承襲繼序不以功最故域中人心尙未鎮服以此尤待我使之來以爲夸矜鎮服之地而使臣之行適及此際將軍深以爲喜。

Kang saw the shogun in person the next day; when Kang “looked at the facial expression” 觀其辭氣 of the new shogun Tokugawa Iemitsu 德川家光 (r. 1623–1651), the shogun appeared “deeply pleased” 多有喜色.⁸⁸

The same was the case for the subsequent missions to Japan. Kim Chinam 金指南 (1654–?), for example, was told during the official 1682 trip that “the governor-like figures [warlords] of the overseas provinces are rushing to get back to the capital on the same day as this procession does” 海外諸道太守之類趁此行入京之日而來朝者也.⁸⁹ In 1711, Kim Hyōnmun 金顯門 (1675–1738) noted seeing myriad ships approaching the bay as he entered Edo. When he asked the Japanese accompaniers about the ships, they gave him the same answer: “The governor-like figures of the overseas provinces were coming back for the occasion [of the Koreans' arrival at Edo]” 海外諸道太守之類趁此行來朝者也.⁹⁰ The Tokugawas apparently wanted a public display of the Korean missions coming to pay respects to the Tokugawa dynasty

⁸⁸ Kang Hongjung 姜弘重, “Tongsarok 東槎錄, in *Kugyōk haehaeng ch'ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 3 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch'ujinhoe), 37.

⁸⁹ Kim Chinam 金指南, “Tongsa ilrok” 東槎日錄, in *Kugyōk haehaeng ch'ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 6 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch'ujinhoe), 48.

⁹⁰ Kim Hyōnmun 金顯門, *Tongsarok* 東槎錄, trans. Paek Okgyōng (Seoul: Hyeon, 2007), 303.

alongside other Japanese lords. In this sense, the Korean missions functioned as a “special form of alternative attendance system” 特殊な参勤交代 designed to exhibit the power of the Tokugawa shogunate to the Japanese public.⁹¹

In addition, the Tokugawa regime mobilized the Korean missions in strengthening the cult of its founder, Tokugawa Ieyasu. As noted in Herman Ooms’s classic work, the personality cult of Ieyasu was a crucial pillar of ideological legitimacy for the Tokugawa shogunate.⁹² The regime wanted to increase its prestige at home by acquiring Korean recognition and participation in the worship of Ieyasu. According to the records left by the members of the 1636–1637 mission, upon arriving at Edo, Korean officials were repeatedly asked by the Japanese authorities to make an unexpected trip to the shrine of Tokugawa Ieyasu at Nikko 日光. Of course, the Japanese authorities had pre-planned the trip. According to Im Kwang 任統 (1579–1644), a Korean man who was captured during the Hideyoshi invasions and who lived in Japan thereafter came to see the Korean mission en route to Nikko. The man told Im that preparation of the road linking Edo and Nikko began days before the Korean missions arrived at Edo, with the shogunate expending tens of thousands of taels in the process.⁹³

After the Korean officials arrived at Nikko, Tsushima lord Sō Yoshinari 宗義成 (r. 1615–1657) asked them to dedicate poems to the shrine. The said visit was also recorded in *Tōshō Daigongen notto* 東照大権現祝詞 (“the Felicitation Message of the Great Avatar Who

⁹¹ Maruyama Yasunari 丸山雍成, *Sankin kōtai* 参勤交代 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2007), 93-94.

⁹² Herman Ooms, *The Tokugawa Ideology: Early Constructs, 1570-1680* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 18-62.

⁹³ Im Kwang 任統, “Pyōngja ilbon ilgi” 丙子日本日記, in *Kugyōk haehaeng ch’ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 3 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe), 59.

Shines in the East”), a written prayer dedicated to the Ieyasu shrine by Lady Kasuga 春日局 (1579–1643):

In the eleventh month of 1636, a mission came from Korea, and ultimately paid their respects from Edo to Nikko. The three [Korean] officials dedicated writings on the exceptionality of the shrine building and the religious beliefs of this land. Indeed, this reflects on the lord’s power; to put it differently, it reflects on the divine virtue of the Great Avatar [Tokugawa Ieyasu], and especially on how Japan is spoken about as a divine country.

ひのへねの年霜月、てうせんごくより信使きたる、けつくゑどより日光山までさんけいいたす、かのちの御ミやづくりしんかうよのつねならず、三しおなじくはい書してこれをたてまつる、まことにこれ君の御いせい、べつしてハ大ごんげんの御神とく、ことに日本ハ神こくのいはれとたのもしくありかたき事なり云々。

The worship of the Great Avatar has spread to a foreign country [Korea], and that can be attributed to the mysterious divine virtue [of Tokugawa Ieyasu].

大ごんげんの御神かういこくまできこゑり、これふしぎの御神とくなりといへり⁹⁴.

Korean visitors were continuously mobilized to participate in the cultic worship of Ieyasu until 1656. According to Nam Yongik 南龍翼 (1628–1692), who visited Japan on an official mission in 1655–1656, the Korean mission was instructed to deliver the Korean king’s own writing 御筆 dedicated to the Ieyasu shrine along with other gifts in addition to paying their respects there. On the way back, the Korean mission made a final stop at Tsushima, where local Japanese officials repeatedly demanded the Korean officials to attend a local shrine dedicated to Tokugawa Ieyasu before their return. The Korean officials refused, claiming that they had not received prior notification. The attending Tsushima official threatened to prevent the Koreans from leaving the island: “This is the order of the shogun. If the mission does not comply, I must report this to Edo. The mission can depart [to Korea] only after hearing back from Edo”

此是關白之意使臣若不聽從則當以此意報于江戸待其回還後使臣可發。The Tsushima

⁹⁴ *Tōshō Daigongen notto* 東照大権現祝詞, ed. Akabori Matajirō 赤堀又次郎 (Tokyo: Tōkyō Insatsu Kabushiki Gaisha, 1915), 12-13.

officials pushed this even further by saying “if the officials do not go [to the shrine], the relationship between the two countries shall come to an end” 使臣終若不往則兩國結末.⁹⁵

According to Nam’s colleague Cho Hyōng 趙珩 (1606–1679), the Tsushima authorities even dispatched additional armed guards around the docked Korean ships in order to instill “fear” 恐怯 of physical harm.⁹⁶ It is clear that the Japanese authorities deliberately sought to mobilize the Koreans to secure foreign recognition for the cult of Ieyasu.

Furthermore, the Korean missions were sometimes subject to egregious disrespect in public. The Japanese authorities repeatedly took them to the Hanazuka 鼻塚 (“nose mound,” also known as the Mimizuka 耳塚 “ear mound”) during their stop in Kyoto, justifying this by leading the Koreans to the Buddhist Hōkō temple 方廣寺 in Kyoto, located next to the mound. Built on Toyotomi Hideyoshi’s orders, the mound was filled with tens of thousands of the noses and ears of Korean soldiers and civilians, which were collected as war trophies. The implications were obvious. As the Korean official Sōng Taejung 成大中 (1732–1809) noted in retrospect, while the Japanese authorities claimed that they “wanted to show the Buddhist statue” 要觀佛像 to the Koreans, their “actual intent was to disrespect [the Koreans]” 實辱之.⁹⁷

As Korean official Kyōng Sōm 慶暹 (1562–1620) noted, Korean officials were first taken to the mound during the first postwar mission in 1607.⁹⁸ Yi Kyōngjik 李景稷 (1577–1640),

⁹⁵ Nam Yongik 南龍翼, “Pusangnok” 扶桑錄, in *Kugyōk haehaeng ch’ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 5 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe), 71.

⁹⁶ Cho Hyōng 趙珩, *Pusang ilgi* 扶桑日記 (Harvard-Yenching Rare Book TK 3487.6 4810), 84.

⁹⁷ Sōng Taejung 成大中, *Ilbonrok* 日本錄 (Korea University Library Rare Book 貴 545).

⁹⁸ Kyōng Sōm 慶暹, “Haesarok” 海槎錄, in *Kugyōk haehaeng ch’ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 2 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe), 41.

who was part of the second postwar mission in 1617, wrote that he “could not suppress anguish to [his] bones” 不勝痛骨 at its sight.⁹⁹ Kang Hongjung 姜弘重 (1577–1642), a Korean official who visited Japan in 1624–1625, also wrote that he “could not suppress his anger” 不勝痛心 at the sight of the mound.¹⁰⁰ The image of Koreans visiting the Hanazuka, as historian Ronald Toby noted, was no doubt choreographed to represent a public Korean submission to the Japanese power.¹⁰¹ In other words, it was a propaganda tool aimed at what historian Ikeuchi Satoshi 池内敏 described as the public display of Japanese “military might” 武威 vis-à-vis its neighbors, which the Tokugawa regime used as a source of legitimacy at home.¹⁰² Tsushima official Amenomori Hōshū 雨森芳洲 (1668–1755) noted that the “Showing of the ear mound [to the Koreans] was a display of Japanese military might” 耳塚を御見せ被成日本之武威をあらはさるへくとの事.¹⁰³ This propagandistic aspect is further evidenced in the way the Japanese officials responded when the Korean visitors began objecting to these mound visits.

In 1719, according to Sin Yuhan 申維翰 (1681–1752), the Korean officials refused the visit by stating that the Buddhist Hōkō temple 方廣寺 adjacent to the mound was built for the sake of Hideyoshi. The shogunate and Tsushima officials alike loudly proclaimed that this was not the case. Over the next two days, the Japanese officials insisted that the Hōkō temple was

⁹⁹ Yi Kyōngjik 李景稷, “Pusangnok” 扶桑錄, in *Kugyōk haehaeng ch'ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 3 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch'ujinhoe), 11.

¹⁰⁰ Kang Hongjung 姜弘重, “Tongsarok 東槎錄, in *Kugyōk haehaeng ch'ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 3 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch'ujinhoe), 41.

¹⁰¹ Ronald Toby, “*Sakoku*” to *iu gaikō* 鎖国という外交, 63-69.

¹⁰² Ikeuchi Satoshi 池内敏, *Taikun gaikō to “bui”*: *Kinsei Nihon no kokusai chitsujo to Chōsen-kan* 大君外交と「武威」: 近世日本の国際秩序と朝鮮観 (Nagoya: Nagoya Daigaku Shuppankai, 2006).

¹⁰³ Amenomori Hōshū 雨森芳洲, *Kōrin teisei* 交隣提醒, ed. Tashiro Kazui 田代和生 (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2014), 93.

built for the sake of the Tokugawa house, not the Toyotomi house. The back-and-forth continued for the next two days as one official, Yi Myōng'ōn 李明彦 (1674–?) steadfastly refused to participate. The arguments became emotional; according to Sin's records, the Tsushima official Amenomori Hōshū 雨森芳洲 (1668–1755) is thought to have exploded at the Koreans, supposedly “scowling while screaming like a lion and revealing his teeth like a hedgehog” 吼如獅奮如蝟張牙裂眦. Hōshū supposedly yelled, “We have provided our country's historical records, clearly proving that it is a temple of the Tokugawa” 故至以國史爲徵自明源氏之寺. He added, “Distrusting our country's historical records and refusing to follow the official rites is disrespectful and belittling to us. [Unless the Koreans comply with the Japanese,] there only can be death” 今乃不信乎國史而不承乎公禮是卑我也弱我也有死而已.¹⁰⁴ Given Hōshū's response, the Korean officials finally acquiesced to the demand to visit, with the exception of Yi Myōng'ōn 李明彦 (1674–?), who persisted with his view that the Japanese were lying and thus refused to participate.

Hideyoshi had commissioned the building of the Hōkō temple in 1586, with the actual construction beginning in 1588. In 1595, Hideyoshi ordered hundreds of Buddhist priests to carry out a mass service there for his ancestors; after it was destroyed in a fire, Hideyoshi's son Toyotomi Hideyori 豊臣秀頼 (1593–1615) ordered it to be rebuilt in 1610, and dedicated a giant bronze bell to it in 1614. While not exclusively dedicated to Hideyoshi, there is no doubt that the Toyotomi house built the Hōkō temple to garner the religious legitimacy of its rule. The Toyokuni Shrine 豊國神社, for example, was built immediately adjacent to the Hōkō temple in 1599, which was meant to expand the spiritual base of worship of the Toyotomi house by

¹⁰⁴ Sin Yuhan 申維翰, “Haeyurok” 海遊錄, in *Kugyōk haehaeng ch'ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 1 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch'ujinhoe), 75.

tapping into Japan's native Shinto tradition. Hōshū's assertion that the Hōkō temple was a "Tokugawa temple" 源氏之寺 was purposefully misleading, and he later wrote that the showing of the mound was actually harmful to Japan-Korea relations:

The repeated showing of such an atrocity [to the Koreans] is not something glorious [for Japan]. It only displays our country's sheer ignorance.
其暴惡をかさねて可申出事ニ候而、いつれも華耀之資には成不申、却而我國之不學無識をあらはし候のみに而御座候。¹⁰⁵

The fact that he was part of the cover-up involved in cajoling the Korean mission to visit the mound in 1719 further suggests that there was an order from his superiors to stage the public scene, though Hōshū himself personally opined against it.

Having pushed the Koreans to visit the Hōkō temple, thereby making them pass by the Hanazuka in public view in 1719, the Japanese dropped the issue altogether by removing the visit from the schedules of the subsequent missions. The Korean officials also realized that they had been deceived by a bogus historical source; after all, as early as 1617, O Yun'gyōm 吳允謙 (1559–1636) was told that "the Daibutsu temple 大佛寺 [another name for the Hōkō temple, referring to the giant Buddha statue there, which was permanently destroyed by lightning in 1798] was built by [Toyotomi] Hideyori" 大佛寺即秀頼所建.¹⁰⁶ Later, Cho Myōngch'ae 曹命采 (1700–1764), a member of the 1748 Korean mission, gathered concrete evidence about the temple and Mimizuka from a Japanese encyclopedic text *Wa-kan sansai zue* 和漢三才圖會 ("Illustrated Sino-Japanese Encyclopedia"), which he obtained during his stay. Having read that Hideyoshi built both the Hōkō temple and the Mimizuka. Cho, realizing that his predecessors

¹⁰⁵ Amenomori Hōshū 雨森芳洲, *Kōrin teisei* 交隣提醒, ed. Tashiro Kazui 田代和生 (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2014), 93.

¹⁰⁶ O Yun'gyōm 吳允謙, "Tongsasang ilnok" 東槎上日錄, in *Kugyōk haehaeng ch'ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 2 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch'ujinhoe), 58.

had been tricked, felt as if his “insides were being ripped apart” 膽裂. He also called the act of presenting fabricated historical records “extremely cunning” 萬萬巧惡.¹⁰⁷ Wŏn Chunggŏ 元重舉 (1719–1790), a member of the subsequent 1763–1764 mission, also expressed his anger at the mound’s existence, noting how “extremely depraved and atrocious” 極兇悖慘毒 it was.¹⁰⁸ The choreographing of the public scene of Korean officials visiting a mound made of the noses and ears from of Koreans killed during the war is a good example of how the Tokugawa regime used Korean visitors as propaganda fodder.

Civilizing the Japanese

Korean official Cho Kyŏng 趙綱 (1586–1669)’s patronizing insults against the Tokugawa advisor Hayashi Razan 林羅山 (1583–1657) during the 1643 mission’s visit to Japan is one of the earliest examples of the pretense of this Korean “civilizing mission.” In many ways, the 1643 mission represented the lowest point of Korean power vis-à-vis Japan. After suffering two consecutive military defeats at the hands of the Jurchens and Manchus in 1627 and 1637, the Korean government was unable to refuse the unprecedented request by the Japanese for the official Korean mission to congratulate the shogun Tokugawa Iemitsu 德川家光 (r. 1623–1651) on the birth of his first son, Tokugawa Ietsuna 德川家綱 (1641–1680), who later succeeded the Tokugawa dynasty from 1651 to 1680. The Chosŏn court considered this request, which included an initial Japanese demand that the Korean officials publicly bow to the baby boy, embarrassingly demeaning.

¹⁰⁷ Cho Myŏngch’ae 曹命采, “Pongsa ilbonsi mun’gyŏnnok” 奉使日本時間見錄, in *Kugyŏk haehaeng ch’ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 10 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe), 55.

¹⁰⁸ Wŏn Chunggŏ 元重舉, *Hwagukchi* 和國志, ed. Yi Usŏng 李佑成 (Seoul: Asea Munhwasa, 1990), 113.

The Korean officials argued against bowing to the infant. Cho himself told King Injo 仁祖 (r. 1623–1649) prior to the mission’s departure that such an act “will incur their sneer, and it is a way to bring disgrace to [the king’s] orders” 見笑於彼則是亦辱命之一也. The king, however, told Cho that “while it would be fortunate if they do not show his son [to the Korean officials]” 彼不出示其子則幸矣, but he ordered that they “do not start a conflict over a minor ritual” 不可以小節惹起爭端也. The possibility of a Japanese invasion was constantly in the minds of Korean policymakers at the time, and following two rounds of military defeats at the hands of the Manchus in 1627 and 1637, Korea was in no position to start a conflict with the Japanese. Without an alternative but to be acquiescent, the Korean court prepared a giant bronze bell as a gift to the Ieyasu shrine at Nikko, where the preceding mission of 1636–1637 unexpectedly visited upon repeated Japanese demands on the ground. When the mission head Yun Sunji 尹順之 (1591–1666) asked the king what he should do if the Japanese authorities demanded that the Korean mission also visit and pay respects to the shrine of the second Tokugawa shogun Tokugawa Hidetada 德川秀忠 (r. 1605–1623), the king instructed Yun to make the trip. However, despite his willingness to accede, the king was not oblivious to what was happening. He lamented during the conversation that “we have received too many insults [from the Japanese]” 我之受侮固已多矣 but nevertheless told Yun and Cho to “make prudent decisions” 須十分善爲之 on the ground in order to avoid conflict.¹⁰⁹

Cho Kyōng’s interactions with Hayashi Razan therefore took place under such perceivably demeaning circumstances for the Korean officials. Earlier scholars have generally viewed the interactions between the Korean and Japanese scholars in a favorable light. For

¹⁰⁹ *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* 朝鮮王朝實錄 *Injo sillok* 仁祖實錄: 44 卷 21 年 2 月 20 日 (1643).

instance, Hō Kyōngjin and Kim Sōng'ūn, for instance, highlighted the leading role Hayashi Razan played in stimulating cultural exchanges between the two countries, including Razan's interactions with Cho Kyōng.¹¹⁰ However, as shown in a recent article by Sin Rosa, Cho Kyōng also displayed sense of contempt towards Japan and its culture based on his own sense cultural superiority.¹¹¹ While largely agreeing with Sin Rosa's perspective, I would like to emphasize that the main issue of contention between the two men, emblematic of the pattern of interactions between Korean and Japanese intellectuals, primarily involved the notion of successorship vis-à-vis the idealized antiquity of China.

Cho first met with Razan and Razan's two sons at Edo and politely exchanged poetry. However, while the mission was making its way back, as if wanting to compensate for the humiliations of having to bow to the Tokugawas at Edo and Nikko, Cho penned a disrespectful and scathing reply when Razan sent a courtesy letter. Nothing in Razan's first letter could be interpreted as provocative; Cho's irritated response was therefore entirely uncalled for. In the letters, the two men initially discussed the philosophy of poetry. Addressing Cho with the respectful and honorific title of "your distinguished self" 君閣下, Razan first thanked Cho for sending him some poems via the Tsushima lord. Wholeheartedly praising Cho's work, Razan said:

When I opened up the envelope [containing Cho's poems], it seemed like the colored cloud-like fine paper and white rainbow-like calligraphy came not from the overseas but had descended from heaven. Shining upon [my] humble home and jolting [my] eyes, [reading Cho's poems] was like a sickman having his medicine.

¹¹⁰ Hō Kyōngjin 許敬震 and Kim Sōng'ūn, "Hayashi Razan ūi such'angsi rūl t'onghae pon Han-Il munsa ch'ogi kyoryu ūi yangsang" 林羅山の唱酬詩를 통해 본 韓日 文士 初期交流의 樣相, *Han 'gugō munhak yōn'gu* 韓國語文學研究 53 (August 2009): 181-184.

¹¹¹ Sin Rosa, "1643-nyōn t'ongsin sahaeng kwa Cho Kyōng ūi Ilbon insik e kwanhan sogo" 1643 年 通信使行과 趙綱의 日本認識에 關한 小考, *Minjok munhwa* 民族文化 41 (June 2013): 89-92.

開緘則硃紙之綵雲猩毛之白虹若非自海外來則是自天上到歟照映蓬華搖動銀海殆似飲暝眩之藥也。

Razan further humbly complimented Cho by asking him to provide additional help to address his own “deficiencies in poetry” 詩病.¹¹²

In his reply, however, Cho took advantage of Razan’s graceful humility by arguing for Korean cultural and civilizational superiority as the only true successor to Chinese antiquity, essentially firing the first salvo in the ensuing cultural and intellectual conflict between the two nations, which decisively poisoned relations between the two countries on many levels for generations to come. Taking cues from Razan’s use of the Daoist term “eyes” 銀海 (literally “silver sea”), which appears in Su Shi’s 蘇軾 (1037–1101) poem “Written on the North Tower Wall after Snow” 雪後書北臺壁, Cho criticized Razan’s more heterogeneous approach to the Chinese tradition that incorporated Su Shi in its scholarship. While centered on Confucianism, Su Shi was known to be open towards other traditions such as Daoism and Buddhism. For this, Su Shi had been considered, in a strict sense, a heretic despite his literary talents.¹¹³ Cho opened his criticism of Hayashi Razan by expounding on the orthodox Cheng-Zhu school’s view of history that emphasized the almost unceasing all-round decline of politics and learning until Song dynasty scholars such as Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200) “rediscovered” the essence of Chinese antiquity. That “essence,” of course, was supposedly transferred to Korea:

The principle of poetry is indeed difficult [to grasp]. Poems come from one’s natural disposition, and this is the case with the three hundred poems in the *Classic of Poetry*. Following that, however, the various authors’ works from the Wei and Jin dynasties moved away from one’s natural disposition and entered the realm of frivolousness and

¹¹² Cho Kyōng 趙綱, “Tongsanok” 東槎錄, in *Kugyōk haehaeng ch’ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 5 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe), 1.

¹¹³ For more about Su Shi, see Ronald C. Egan, *Word, Image, and Deed in the Life of Su Shi* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Council on East Asian Studies, 1994).

emptiness. From the Tang dynasty, [the works of poetry] moved further into frivolousness and further away from natural disposition. While Li Bai (701–762 CE) and Tu Fu (712–770 CE) shook off generations of frivolousness and occasionally spoke of natural disposition, how could they have said something comparable to Cheng Hao (1032–1085) and Zhu Xi in reaching the principle?

詩道實難詩出性情故三百篇無非性情也下而魏晉氏諸作祛性情而入於浮唐以下則愈浮而愈去性情矣惟李杜氏振屢代之浮間出性情語然豈有如程伯子朱晦菴之理到之一語乎。

After lecturing Razan on history, Cho went further by bringing up Razan and his two sons:

As for your two sons, they are indeed [talented] like fine steeds that can go a thousand *li* a day. It is therefore not excessive to compare [you and your two sons] to the father and sons of the Su family. However, how could Su Xun [1009–1066], Su Shi [1037–1101], and Su Zhe [1039–1112] compare to the father and sons of the Cheng family (Cheng Xiang [1006–1090], Cheng Hao [1032–1085], and Cheng Yi [1033–1107])? I hope that you do not frivolously indulge into the School of Diplomacy’s methods and instead exalt the Cheng brothers and become the progenitor and benchmark of scholarship in Japan. How fortunate would that be?

賢胤二妙誠千里駒也此邦雖比之蘇氏父子不爲過言然老泉子瞻子由孰與太公兩程子乎願足下無淫於捭闔縱橫之術鑽仰兩程使日域蛾子有所矜式幸甚。¹¹⁴

Japanese historian Abe Yoshio 阿部吉雄 misunderstood this comparison as a compliment, and wrote of Razan, “His renowned reputation appears to have already been known in Korea” その名聲はすでに朝鮮にとどろいていたと見え; “The deputy envoy [Cho Kyōng] and others had compared Razan and his sons to the Song dynasty’s three Sus” 副使などは、羅山父子をもって宋の三蘇に比したりなどしたようである。¹¹⁵ However, this was certainly no compliment. By comparing Razan and his two sons to Su Shi, Su’s father, and Su’s brother, all the while contrasting them with the supposed “correctness” of Cheng Xiang and his two sons, Cho was plainly criticizing the Hayashi family’s scholarship in a patronizing manner.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Abe Yoshio 阿部吉雄, *Nihon shushigaku to Chōsen* 日本朱子學と朝鮮 (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1965), 221.

Clearly aware of the nature of Cho's attack, Razan wrote back, defending himself and his sons by showering praises on the Su family. Razan responded:

You have compared my two sons and myself to the three Sus. Your praise is extremely flattering, and I am really happy. However, I fear that your praise is excessive, and I feel embarrassed; I am afraid that there will be snide remarks [directed at us] in the future. Su Xun is sublime, Su Shi is majestic, and Su Zhe is steep. The father and sons are all rare talents of the generation and heroes of all ages. All people have looked up to them.
足下指余及二子以譬諸三蘇褒獎之至固雖可喜然不虞之譽過當過實不堪恐縮唯恐有毀于其後也夫老泉之雄渾長公之波瀾少公之巉岩父子昆弟皆一代之奇才千古之雄偉也人皆景仰之。

Furthermore, Razan defended his more eclectic scholarly approach to Confucianism and the Chinese tradition by stating that his method, while different from the Korean approach, was nevertheless equally valid:

While I differ from others in what I revere, my original intention does not differ from the way you revere the Cheng brothers and Zhu Xi.
與人之所仰異而與足下之仰程朱不異者是余之素志也。¹¹⁶

Cho, however, was not done. In his second reply, he changed the topic to the paramount importance of the burial and ancestral rites rooted in the ancient Chinese texts as a means of further criticizing Japanese culture. Cho wrote to Razan:

I do not know whether scholars of your country have fulfilled their duty in this area. After entering your country's borders, I have traveled thousands of *li* from Tsushima to Edo, and I have passed by more than a few high and arid hills. I also have observed numerous towns, cities, and other places where many people gather tightly. However, I have yet to see a single place where axe-shaped or house-shaped burial mounds in the styles of ancient China exist. I also have yet to see a single gaunt person who respectfully performed ancestral rites. Were tens of thousands of people all born at this time [and did not need burying]? Or did all people enjoy long lives, as did Peng Zu or Laozi [Daoist figures who supposedly lived for hundreds of years]? This is something I do not know yet.
不知貴國學者於這面上靡有不盡分事乎不佞入貴國之境自馬州達江戶行數千餘里經過高燥好丘不爲不多目擊通邑大都稠人廣衆亦不爲不多而未見有一處若晉京漢阡若斧若堂而封者未見有一人變變其形濟濟漆漆以祭者幾累萬氏人適此時而皆巨創人人皆享彭聃之壽歟是未可知也。

¹¹⁶ Cho Kyōng 趙綱, "Tongsanok" 東槎錄, 2.

Cho then brought up the traditional Japanese haircut for the elite warrior class, the *chonmage*

丁髷, in criticizing the Hayashis and the Japanese society as a whole:

I have one more thing to say. The four ceremonial occasions of coming of age, marriage, funeral, and ancestral rites all come from the five virtues [of Confucianism] and are not something people falsely made up and arranged. It is the code of proprieties based on the heavenly principle. Following Zisi [481–402 BCE] and Mencius [372–289 BCE], the sages of Luoyang and Fujian [the Cheng brothers and Zhu Xi] put forth their best efforts in creating a text to teach the next generation of students. Now you have established your aim in life to faithfully follow the Cheng brothers and Zhu Xi and propagate [their teachings] to the country. However, you and your two sons have shaved your entire heads without a single hair left. Where could they carry out the principle that “all body parts come from one’s parents and cannot be damaged” following one’s coming of age ceremony? I cannot help but doubt your scholarship.

又有一說冠婚喪祭四者皆自五常中生非人假設安排乃天理之節文也思孟以後洛建諸賢最致力於斯作爲一書以詔後學今足下卓然自樹立篤信程朱爲一國倡而觀足下二郎則兀然頭角不留一髮冠禮十九於何所施身體髮膚受之父母不敢毀傷之訓不佞不能無疑於足下之學也。

If you want to change the world with Confucianism, you should start with your own body. You should start with your own family.

足下如欲振儒風以變一世則莫若先自身而始先自一家而始也。¹¹⁷

Cho Kyōng then placed Korea on a pedestal, presenting it as *the* example that Japan

ought to follow:

Have you also heard of Korean proprieties and customs? Our country was also barbaric in ancient times. After the great teacher [Jizi] was invested [to Korea] by the Zhou and started to teach the people about the rites and music to cultivate Chinese customs, [Korea] started to uphold humility and promote teachings of Confucius. Institutions of food, ancestral rites, and attire became splendid and worth seeing. We have been blessed with the country for more than a millennium. By the time of our dynasty [Chosŏn], sagacious monarchs had succeeded in succession, cleaning out the evil Buddhist customs of late Koryō and reviving the customs of Jizi in producing a number of true Confucians. For example, Kim Koengp’il [1454–1504], Chōng Yōch’ang [1450–1504], Cho Kwangjo [1482–1520], and Yi Ŏnjōk [1491–1553] sequentially espoused Neo-Confucian thought. In expounding ideas and bequeathing instructions, they all used the Cheng-Zhu school as a benchmark. Master Yi Hwang [1501–1570] made a particular contribution to scholars. His scholarship was great and upright, and he only upheld the will of Zhu Xi. That was particularly the case with the four ceremonial occasions of coming of age, marriage, funeral, and ancestral rites. Therefore, regardless of the location or status, not a single

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

person failed to go into mourning or to perform marriage and ancestral rites. Not only is this respectable vis-à-vis the Han and Tang, but also to the Three Dynasties [of Xia, Shang, and Zhou].

足下亦嘗聞朝鮮禮義風俗乎吾東在三韓之前亦一東夷也自父師一受周封教民禮樂釀成中國之風崇信讓篤儒術飲食籩豆衣冠制度彬彬可觀享國千有餘年至於我朝列聖相承滌濯麗末佞佛之俗以復箕子之風真儒輩出有若寒暄堂金公宏弼有若一蠹鄭公汝昌有若靜菴趙公光祖有若晦齋李公李彥迪前後倡明道學立言垂訓皆以濂洛關閩爲標準若退溪李先生則尤有功於學者其學大中至正一遵朱子之旨其於冠婚喪葬祭祀之禮尤兢兢焉由是一國之中無論遠近內外無論士大夫雖輿僮田畯安有一人不喪其親不爲冠婚祭祀者乎此則靡獨漢唐以下不論雖比之三代亦無媿焉。¹¹⁸

Despite Cho's belligerent espousal of the Cheng-Zhu school in Japan, the irony is that Cho was not necessarily a complete believer of his own rhetoric in his private life. Korean political and religious thought underwent through profound change over the course of the seventeenth century, and the domination of Confucianism at the expense of other traditions was only achieved towards the end of that century. As historian Kwŏn Oyŏng 權五榮 noted, Cho's work displays an unusual degree of openness to other traditions, even in the context of his own time.¹¹⁹ His views on Buddhism and Daoism, for example, are expressed in his poems, "Meeting a monk" 逢僧 and "Sudden recitation" 偶吟, respectively:

獨坐長松下 After sitting underneath a big pine tree by myself
飄然遠謁僧 Suddenly met a monk coming from afar
談山仍半日 A half-day was spent talking about mountains
說妙更傳燈 Mysterious sermon reconveyed teachings of Buddhism
欸覺心魂爽 After realizing the sudden exhilaration of mind
眞如法界陞 It really felt like ascending to the Dharmadhatu
佳期煩告汝 I want to remind you of the good occasion to meet again
春服石門屨 Let's meet at the steps of stone gate wearing spring clothes.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Kwŏn Oyŏng 權五榮, "17-segi chŏnban ūi Chosŏn hakkye wa Cho Kyŏng ūi hakmun sŏngnyang" 17世紀前半의 朝鮮 學界와 趙綱의 學問性向, *Chosŏn sidae sahakbo* 朝鮮時代史學報 75 (2015): 267-301.

¹²⁰ Cho Kyŏng 趙綱, "Yongju yugo" 龍洲遺稿 in *Yŏngin p'yojŏm Han'guk munjip ch'onggan* 影印標點韓國文集叢刊, vol. 90 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch'ujinhoe, 1993), 14.

平生無長物 Living my life without a single valuable
粗涉道家書 I have glossed over Daoist texts
多病身雖苦 While my body is distressed from diseases
耽玄意自如 Seeking profound ideas brings composure
丹鑪吾制虎 I control my passions by making [Daoist] medicinal pellets
濠上子非魚 You at the lakeside are not a fish [and should not talk knowingly]
坐睡輸長夏 Spending a long summer while sitting and drowsing
誰醫不俯箴 Who could fix [my] inability to bend [and be humble]?¹²¹

The two poems reveal Cho's interest in Buddhism and Daoism, traditions largely considered heretical to the idealized visions of antiquity rooted in the classical Confucian texts supposedly transmitted by Confucius himself. Cho Kyōng's son Cho Wibong 趙威鳳 (1621–1675) also revealed an interesting aspect of his father's scholarly interests in the "Record of Words and Deeds" 言行總錄, which was dedicated to his father. According to Cho Wibong, while his father's scholarship was "based on the Six Classics and Four Books" 本之於六經四書, he supposedly "also cherished" 又喜 a range of "heretical" texts. Despite Cho Kyōng's harsh criticism of Hayashi Razan for the Hayashi family's supposed openness to the "School of Diplomacy" 縱橫家, Cho himself also supposedly enjoyed reading "Strategies of Warring States" 戰國策, a primary text of the "School of Diplomacy." According to Cho Wibong, his father also enjoyed reading Daoist author Zhuang Zhou 莊周 (c. 369 BCE–286 BCE; better known as Zhuangzi 莊子), the early ancient style scholar Han Yu 韓愈 (768 CE–824 CE), and Ming dynasty scholar Wang Shizhen 王世貞 (1526–1590), the latter of whose Old Phraseology movement 古文辭派 sought to bypass the Song era scholarship in its entirety.¹²²

¹²¹ Ibid., 16.

¹²² Cho Wibong 趙威鳳, "Ōnhaeng ch'ongnok" 言行總錄 in *Yongju Cho Sōnsaeng yōnbo* 龍洲趙先生年譜 (P'och'ōn: Yongju Yōn'guhoe, 2014), 107-108.

This obvious duplicity, of course, further highlights the propagandistic nature of the attacks. Regardless of his own private beliefs, Cho Kyōng put forth the official line in waging a cultural battle against the Japanese. Thereafter, subsequent Korean mission officials sought to do the same. According to Kim Chinam 金指南 (1654–?), an unnamed Japanese Confucian scholar approached him regarding the subject of rites during the Korean mission’s stay at Edo in 1682. After writing down the procedures of various Japanese rites on paper, the Japanese scholar reportedly asked Kim, “Are the rites in your country similar to this? I would like to hear about it generally” 貴國常行之禮亦倣乎此否願聞其略云. Finding the Japanese rites to be “filthy and ugly” 醜陋 and “strange and odd” 怪訝, Kim proceeded to lecture him on how Korea abided strictly by the ritual prescriptions of Zhu Xi, and how Japan should follow the same:

Commonly used rites in our country all follow the prescriptions of Zhu Xi. Even among low-borns like servants, there is not one who does not respect them. If you want to know the details [about Korea’s rites], study Zhu’s rites.

我國常行之禮悉遵朱文公五禮儀而至於僇輿之賤莫不遵守者公若欲知考之朱禮可知其詳耳。¹²³

This claim is also propagandistic and based on tenuous grounds. As historian Martina Deuchler has shown, the Confucianization of Korean society—the aligning of social norms and rites according to the prescriptions laid down by Zhu Xi, particularly through his work *Master Zhu’s Family Rituals* 朱子家禮—occurred only gradually over the course of three centuries, starting with the founding of the Chosŏn dynasty in the late fourteenth century. Buddhist and Shamanistic rituals also persisted during this lengthy process, making a mockery of the growing debates over Confucian rites. For example, Cho Wi 曹偉 (1454–1503) had noted that “Buddhism had been mixed into the funeral and ancestral rites” 喪祭禱用浮屠 for aristocrats in Korea in his

¹²³ Kim Chinam 金指南, “Tongsa illok 東槎日錄, in *Kugyōk haehaeng ch’ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 6 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe), 51.

own time. In another instance, Korean official Sin Yonggae 申用漑 (1463–1519) noted to the court in 1509 that a popular Korean burial ritual at the time often involved what could be described as partying, “gathering guests and performing music to entertain the dead” 會客張樂娛尸.¹²⁴

Furthermore, the new Confucian norms and rituals that emerged in Korea in the mid-seventeenth century significantly deviated from Zhu Xi’s original suggestions. Over the centuries of debate, Korean Confucians incorporated what they termed “local customs” 土俗 or “national customs” 國俗 into ritual prescriptions. For example, due to the shared interest on the part of the Korean aristocracy in maintaining their exclusivity and keeping their numbers limited relative to the rest of society, as well as in reflecting the enduring traditional importance of one’s wife’s family dating from the older custom of uxoriocal marriage, the new rituals in Korea included severe discrimination against the sons of concubines in aristocratic households in terms of heirship and official careers.¹²⁵ Such discrimination, of course, was nonexistent in China, where hereditary aristocracy was destroyed during the violent chaos that followed the late ninth century rebellion of Huang Chao, 黃巢 (835 CE–884 CE) never to rise again.¹²⁶ Not only did Korean society recently start following Confucian norms and rites at large, the rites themselves were revised significantly revised to fit the local context. Moreover, Kim’s claim that even “low-borns” 賤 followed the same norms and rites as the aristocrats was entirely unfounded. All this, of course, was intentional; Kim was making an ideological statement designed to “prove” Korean

¹²⁴ *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* 朝鮮王朝實錄 *Chungjong sillok* 中宗實錄: 8 卷 4 年 6 月 4 日 (1509).

¹²⁵ Martina Deuchler, *The Confucian Transformation of Korea: A Study of Society and Ideology* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992).

¹²⁶ Nicolas Tackett, *The Destruction of the Medieval Chinese Aristocracy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2014).

civilizational superiority over the Japanese by emphasizing the view that Korea was the legitimate successor to Chinese antiquity.

Such patronizing claims of cultural and civilizational superiority based on the Korean proto-nationalist claims continued. In 1682, Hong Set'ae 洪世泰 (1653–1725) told his Japanese counterparts that Korea was “called the ‘small civilization’ because it most reveres scholars of letters and literary arts and there is no shortage of such persons generation after generation” 弊倣最尙文學文章之士代不乏人故有小中華之說.¹²⁷ In 1711, Korea's Yi Hyōn 李穰 (1654–?) told Japan's Terada Rinsen 寺田臨川 (1678–1744):

Ever since [the legendary Chinese sage Jizi] came to the east on a white carriage, the “Learning of the Way” and civilization has prospered in our country, unchanged over thousands of years. From the end of Koryō to the divine dynasty [Chosŏn], scholars of letters are so innumerable that their shoulders rub and their heels touch each other. 我國自素車東來之後道學文物蔚然大盛歷數千餘載而如一日矣自麗季至我聖朝文章之之士肩磨踵接不可勝算.¹²⁸

In another instance, in 1719, Asahina Bun'en 朝比奈文淵 (?–1734) asked whether his Korean counterparts had “visited China before” 有入中朝之地也耶. Kang Paek 姜栢 (1690–1777) retorted that there was no need to visit China; after all, Korea was superior to contemporary China in its mastery and re-creation of Chinese antiquity:

Our country's natural scenery and the flourishing of rites, music, and civilization are abreast of those of China. Why must [we] go to distant China? 弊國煙霞水石之觀禮樂文物之盛不讓中國何必遠入中邦也.¹²⁹

In 1748, Korea's Yu Hu 柳逅 (1690–?) supposedly wrote the following poem to his Japanese counterpart Fujiwara Akitō 藤原明遠 (1697–1761). The last two lines are particularly

¹²⁷ *Kanshi shukōroku* 韓使手口錄 (National Archive of Japan Rare Book 178-0534).

¹²⁸ *Kōryō monsaroku* 廣陵問槎錄, vol. 2 (National Library of Korea Rare Book 한古朝 51-나 161), 36-37.

¹²⁹ *Hōtō ishu* 蓬島遺珠 (National Archive of Japan Rare Book 178-0611).

noteworthy, as they express the notion of a complete transference of civilization. With China “barbarized” following the Manchu takeover, the civilization of ancient China has completely relocated to Korea:

欲識吾邦事 If you want to know about my country
何難說與聽 Why would it be hard to say and hear?
人皆從古禮 All people abide by the ancient rites
家自誦遺經 [All] households recite the classics
衣尚殷時白 Clothes are still white from the time of Yin [Shang] dynasty
山連岱畎青 [Korea’s] mountains adjoin Mount Tai and its valleys are green
文明盡在此 Civilization is all here
方夏遜華名 Now China has handed-over its splendid name [to Korea].¹³⁰

In the same year, Yi Pŏnghwan 李鳳煥 (?–1770) lectured Yamamiya Setsurō 山宮雪樓 (?–?) in stating that the Japanese rites were severely lacking:

Your country must have many books coming into Nagasaki. Extensive and long-standing practices of the institutions and civilization [of ancient China] are also not lacking. But when I obtained and read a book on the rituals of the four ceremonial occasions [in Japan], they did not abide by the old customs [of the Chinese antiquity] at all. 貴邦於書籍必多自長碕流來者至於典章文物其博通淹習亦非不足而冠婚喪祭之禮得於見聞則全似不尊古制。¹³¹

Another pillar of the Korean pretensions of cultural and intellectual superiority involved the supposedly exceptional qualities of Korean intellectuals. As for the officials sent to Japan, often only the *crème de la crème*, those deemed capable of intellectually besting their Japanese counterparts, were allowed to go. For example, as Han Sunsök 韓舜錫 (1637–?) noted in his introduction to the 1682 travelogue of Kim Chinam 金指南 (1654–?), it was often those with

¹³⁰ Cho Myŏngch’ae 曹命采, “Pongsa ilbonsi mun’gyönnok” 奉使日本時間見錄, in *Kugyök haehaeng ch’ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 10 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe), 36.

¹³¹ *Wakan hitsudan kunfū hen* 和韓筆談薰風編 (National Library of Korea Rare Book 한古朝 51-나 204).

“exceptional talents” 逸才 and “divine penmanship” 神筆 that joined the mission to Japan.¹³²

For example, Sin Yuhan 申維翰 (1681–1752), a member of the 1719–1720 mission, was selected due to his exceptional literary talents. According to Sin’s records, the mission head Hong Ch’ijung 洪致中 (1667–1732) had reportedly recommended that Sin accompany the mission because his “name for talent in writing” 雕篆之名. Prior to his departure for Japan, Sin noted meeting with a senior colleague, Ch’oe Ch’angdae 崔昌大 (1669–1720), in Ch’oe’s study. According to Sin, Ch’oe pulled out a collection of poems written by Arai Hakuseki, brought back by the previous 1711–1712 mission. Ch’oe told Sin that Sin “could stand against him [and beat him] with one arm” 可以褊師敵之, but nevertheless warned him not to underestimate the Japanese as “there must be those who are highly talented and wide-eyed” 必有才高而眼廣者 in Japan. The purpose of the mission, after all, was not merely to use the writing brush to make the Japanese “dreadful” 惴恐 of Korea’s literary and intellectual prowess, but to make them “submit from the heart” 心服.¹³³

Hong Set’ae 洪世泰 (1653–1725), a member of the 1682 mission, sent his junior colleague Chŏng Hyegyŏng 鄭惠卿 (?–?) to Japan in 1719 with a poem, urging him to “sweep away” 一掃 the Japanese with his intellectual prowess:

君能用筆如霜戟 You can use your brush like a frosty spear
一掃殊邦亦戰功 Sweeping away the country is also a distinction in war.¹³⁴

¹³² Kim Chinam 金指南, “Tongsa ilrok 東槎日錄, in *Kugyŏk haehaeng ch’ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 6 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe), 39.

¹³³ Sin Yuhan 申維翰, “Haeyurok” 海遊錄, in *Kugyŏk haehaeng ch’ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 1 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe), 48.

¹³⁴ Hong Set’ae 洪世泰, “Yuha chip” 柳下集, in *Yŏngin p’yojŏm Han’guk munjip ch’onggan* 影印標點韓國文集叢刊, vol. 167 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe, 1995), 431.

For another example, in his short biography of Yi Ŏnjin 李彦瓊 (1740–1766), Pak Chiwŏn 朴趾源 (1737–1805) also praised the supposed role of Yi Ŏnjin as part of the 1763–1764 mission to Japan in similar terms. Regardless of Yi’s actual deeds, Pak praised him because he supposedly “uprooted the mountains and rivers” of Japan with his brush:

While Yi Ŏnjin could not beat a soft hair with his strength, he sucked in the quintessence of their country so that he dried up the trees and streams of the island country of ten thousand *li*. [One could] even say that a brush [of Yi Ŏnjin] uprooted the mountains and rivers [of Japan].

虞裳力不能勝柔毫然吮精嘖華使水國萬里之都木枯川竭雖謂之筆拔山河可也。¹³⁵

Such an attitude was not limited to officials. King Yŏngjo 英祖 (r. 1724–1776), for example, also wanted to see the Korean officials “beat” their Japanese counterparts. The king personally tested the literary capabilities of several officials in the days prior to the departure of the 1763–1764 mission, and once the mission returned home, he was eager to hear about their showcasing of Korean literary prowess during their time in Japan. After hearing about the “extraordinary” 非常 performance of Sŏng Taejung 成大中 (1732–1809) and how Nam Ok 南玉 (1722–1770), Wŏn Chunggŏ 元重舉 (1719–1790), and Kim In’gyŏm 金仁謙 (1707–1772) each produced more than a thousand poems during their exchanges with Japanese scholars, the king proudly asked, “Did they [the Japanese] say that the Korean talent in literary and martial arts was difficult [to keep up with]” 彼以朝鮮人文武才皆難矣云乎?¹³⁶ According to Nam Ok, the king also asked about the quality of the Japanese literary arts “relative to those of our country” 比我國優劣. Nam responded that it was a matter of “difference between civilization and

¹³⁵ Pak Chiwŏn 朴趾源, “Usang chip” 虞裳集 in *Yŏnam chip* 燕巖集, trans. and eds. Sin Hoyŏl 辛鎬烈 and Kim Myŏnggho 金明昊, vol. 3 (P’aju: Tol Pegae, 2007), 453.

¹³⁶ *Sŏngjŏngwŏn ilgi* 承政院日記 Yŏngjo 英祖 40 年 7 月 8 日 (1764).

barbarism” 華夷之別。¹³⁷ Without question, the emphasis was placed on “out-brushing” the Japanese to prove Korean cultural and intellectual superiority.

The introduction of such “all-star” teams of intellectuals to Japan garnered significant interest from Japanese scholars. According to the Korean official Cho Myōngch’ae 曹命采 (1700–1764), who visited Japan in 1748, several overly eager Japanese scholars of Edo sent their writings some 700 miles west to Tsushima in time for the Korean mission to read at their first stop in Japan.¹³⁸ Japanese scholar Maeda Tōkei 前田東溪 (1673–1744) referred to the interactions between Japanese scholars and Korean officials during the 1719–1720 mission as follows:

Scholars all over the country competed against each other to give their name cards [to the Koreans]. Those who obtained even a single word or writing [from the Koreans] were as happy as if they had obtained a precious jade. After the farewell, they sighed and grieved like babies who had become separated from their nannies.

闔國操觚之士爭先投刺得片語隻字者喜如獲連城之璧別後歎惜如嬰兒之離乳媪。¹³⁹

This level of interest was even acknowledged by contemporary Japanese scholars who were displeased with the interest the Korean missions received in Japan. Ogyū Sorai 荻生徂徠 (1666–1728), for example, wrote the following about a Korean mission:

What happened in the Eastern Capital [Edo] was indeed unpleasant. An official who is influential for his literary arts loudly said at the court, “Their coming is an august ritual moment. Korea is a ‘superior nation.’ Their people are cultured and [their lands] directly border China, and the ordinary men, therefore, cannot cope with them.”

若夫吾東都之事則莫快焉有輦上君子握文章之柄者益嘗昌言於朝者曰聘大禮也三韓上國也其人習文又接壤中華是不可以世瑣瑣者當之。¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ Nam Ok 南玉, *Ilgwan’gi* 日觀記 (National Institute of Korean History Rare Book KO B16HD 6).

¹³⁸ Cho Myōngch’ae 曹命采, “Pongsa ilbonsi mun’gyōnnok” 奉使日本時間見錄, in *Kugyōk haehaeng ch’ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 10 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe), 13.

¹³⁹ *Sōkan shōwa* 桑韓墳簾 (National Library of Korea Rare Book 古朝 51-나 152).

¹⁴⁰ Ogyū Sorai 荻生徂徠, *Sorai shū; Sorai shū shū* 徂徠集; 徂徠集拾遺, ed. Hiraishi Naoaki 平石直昭 (Tokyo: Perikansha, 1985), 223.

Despite the evident interest and even admiration of the Japanese, as I will show, the nature of the interactions between the two parties proved far more contentious.

Many Japanese officials and scholars had their own reasons for resentment due to the Korean textual descriptions of the Japanese. A number of Korean officials dispatched to early modern Japan expressed their shock at the variety of Korean texts that had been smuggled out of Korea to the book markets in Japan. For example, the 1711–1712 mission witnessed the selling of Yu Sŏngnyong’s 柳成龍 (1542–1607) *Chingbirok* 懲毖錄 (“Book of Corrections”), a history of Japanese invasions of Korea (1592–1598), at Japanese book markets. On hearing this, the Korean court official O Myŏnghang 吳命恒 (1673–1728) expressed his “extreme shock” 極驚駭 that a book containing sensitive information had been smuggled to Japan.¹⁴¹ In 1719, Sin Yuhan 申維翰 (1681–1752) noted seeing first-hand Korean records of Japan at a book market in Osaka, and expressed his outrage at the contraband trade in leaked books containing “secretive information” 隱情. Sin asked himself, “how is this different from telling the enemy that we have spied on him” 是何異於覘賊而告賊者乎?¹⁴²

The way in which these Korean texts described the Japanese, however, affronted many Japanese intellectuals, even before they interacted with the Koreans. For example, the shogunate official Arai Hakuseki wrote:

Looking at the historical works of Korea, they have generally been recorded as if our country had submitted to their country. Even worse, instances of writing about us as “Japanese savages,” “Japanese barbarians,” and “Japanese thieves” are too many to write down.

¹⁴¹ *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* 朝鮮王朝實錄 *Sukchong sillok* 肅宗實錄: 150 卷 38 年 4 月 22 日 (1712).

¹⁴² Sin Yuhan 申維翰, “Haeyurok” 海遊錄, in *Kugyŏk haehaeng ch’ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 1 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe), 76.

朝鮮歴代の書共を見るに大かた我國を以て彼國に臣屬せし事の如くに記し置き甚しきは倭酋倭奴倭賊などしるし候事筆を絶候はず。

People of that country often say that the relationship between neighboring countries must involve decorum and mutual trust and that Korea has been a nation of proprieties since ancient times. While they claim that they are upholding proprieties in continuing the neighborly relationship, in their country, however, they send missions to spy on the conditions in Japan. While they use the honorific title of “country’s king” [to refer to the Tokugawa shogun during their stay in Japan], within their own country they use the base term “Japanese savage.” How could one call this decorum or mutual trust? How could one call their country a nation of proprieties? This must be an age-old custom of Yemaek barbarians [one of the ancient tribes of the Korean Peninsula].

彼國の人常に隣國の交りは禮と信とを以てする由を申しまた吾が朝鮮は古より禮義の邦也など申事に候へども我國にむかひては隣好を繼て聘禮を修め候と申て其國にては倭情を偵探するの使とし我國にむかひては國王を以て尊び稱し其國にては賤しめ稱して倭酋と申事何の禮とし信とする所候はんや何の禮義の邦とすべき所候はんや誠に古へに申傳へ候ひし濊貊東夷の國俗とは申すべき事に候。¹⁴³

In another instance, a Japanese official addressed his Korean counterpart in person to enquire about the prevalence of insults in Korean writings. Amenomori Hōshū raised this issue to his Korean counterpart Sin Yuhan during the 1719–1720 mission’s visit to Edo. According to what Hōshū told Sin, even a Tokugawa shogun was supposedly aware of this issue:

I have an impression I would like to speak of at this time. Because Japan and your country share a relationship across the sea and the people of our country all know that the Korean king shares official communication in decorum with our lord [the Tokugawa shogun], we greatly respect [Korea] in official and unofficial writings. Examining individual works written by the people of your country, words such as “Japanese thieves” or “southern barbarians” are used in reference to our country, unbearably degrading and scorning us. In the final year of shogun Tokugawa Ienobu [r. 1709–1712], he read individual writings from Korea by chance, and would always tell his officials, “how could Korean insults against us reach this far.” He harbored resentment until he died. Now, do you and others know of this?

吾有所懷欲乘間言之日本與貴國隔海爲隣信義相孚敝邦人民皆知朝鮮國王與寡君敬禮通書故公私文簿間必致崇極而竊觀貴國人所撰文集語及敝邦者必稱倭賊蠻酋醜蔑狼藉有不忍言者我文昭王末年偶見朝鮮文集每謂群臣曰豈料朝鮮侮我至此憾恨終身今日諸公可知此意否。

¹⁴³ Arai Hakuseki 新井白石, “Chōsen heishi kōgi” 朝鮮聘使後議, *Arai Hakuseki zenshū* 新井白石全書, vol. 4 (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1906), 683-684.

According to Sin Yuhan’s recollection, Hōshū’s “words and facial expressions were quite bitter, and he increasingly displayed anger” 辭色甚不平怒腸漸露. Sin Yuhan argued away further conflict by saying that all such writings emerged *after* the death and destruction caused by Hideyoshi’s invasions.¹⁴⁴ That, however, was not entirely true. Some individual writings of Korean scholar-official Kim An’guk 金安國 (1478–1543), who obviously never lived through the Hideyoshi’s invasions, were collected and introduced to Japan. One of these works was titled “Writing about Japanese People as the Paintings of Dogs Barking” 書日本人犬吠圖, in which Kim insulted the Japanese by comparing them to dogs. It goes:

大明初出赫當空 When the sun goes up and shines in the sky
 炤遍光輝四海同 The shining light is universal
 堪笑蜀中群狗吠 Dogs barking in Shu is laughable
 只緣風土喜陰霧 This is only because the natural climates are shadowy and foggy
 百越窮冬暖若春 Yue is spring-like warm even in the midwinter
 黃茅瘴氣每蒸薰 Every day is sultry due to brown fog and miasma
 千年一下霏霏雪 When snow falls for once in a thousand years
 無恠狂奔吠犬群 Dogs wildly barking in masses do not look strange.¹⁴⁵

Tang scholar-official Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元 (773–819 CE) had created the idiomatic phrases of “Shu dog barking at the sun” 蜀犬吠日 and “Yue dog barking at the snow” 越犬吠雪 to describe those with a narrow base of knowledge or insight.¹⁴⁶ Kim An’guk, who interacted with a number of Japanese political figures in person and played an important role in shaping Korea’s foreign policy vis-à-vis Japan at the time, ridiculed the Japanese people as a whole as

¹⁴⁴ Sin Yuhan 申維翰, “Haeyurok” 海遊錄, in *Kugyōk haehaeng ch’ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 2 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe), 14

¹⁴⁵ Matsushita Kenrin 松下見林, *Ishō Nihon den* 異稱日本傳, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1975), 1298.

¹⁴⁶ The Shu 蜀 region (today’s Sichuan 四川 province of China) is known for year-round foggy climate, which makes a clear sunny sky a rarity. The Yue 越 region (areas around today’s Shanghai) is known for its mild climate, making snow a rarity. In this sense, dogs were barking at things that they have not seen before. Liu Zongyuan’s discussions of the phrases can be found in the Chinese compendium *True Treasures of Ancient Literature* 古文真寶.

simpletons who did not know any better by alluding to them as dogs. The Japanese scholar Matsushita Kenrin 松下見林 (1637–1703) fully understood what Kim meant. He commented, “Examining this now, this poem turns the Japanese people into [the likes of] paintings of Shu dog and Yue dog 今按此詩見日本人所畫蜀犬越犬圖爲作之也.¹⁴⁷ Kim probably would never have imagined the day his poem would be read by Japanese readers. However, the introduction of such works to Japan decisively poisoned the interactions between members of the Korean missions and their Japanese counterparts, regardless of the continuation of the practice of sending and receiving missions.

In Defense of Japanese Civilization

The Japanese retorted to such displays of Korean arrogance in several ways, one of which was to claim that Japan was more cultured and civilized than Korea vis-à-vis their grasp of the Chinese culture of antiquity. During the 1682 mission to Japan, for example, Tokugawa Mitsukuni 德川光圀 (1628–1701), the lord of Mito Domain 水戸藩 from 1661 to 1701 and a grandson of Tokugawa Ieyasu, decided to engage the Koreans in their own game. Mitsukuni, who appeared in Edo with much pomp and his own set of officials and translators, stood out from all other feudal lords that the Koreans had ever seen before. A Japanese monk told Kim Chinam 金指南 (1654–?):

The ruler of Mito is a close relative of our lord [the Tokugawa shogun] and his wealth and prestige are unparalleled. [The shogun] relies on him and the responsibilities assigned [to Mitsukuni] are also invaluable.
水戸宰以吾君至親富貴無比倚任且重。¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷ Matsushita Kenrin 松下見林, *Ishō Nihon den* 異稱日本傳, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1975), 1298.

¹⁴⁸ Kim Chinam 金指南, “Tongsa ilrok 東槎日錄, in *Kugyōk haehaeng ch’ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 6 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe), 49.

Seemingly bent on schooling the Koreans, Mitsukuni raised an issue over a letter he had received from Korean officials on the grounds that the letter was improperly formatted, writing:

The local goods that the three officials [of the Korean mission] presented to our lord yesterday had only descriptions and quantities of items, not [the officials'] names.
昨日三使所贈我相公之土宜唯錄品數不具姓名。

After pressing a single seal into the paper, [the author] claimed that all three officials of the mission were presenting [the gifts to Mitsukuni].
楮尾押一印稱三使所贈。

Looking at the two characters of the “seal text,” do they represent the courtesy name of [the mission head] Mr. Yun? When the ancients interacted with each other, it was common to refer to oneself by given name, not by courtesy name.
見印文二字疑是尹公之字乎古人於交際自稱名不稱字以爲通式。

Mitsukuni added, “The three abovementioned points are questionable. I want to know if the laws of your country are as such” 右三件竊有所疑蓋貴國之法乎願聞之。¹⁴⁹

Presumably caught off guard, the Korean officials repeatedly evaded responding to these questions. Perhaps intentionally, this episode is entirely left out of extant Korean records from the 1682 trip, written by translators Hong Ujae 洪禹載 (?-?) and Kim Chinam 金指南 (1654-?). The extant Japanese record, however, chronicles “the three officials [the three highest ranking officials of the Korean mission] particularly marveled and praised” 三使殊外驚嘆稱美 the Mito lord for his knowledge in ritual.¹⁵⁰ Regardless of whether the Korean officials actually capitulated to the Japanese, the Koreans wanted to forget about the event altogether, blanking it out in their records, while the Japanese recorded and cherished the exchange as a decisive victory over the Koreans in their own game. Upon farewell, Mitsukuni sent the following poem to the Korean mission head, Yun Chiwan 尹趾完 (1635–1718):

¹⁴⁹ *Chōsen buntsū* 朝鮮文通 (Harvard-Yenching Rare Book TJ 3481.5 4203).

¹⁵⁰ *Mito kō Chōsenjin zōtōshū* 水戸公朝鮮人贈答集 (National Library of Korea Rare Book 韓古朝 51-나 227), 25.

萬里勞來聘 Laboriously coming ten thousand *li* to visit
 三韓尋舊盟 Korea sought after an old pledge
 衣冠皆駭矚 Everybody is surprised of the attire
 草木亦知名 Even plants and trees know the name
 遽爾已臨別 As we suddenly part from each other
 黯然下盡情 What is mournful is the remaining affection
 鄉人若相問 If the folks at home ask [about Japan]
 文物屬昇平 Tell them [Japan is] reigns in peace and products of civilization.

The last two lines are particularly noteworthy: by insisting on the presence of “peace” 昇平 and “products of civilization” 文物 in Japan, Mitsukuni further insisted on the idea of early modern Japan as a fully civilized nation.

Arai Hakuseki 新井白石 (1657–1725) also challenged the Korean claim of superiority and centrality in civilization by publicly arguing that Japan was a superior civilization to Korea. Similar to the Korean intellectuals, Hakuseki also reinterpreted Confucian texts in order to support his view that Japan was an integral part of the ancient Chinese civilization. Insisting that Confucius’s mention of “eastern barbarians” 東夷 referred to the Japanese, he redefined the this term as follows:

It can be seen in the *Shuowen jiezi* [“Explaining Graphs and Analyzing Characters,” the Chinese dictionary from the second century CE] that the character “barbarian” means a man from the east, a combination of [the character for] “large” and [the character for] “bow.”

説文に夷の字を釋して東方之人也從大從弓と見えて。

From ancient times to the present, throughout all countries of the world, I have never heard of a bow as long and large as the ones from our country. [It is obvious in] this entry from the *Book of Documents*, which refers to [the land of] Yu barbarians as “the valley where the sun rises,” the Japanese kings and other aspects of our country were already known in their country since the time of [the mythical Chinese rulers] Yao and Shun. 古より今に至りて萬國之中我國の弓のごとく長大なる者いまだある事を聞かず虞書の嵎夷日出之谷等の事によるの倭王我國の事のごときすでに唐虞之際より彼國にも聞へたりけるなり。¹⁵¹

¹⁵¹ Arai Hakuseki 新井白石, “Koshitsū wakumon” 古史通或問, in *Arai Hakuseki zenshū* 新井白石全書, vol. 3 (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1906), 392.

Based on his explanation of the term “eastern barbarian” and the supposed position of Japan within ancient Chinese discourse, Hakuseki reinterpreted Confucius’s praise for the eastern barbarians Dalian 大連 and Shaolian’s 少連 upright mourning of their parents and a well-known entry from the *Analects* 論語 noting that Confucius “wanted to live among the nine barbarian groups [of the east]” 欲居九夷. Through such interpretations, Hakuseki portrayed Confucius as someone who admired and wanted to live in Japan:

Confucius spoke of the upright mourning of an eastern barbarian man’s two sons, Dalian and Shaolian. [He was] referring to the sons of our countryman Lian.
孔子東夷之子大連少連が善居喪たりし事を稱し給ひしはすなはち我國の連の人の子を指給ひき.

I think it stands to reason that the place that Confucius wanted to get on a raft to go live in is our country.
孔子の居らまく欲し桴に乗て浮まむとのたまひし處の如き我國を指したまひしといふことはさも有なんやと思ひ合する.¹⁵²

According to Arai Hakuseki and many other Japanese scholars, not only was Japan an integral part of Chinese antiquity but superior to China itself, as Confucius himself wanted to live in Japan instead of China. Furthermore, according to Hakuseki, “there are many aspects of the ancient Chinese institutions of rites that only survived in our country” 三代の禮制のごとき我國にのみ遺れりと見ゆるもの多.¹⁵³ Based on this understanding, Hakuseki wanted to challenge the Korean pretense of superiority by testing the Koreans on their preservation of ancient institutions from Chinese antiquity. In doing so, Hakuseki ordered twelve ancient musical pieces from China, Japan, and Korea be played in front of Korean officials during a

¹⁵² Arai Hakuseki 新井白石, “Gakutai” 樂對, in *Arai Hakuseki zenshū* 新井白石全書, vol. 6 (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1907), 143.

¹⁵³ Arai Hakuseki 新井白石, “Koshitsū wakumon” 古史通或問, 392.

1711 banquet in Edo. Music has long been considered to have moral, political, and even cosmological significance in traditional East Asia, dating back to descriptions in the Chinese classics.¹⁵⁴ Historical songs had been performed while receiving Korean officials before, but playing ancient songs from China and Korea, which had been lost in their native lands, and Japanese preservation of such ancient musical pieces signified that Japan was exceptionally cultured in its own right and the true successor of the idealized culture of antiquity.

After hearing a piece originating from Tang China titled “Great Peace Music” 太平樂, for example, Korean official Im Sungan 任守幹 (1665–1721) asked Hakuseki if the same music is also played in Kyoto and Osaka. Hakuseki proudly replied to him:

The celestial dynasty [Kyoto]’s music officials have succeeded in their duties throughout the generations. Osaka and the southern capital [Nara] are former capital cities, and they both have households of musicians who have succeeded in their duties for more than a thousand years.

天朝樂官世守其職大坂及南都是舊京之地各有樂戶皆是歷世千有餘年而不墜厥業。¹⁵⁵

Several musical pieces later, Hakuseki revealed why he arranged for the performance in the first place. He linked the exceptional preservation of ancient music in Japan to the superiority of Japan and its culture, not only over Korea but also the later Chinese dynasties, in preserving the essence of Chinese antiquity. Hakuseki said to the Korean officials:

The celestial dynasty [Japan] started with heaven and its descendants will only fall with heaven itself. The Japanese emperor [therefore] is the real son of heaven. [Japan] is different from the dynasties of the west [China], where human beings succeed the mandate of heaven and different dynasties ruled. This is why the rites, music, and institutions are singular through the generations. We can thereby solicit the rites and music of Chinese antiquity.

¹⁵⁴ Jie Jin, *Chinese Music*, trans. Wang Li and Li Rong (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 37-43.

¹⁵⁵ Arai Hakuseki 新井白石, “Zakan hitsugo” 坐間筆語, in *Arai Hakuseki zenshū* 新井白石全書, vol. 4 (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1906), 723.

天朝與天爲始天宗與天下墜天皇卽是真天子非若西土歷朝以人繼天易姓代立者是故禮樂典章萬世一制若彼三代禮樂亦有其足徵者。¹⁵⁶

The Korean mission head Cho T'aeök 趙泰億 (1675–1728), clearly aware of the game Hakuseki was playing, reacted negatively to Hakuseki's presentation many times. After hearing the statement above on the superiority of Japan over China and the singularity of Japanese culture and institutions, Cho took a gibe at Hakuseki by noting that Japan would still have to “change” 一變 in order to achieve civilized society. Elsewhere, Cho reacted to Hakuseki's presentation of ancient music with several brusque responses. When Hakuseki had musicians play a piece dating from the Sui and Tang dynasties of China, for example, Cho nitpicked the performance by asking Hakuseki why “foreign sounds had been mixed-in” 雜用外國之音也 and “why didn't [the performers] use ancient musical instruments” 何不用古樂懸耶. When Hakuseki said that musical instruments of Tang and Song China cannot be fully recovered the texts, such as the *Wenxian tongkao* 文獻通考 (“Comprehensive Examination of Literature”) from the thirteenth century, Cho further argued, “while the *Wenxian tongkao* is an old text, how could it be as [old] as the Six Classics” 通考雖古書何如六經?¹⁵⁷ The text that Cho referenced, the *Yuejing* 樂經 (“Classic of Music”), had been extinct ever since the third-century-BCE practice of “burning of books and burying of Confucian scholars” 焚書坑儒 in Qin China. Cho's intention, however, was to do whatever he could to discredit Hakuseki's presentation of Japan as the ultimate preserver of music from high antiquity and, thus, deny that Japan is a more befitting successor of the antiquity than Korea.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 723-724.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 722-724.

The only extant Korean account from the 1711–1712 mission, by Im Suga, recorded the presentation of music but left out parts of the abovementioned conversations.¹⁵⁸ In the Japanese records, however, not only were the conversations recorded, they were also celebrated for generations as a decisive victory over the Koreans. Muro Kyūsō 室鳩巢 (1658–1734) celebrated this event as a signature moment of displaying Japan’s civilization. He also noted that the Koreans should have felt “honored” 榮, comparing the event to Ji Zha’s 季札 (fl. mid-6th cent. BCE) visit to the state of Lu 魯 in ancient China, where Lu officials played music for Ji Zha, leaving him inspired by the essence of civilization. The state of Lu was located primarily in today’s Shandong 山東 region, a bona fide part of China proper and the birthplace of Confucius. On the other hand, Ji Zha was a prince of the state of Wu 吳 along the Yangzi River basin, and its inhabitants were still considered at the time to be semi-barbaric by those living in the Central Plains. As the Lu officials school Ji Zha, the Japanese framed to frame the event as one in which they schooled the Koreans about civilization. Muro Kyūsō wrote:

In history, Ji Zha visited the State of Lu and observed music from antiquity. Zuo [Qiuming (556–451 BCE)] recorded the incident, and the peoples of all ages considered it a beautiful story. While international exchanges continued from the end of the Han dynasty and the Three Kingdoms era, through the northern and southern Sixteen Kingdoms, and until the Southern Song, Liao, and Jin dynasties, I have yet to hear of an envoy that observed [a musical performance] at a banquet. I have just witnessed what could not have been seen in more than a thousand years. I know that someone writing history in the future will succeed Zuo Qiuming and will also write about it, making the event shine brilliantly for the next hundred generations. How could this be glorious for the [Korean] officials alone? It is also glorious for their country and their families. 昔延陵季聘魯觀三代之樂左氏傳之古今以爲美談自漢季三國以後歷南北十六朝以逮南宋遼金之時敵國交聘前後相踵未聞有使臣觀樂於燕會之間者千有餘年間絕矣不可見者今乃見之吾知後之作史者亦將繼左氏而傳之使其事赫赫於百世之下豈特使臣榮抑亦邦家之光也。¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁸ Im Suga 任守幹, “Tongsa ilgi” 東槎日記, in *Kugyōk haehaeng ch’ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 9 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe), 39-104.

¹⁵⁹ Arai Hakuseki 新井白石, “Zakan hitsugo” 坐間筆語, 721.

Japanese scholar Yamamiya Setsurō 山宮雪樓 (?-?) again brought up Hakuseki's "feat" and the issue regarding the preservation of ancient Chinese culture with the members of the 1748 mission. He asked the Korean official Yi Ponghwan 李鳳煥 (?-1770):

Did King T'aejo [r. 1392–1398] establish [the institutions of] your country's music? Or is it the music of the Ming dynasty? In 1711, the visiting officials watched [the playing of] music handed down in our country. Have you heard of this?
貴國樂康獻王之所定乎或明樂耶正德聘使觀我國所傳之樂公定聞之。

Yi Ponghwan answered:

Institutions of our country's music were first created when King Sejong [r. 1418–1450] ordered Pak Yŏn and others to create them.
鄙邦樂制我世宗大王令朴堧勑成者也。

At the time of the 1711 mission, they say that the music handed down in your country were insignificant pieces from the time of Koryŏ [918–1392 CE].
辛卯使行時貴國所傳之樂皆高麗時靡靡之調云爾。

Setsurō immediately refuted him:

The music handed down in our country includes the "Music of Five Permanent Things," music of [the legendary Chinese sage king] Shun. There are many other pieces of ancient music [in Japan], numbering around three hundred. How could these only be vulgar pieces from Koryŏ?
吾邦所傳有五常樂蓋舜之韶樂也云其他鬱有古樂凡三百餘調豈唯高麗之俗樂而已哉
¹⁶⁰

The issue of ancient music preservation as a hallmark of civilization was once again raised by the Japanese scholar Imai Shōan 今井松庵 (1740–1823) with members of the 1763–1764 mission. He inquired his Korean counterparts about the existence of ancient music in Korea and the music collection put together during the era of King Sejong 世宗 (r. 1418–1450). When Nam Ok 南玉 (1722–1770) answered him by noting that a collection put together during the

¹⁶⁰ *Wakan hitsudan kunfū hen* 和韓筆談薰風編 (National Library of Korea Rare Book 한古朝 51-나 204).

Sejong era was “created by adding and removing [parts] from the music of antiquity”

損益三代之樂而成, Shōan immediately refuted him:

I have examined Chinese history, and it has been some two thousand years since the music of antiquity disappeared. How could King Sejong add to or remove from them? Is there anything that remains in the country of sage Jizi [Korea]? Please show me a couple ancient musical scores or instruments.

僕嘗攷中華歷代史三代之樂既亡二千有餘年世宗大王何所損益乎箕聖之邦猶有存者耶古樂譜古樂器願一二示之。¹⁶¹

In addition to presenting Japan as the reservoir of idealized Chinese antiquity, Japanese intellectuals also framed the rather subjective literary exchanges between Korean officials and their Japanese counterparts as Japanese “victories,” editing and writing introductions to the “conversation by writing” 筆談 records published in Japan. Japanese scholar Itazaka Bansetsuzai 板坂晚節齋 (?-?), for example, construed the 1682 exchanges of poetry and conversation between the two parties as decisive victories for Japan. Noting that “the literary spirit of the talented men of the Hayashi school largely overwhelmed Korea” 林門之英傑也文風殆壓韓國, Bansetsuzai also declared that the two Japanese boys who participated in the exchanges had impressed the Koreans so much that “the Koreans were astonished [by their poetic talents] and were reminded of the ‘seven steps’” 無韓人大捲舌不感七步. This refers to a famous episode in which the medieval Chinese poet Cao Zhi 曹植 (192–232 CE) impressed all onlookers, including his brother Cao Pi 曹丕 (187–226) who once considered killing him, by composing a touching poem within seven strides. Itazaka Bansetsuzai then argued that the Koreans “still could not

¹⁶¹ *Shōan hitsugo* 松庵筆語 (National Archive of Japan Rare Book 178-0641).

avoid being barbarians” 尙未免有胡臭, stating that he did not know “how [Korea] could be considered a civilized nation” 其稱文物之邦者果何事耶.¹⁶²

Ogyū Sorai 荻生徂徠 (1666–1728) also sought to reframe the interactions between the two parties. Sorai understood Korean intentions to pretend to be the civilizing mission, arguing that the Korean literary arts and scholarship were far inferior to their Japanese counterparts:

[The Koreans] want to beat [the Japanese] in literary arts, and [those with literary talents] have been selected from the eight provinces [all of Korea] and accompanied the officials on a visit to the east [Japan].

欲以文勝之則輒拔八道之萃從聘使東來.¹⁶³

I have read the poetry of the westerners [the Koreans] and could not help but be disappointed at their absurdity and ineptitude. They peculiarly inherited the dated conventions of the Song and Yuan dynasties: such are the parochial customs of Korea. 西人詩以讀之乃又爽然自失焉亡論其卑靡一沿襲宋元之舊是自三韓土俗.¹⁶⁴

Sorai also insisted that the Japanese had previously outdone the Koreans, writing the following in his commentaries to the *Analects*:

[In Japan, the practices of] equating ancestors with heaven, teaching in the way of the gods, and administrating reward and punishment all come from the ancestral temple and altars of the state. They are just like those of the Chinese antiquity, meaning that the way of our country [Japan] is also the ancient way of the Xia and Shang dynasties [of Chinese antiquity].

夫配祖於天以神道設教刑政爵賞降自廟社三代皆爾是吾邦之道即夏商古道也.¹⁶⁵

He also noted the prominence of Abe no Nakamaro 阿倍仲麻呂 (698–770 CE) as a poet in Tang China, comparing him to his Korean counterparts:

In old times, only a single poem by a Silla queen was included in [Gao Bing’s 高棅 (1350–1423)] *Tangshi pinhui* 唐詩品彙 (“Graded Compendium of Tang Poetry”). Today,

¹⁶² *Wakan shōshūshū* 和韓唱酬集 (National Library of Korea Rare Book 古朝 43-가 128).

¹⁶³ Ogyū Sorai 荻生徂徠, *Sorai shū*; *Sorai shū shūi* 徂徠集; 徂徠集拾遺, 275.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 223.

¹⁶⁵ Ogyū Sorai 荻生徂徠, “Rongo chō” 論語徵, in *Ogyū Sorai zenshū* 荻生徂來全集, eds. Imanaka Kanshi 今中寬司 and Naramoto Tatsuya 奈良本辰也, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 1978), 559.

only their Nam [Sōngjung 南聖重 (1666–?)] is slightly better. When they came [to Japan] last year, the whole country went crazy [over the Koreans], and I do not know why. Abe no Nakamaro’s exceptional talents were equal to that of [the famous Chinese poets] Li Bai 李白 [701–762] and Wang Wei 王維 [699–759].

往昔唯新羅女王一篇收諸品彙中今則其南姓者稍爲彼善於此耳去年來一國人如狂吾不知其何爲而然也晁卿之雄與謫仙摩詰相頡頏。¹⁶⁶

Sorai then revisited the three rounds of literary exchanges held between the Koreans of the 1711–1712 mission and his affiliates and students, writing commentaries that are just as emotionally charged and antagonistic as Cho Kyōng’s attacks against Hayashi Razan. For example, in response to Yi Hyōn’s 李磻 (1654–?) innocuous poem about the scenery of Akamagaseki 赤間關 (modern-day Shimonoseki), Sorai commented that his “language is extremely vulgar” 甚俚語, also noting that Yi’s poem is “filthy as if he is a Song [dynasty] person, and [his writing] appears abominable” 醜宛然宋人面目可憎. Toward yet another innocuous poem by Ōm Hanjung 嚴漢重 (1665–?) about Japan’s scenery and the relief of being welcomed by Japanese scholars after a long trip, Sorai again commented that it was “extremely vulgar” 俚甚. Regarding Yi Hyōn’s other innocuous poem about the poignancy of parting between the Korean officials and their Japanese counterparts, Sorai noted:

[The poems] must have been pre-written when [the Koreans] were in the west [Korea]. They brought some poems to the east [Japan], and the poems that they gave to the [Japanese] people whom they met must have been swiftly copied. If not so, how could they have ended up with barbarian invasions [the Manchu invasions of Korea]? It is laughable. It is laughable.

必是其在西時預先作下若干首及東來每遇人寄詩隨手寫去以銜敏捷耳不然那得這樣胡亂可笑可笑.

In another instance, Sorai even described the Koreans as “speaking orangutans” 猩猩能語。¹⁶⁷

Later, he described the three rounds of literary exchanges between the Koreans and his affiliates as a great naval battle, which ended with a decisive Japanese victory:

¹⁶⁶ Ogyū Sorai 荻生徂徠, *Sorai shū*; *Sorai shū shū* 徂徠集; 徂徠集拾遺, 275.

Dispatching a military force westward to meet them at the great sea, [we were] already able to captivate their soul. After chasing them and challenging them on their ships, they could not utter a word in response. How can they compete against us?

西出偏師邀諸大海上既足以奪其魄矣追焉挑戰舟中則不能出一言之相酬何況能相抗乎。¹⁶⁸

Hayashi Tōmei 林東溟 (1708–1780) described a 1764 literary exchange between the two parties in Osaka using similar terms. He first noted that, “from the mission head to the scribes, they had been hand-picked among all the scholars of their lands to engage the scholars of this country” 自正使至於掌書記皆彼土詞騷中之選而其使之當於此邦操觚之士者也. Then, playing on an old name for Korea, “chicken forest” or “forest of chickens” 鷄林, Hayashi Tōmei praised his friend Kitayama Kitsuan’s 北山橘菴 (1731–1791) display of literary prowess against the Koreans, describing the scene as “pulled feathers [of Korean chickens] messily scattered around and stems [of writing brushes] floating on blood” 落羽繽紛流血漂管。¹⁶⁹ Without a doubt, according to Hayashi Tōmei, Kitayama Kitsuan had crushed the “chickens” of Korea.

The Empire of Japan, the Kingdom of Korea

Lastly, some Japanese also sought to undercut Korean claims of cultural superiority by unveiling the geopolitical realities upon which Korea’s very existence rested. After all, early modern Korea was a vassal state of the Qing Empire, a country that the Koreans considered to be barbaric. During their visits to Japan, however, Korean officials mostly refused to discuss anything about the Manchu empire or any other aspect of contemporary China. When a Japanese scholar asked about “the war in the Ming in recent years” 大明近歲之兵革 in 1655, Nam

¹⁶⁷ *Monsa nishu* 問槎二種 (National Diet Library Rare Book 詩文-3580).

¹⁶⁸ Ogyū Sorai 荻生徂徠, *Sorai shū*; *Sorai shū shūi* 徂徠集; 徂徠集拾遺, 224.

¹⁶⁹ *Keidan ōmei hitsuwa* 鷄壇嚶鳴・筆話 (Osaka Prefectural Nakanoshima Library Rare Book 甲和/420#).

Yongik 南龍翼 (1628–1692) refused to answer, noting that he was “did not to know the details because the territories are far away [from each other]” 疆域絕遠未能詳知.¹⁷⁰ In 1682, Ohara Daijōken 小原大丈軒 (1637–1712) asked Hong Set’ae 洪世泰 (1653–1725) about the ongoing Han Chinese rebellions against the Qing in southern China:

I have heard that the northern people are now controlling the heavens of China. I have also heard that an army has risen up in the south and almost recovered the old institutions [of China]. But I do not know the details. Has your country heard something in detail? I hope that you write and show us what you have heard.
嘗聞北人御中華之天近亦傳南方兵起殆將復舊物然未知其詳貴國或有聞其詳願書所其聞以示之。

Hong, however, evaded the question by noting that Korea “only has contact with Beijing and is far away from Nanjing, so we have not heard anything” 只通北京與南京相去隔絕不相聞知.¹⁷¹

Of course, as Yi Chaegyōng 李在璟 noted, the Korean officials sent to the Qing Empire during the Revolt of the Three Feudatories 三藩之亂 (1671–1682) displayed a keen interest in gathering information about the rebellions in southern China.¹⁷²

When Japan’s Seo Yōsetsusai 瀨尾用拙齋 (1691–1728) showed his interest in the Qing-Korea relations and interactions in a conversation with Korean officials in 1719 by noting that “people of your country frequent the Qing dynasty” 貴邦之人往來清朝, Korea’s Sin Yuhan

¹⁷⁰ Nam Yongik 南龍翼, “Pusangnok” 扶桑錄, in *Kugyōk haehaeng ch’ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 5 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe), 60.

¹⁷¹ *Wakan shōshūshū* 和韓唱酬集 (National Library of Korea Rare Book 古朝 43-가 128).

¹⁷² Yi Chaegyōng 李在璟, “Sampōn ūi nan chōnhu (1674-1684) Chosōn ūi chōngbo sujip kwa chōngse insik” 三藩의 亂 前後 (1674~1684) 朝鮮의 情報收集과 情勢認識 (M.A. diss., Seoul National University, 2013). The Korean officials dispatched to the Qing empire also showed significant interests regarding the Taiping Rebellion 太平天國運動 (1850-1864). Also see Hō Pang 許放, “Ch’ōljong sidae yōnhaengnok yōn’gu” 哲宗時代 燕行錄 研究, (Ph.D. diss., Seoul National University, 2016).

申維翰 (1681–1752) overreacted, ending the topic of conversation by falsely claiming that there was absolutely no individual contact between the peoples of the Qing Empire and Korea:

While the envoys come-and-go, they do not interact with their people. When Qing officials come [to Korea], they do not interact with our country in writing. Officials are sent only for the official ritual of state visits. The communications and scholarships of the court officials and Confucian scholars do not involve hearing and inquiring [about the Qing], and we do not know about their circumstances.

雖有使介往來不與其人相接清使之來亦不與我國之文字相應但以公事聘問之禮遣使而已其朝士儒生文詞學問非所聞問不知其處人何其狀。¹⁷³

When Yamagata Tōen 山縣棠園 (?–?) again brought up the Qing Empire in conversation in 1748, Korea's Pak Kyōnghaeng 朴敬行 (1710–?) refused to discuss it further, noting that “I can no longer speak of China” 神州不可以更有說話.

Regarding the consistent Korean refusal to discuss anything about Manchu or Chinese affairs, their Japanese counterparts correctly assumed that such rebuff had to do with Korea's desire to conceal the fact that Korea had surrendered and regularly submitted tribute to the Manchus since 1637. For example, Itazaka Bansetsuzai particularly criticized Korean duplicity for claiming that it somehow does not use the Qing era name and thereby is not subordinate to the Qing:

Korean barbarians are being deceitful to the Japanese. While the Korean king is currently subordinate to the Great Qing, they claim that they are not subordinate [to the Qing]. While they use the era name of the Great Qing's [Emperor] Kangxi, they claim that Korea does not have an era name. Since ancient times, I have never heard of a cultured country without an era name. To discuss this using the [Korean historical text] *Tongguk t'onggam*, Korea was [at times] subordinate to Parhae, subordinate to the Khitans, subordinate to the Jurchens, and subordinate to China. The Korean king could not be independent. This is recorded in their own history. How can they [claim] that they are not subordinate to the Qing now? In general, those who pay tribute to China receive their calendar and use their era name. It has been a thousand years since we Japan have self-established [state institutions] in the Taihō era [701–704 CE]. Our system of government, clothing, decorum, and [other forms of] institutions are superbly independent, and we

¹⁷³ *Sōkan shōwa* 桑韓墳簾 (National Library of Korea Rare Book 古朝 51-ㄴ 152).

have not received an era name or calendar from any foreign country. How did the Korean king receive the Chinese calendar and claim that it does not use its era name?

麗奴之欺倭人也麗主如今臣隸于太清而曰不隸之用太清洪熙之號而曰麗國無號振古未聞文物之國無號姑以東國通鑑論之三韓或隸于勃海或隸于契丹或隸于女眞或隸于中國不能韓主自立大卒所東史之筆也胡爲今不隸于清矣凡中國進貢之主皆受中國之封冊用中國之號我日本自建太寶以來歲序既一千年官階服色禮儀制度卓然自立而無受他邦之號冊麗主皆受中國之冊豈不用號耶。¹⁷⁴

Perhaps wanting to discuss the issue of Korea's relationship with the Qing, Arai

Hakuseki asked Cho T'aeök, "The countries of the west [countries located west of Japan] now all follow the customs of the Great Qing. Why is that your country alone maintains the old customs of the Great Ming" 當今西方諸國皆用大清冠服之制貴邦獨有大明之舊儀者何也? Cho proudly responded by emphasizing the Korean belief that Korea became the sole successor of the idealized antiquity. Cho even linked this notion of successorship to the reason why the Manchus did not impose a more direct form of rule upon the Koreans:

While the entire world is [now] barbaric, our country alone does not deviate from the customs of civilization. The Qing considers our country to be a nation of decorum and does not dare to impose improprieties. Only our country is the Eastern Zhou [ancient China] in the world. Does your country also seek to use the customs of civilization? Having seen the revival of education in your country, I have great hope that your country will experience a transformation.

天下皆左衽而獨我國不改華制清國以我爲禮義之邦亦不敢加之以非禮普天之下我獨爲東周貴邦亦有用華之意否今看文教方興深有望於一變之義也。

Cho seemingly walked into a trap. Looking at how Hakuseki responded to Cho's statement, Hakuseki's first question was most likely designed to elicit such an assertion of Korean centrality in civilization, only to shut it down immediately after. After noting Korean customs approximate only that of the Ming dynasty and not that of ancient China as Cho had claimed, Hakuseki added:

The Great Qing is now changing the culture through the generations, recreating the world based on its own native customs. Your country and the Ryukyu Kingdom have already submitted to the north [to the Qing Empire] but have been spared from the pigtail and barbarism. Is that because the Great Qing, like the Zhou [of ancient China], rules through

¹⁷⁴ *Wakan shōshūshū* 和韓唱酬集 (National Library of Korea Rare Book 古朝 43-가 128).

virtue instead of force? Or is it because the two countries rely on the power of the east [Japan]? I am not sure.

當今大清易代改物因其國俗創制天下如貴邦及琉球亦既北面稱藩而二國所以得免辮髮左衽者大清果若周之以德而不以疆然否抑二國有假靈我東方亦未可知也。¹⁷⁵

Hakuseki effectively overturned the Korean assertion of exceptionalism by arguing that not only was Korea subservient to the supposedly barbaric Manchu empire, but it was only spared of direct rule by the Manchus because of the balancing presence of Japan to its east. By unveiling the geopolitical realities surrounding Korea, Hakuseki showed the hollowness in the Korean assertions of superiority—Korea was in fact politically and ritually subservient to the supposed barbarians. Furthermore, Hakuseki’s assertion regarding the balancing presence of Japan to the east was also something that the Koreans themselves understood. First, the early modern Korean policymakers were well aware of the new predicament of being encircled by the unified Japanese state to the south and east and the expansionist Manchu empire to the north and west. In 1598, King Sōnjo spoke of the imminent danger of being sandwiched and “attacked from the front and back” 腹背受敵.¹⁷⁶ In 1629, Yi Chōnggu 李廷龜 (1564–1635) spoke to Korea’s King Injo 仁祖 (r. 1623–1649) about the general consensus among officials that Korea was in fact “a hollowed-out country” 空虛之國 that was already “struck from north and south” 南北交侵.¹⁷⁷

Ironic as it might sound, one reason explaining the Manchu decision to leave Korea intact even after capturing the Korean king and his court in 1637, may have had to do with the desire to avoid abutting Japan in order to concentrate on the more pressing goals of dominating China

¹⁷⁵ Arai Hakuseki 新井白石, “Kōkan hitsudan” 江關筆談, in *Arai Hakuseki zenshū* 新井白石全書, vol. 4 (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1906), 727.

¹⁷⁶ *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* 朝鮮王朝實錄 *Sōnjo sillok* 宣祖實錄: 105 卷 31 年 10 月 20 日 (1598).

¹⁷⁷ *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* 朝鮮王朝實錄 *Injo sillok* 仁祖實錄: 20 卷 7 年 4 月 20 日 (1629).

proper and bringing in the often recalcitrant Mongols into the fold. In this sense, the non-threatening Korea was a useful buffer to keep.¹⁷⁸ The Manchus were well aware of the existence of the militarily powerful Japanese. Katō Kiyomasa's 加藤清正 (1561–1611) army once crossed over the Tuman River 豆滿江 (C. Tumen River 圖們江) and engaged the Jurchen forces in 1592 during the Japanese invasions of Korea. Soon thereafter, Nurhaci (1559–1626), the then leader of a rapidly growing group of Jurchens tribes that eventually grew into the Qing Empire after Nurhaci's death, offered military assistance to Korea to fight the Japanese, most likely to test the threat level posed by Japan. While certainly not an urgent priority, the Manchus also tried to find out more about the Japanese through Korea. In fact, on the exact day the Koreans surrendered to the Qing in 1637, the Manchu emperor instructed Korea to act hereafter as a communication medium between Japan and the Manchu empire:

Commerce with Japan will be permitted as in the past. However, guide their envoy to come into the [Qing] court. I will also send out an envoy to them.
日本貿易聽爾如舊但當導其使者赴朝朕亦將遣使至彼也。¹⁷⁹

Several months later, Manchu officials Inggūldai (1596–1648) and Mafuta (?–1640) inquired about the progress of bringing in an envoy from Japan to the Korean crown prince Sohyōn 昭顯 (1612–1645), who was held hostage by the Manchus from 1637 to 1645 and worked as an intermediary between the Korean court and the Qing Empire during that time. Soon after Sohyōn's arrival at the Qing capital of Shenyang 瀋陽, Inggūldai and Mafuta reiterated to

¹⁷⁸ This, of course, does not necessarily explain the whole story. Yuanchong Wang, for instance, emphasizes the ideological dimension of the Manchu decision to maintain the traditional tributary relationship with Korea, as maintaining the traditional tributary ties with Korea served to legitimize the Manchu empire as the traditional center of the “Chinese world.” See Yuanchong Wang, “Recasting the Chinese Empire: Qing China and Chosŏn Korea, 1610s–1910s,” (Ph.D. diss., Cornell University, 2014).

¹⁷⁹ *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* 朝鮮王朝實錄 *Injo sillok* 仁祖實錄: 34 卷 15 年 1 月 28 日 (1637).

the prince that the Qing authorities had made it clear at the time of Korea's surrender in 1637 that the Qing Empire was interested in having relations with Japan:

Did the Japanese envoy come [to Korea]? Our country's intention to have a relationship [with Japan] was declared at the time of the treaty [of Korean surrender].
日本使出來乎我國欲爲通信之意曾於約條時言之矣。¹⁸⁰

With nothing to gain from the Manchu–Japanese contact, the Koreans continued to demur. Inggūldai, for example, expressed his frustration in 1638 that Korea was taking too long to follow orders:

What did I also say about Japan? I have said “continue to contact [them] regardless of speed.” Why no news?
日本之事亦如何云耶緩急之間連續更通事前已言之而厥後何無聲息耶。¹⁸¹

In 1642, for example, Inggūldai and a number of the Manchu officials came to see the Korean prince, asking questions about Japan. They asked, for example, “What kind of name is *taikun*? Is *taikun* a country's ruler?” 大君是何名大君爲一國之主。The Manchus also asked about, among other things, the Japanese emperors, Tsushima, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and Tokugawa Ieyasu.¹⁸² About a month later, the Koreans witnessed the ceremony of recently surrendered Chinese officials at Shenyang. During the ceremony, the Qing emperor asked one surrendered official named Hong Chengchou 洪承疇 (1593–1665):

You are a southerner. Do the Japanese frequent the South [of China]?
汝是南方之人云日本人往來於南方耶。¹⁸³

Aware of the Manchu suspicion of Japan, the Korean official Cho Kyōng 趙綱 (1586–1669) even suggested in 1640 that Korea ought to use the Japan card to deter future Manchu

¹⁸⁰ *Shin'yō jōkei* 瀋陽狀啓 (Keijō: Keijō Teikoku Daigaku Hōbun Gakubu, 1935), 41.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 76.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 430.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 448.

intrusions. Noting that the Manchu officials “repeatedly asked whether the Japanese [came to Korea]” 常問倭來否 and claimed that they “also wanted to send an official to them [the Japanese]” 且曰吾亦欲送使至彼, Cho concluded that such moves had to do with the fact that the Manchus “mind about them” 憚彼也. Because of this, Cho even suggested to the king that Korea should let the Manchus “know that we [Korea] are deeply aligned with Japan” 知我與倭深結 so that the Manchus “will not be able to attack us easily” 不能輕易加兵於我矣.¹⁸⁴ In other words, Hakuseki was right: the Korean policymakers themselves attempted to rely on Japanese power in the hope of avoiding more direct forms of Manchu rule.

Furthermore, the exposure to geopolitical realities reaffirmed the qualitative difference between early modern Korea and Japan in terms of stature: regardless of Korean assertions of cultural and civilizational superiority, Korea was still a vassal country, whereas Japan dictated its own international order. This point was particularly noticeable in the discussions between the two sides regarding the contemporary Ryukyu Kingdom. In his conversation with Cho T’aeök, Hakuseki noted the “residual Ming customs” 明代遺制 of the Ryukyu Kingdom and that the Ryukyu Kingdom “has paid annual visits [to Japan] since the time of the Ming dynasty” 明代以來比歲朝聘. Hakuseki also noted that the first-known Ryukyuan monarch, King Shunten 舜天王 (r. 1187–1237), was a son of the Japanese warlord Minamoto no Tametomo 源爲朝 (1139–1170).¹⁸⁵ Koreans knew of the Ryukyus at least by the fourteenth century. Receiving official tribute from the Kingdom of Chūzan 中山 of the Ryukyu Islands in the Chosŏn

¹⁸⁴ *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* 朝鮮王朝實錄 *Injo sillok* 仁祖實錄: 40 卷 18 年 5 月 9 日 (1640).

¹⁸⁵ Arai Hakuseki 新井白石, “Kōkan hitsudan” 江關筆談, 727.

dynasty's founding year of 1392, and in the decades thereafter, was considered a significant coup in the legitimation of the new dynasty. It was thereby recollected for centuries thereafter. As late as 1873, King Kojong 高宗 (r. 1863–1907) noted during a discussion on foreign affairs with his officials that “the Ryukyu Kingdom was originally a tributary state in our country's early years” 琉球國本是我國初朝貢之國.¹⁸⁶ While the formal tribute may have ended with the consolidation of the new international order around Ming China, friendly communication between the two countries nevertheless continued, particularly through the Ming capital where Korean and Ryukyuan officials sometimes met and exchanged letters and gifts.

The Korean court understood the increasingly subservient role that the Ryukyu Kingdom was placed in vis-à-vis Japan. For example, King Sōnjo noted in 1595 that “the Ryukyu has submitted to Japan” 琉球則稱臣日本.¹⁸⁷ The news of the physical conquest of the Ryukyu Kingdom by the Satsuma domain 薩摩藩 of Japan in 1609 reached Korea in 1613 through China.¹⁸⁸ Despite the increasing loss of autonomy, however, the Ryukyu Kingdom continued to communicate with Korea. In 1606, the Ryukyu Kingdom sent a message to Korea, claiming to be a “friendly nation” 友邦 of Korea while condemning the “arrogant and treasonous” 肆逆 deeds of Hideyoshi.¹⁸⁹ In January 1610, mere months after the Satsuma invasion, the Ryukyu Kingdom sent an envoy to speak of “everlasting affection” 永結鄰好 between the two countries.¹⁹⁰ While

¹⁸⁶ *Sūngjōngwŏn ilgi* 承政院日記 Kojong 高宗 10 年 8 月 13 日 (1873).

¹⁸⁷ *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* 朝鮮王朝實錄 *Sōnjo sillok* 宣祖實錄: 59 卷 28 年 1 月 30 日 (1595).

¹⁸⁸ *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* 朝鮮王朝實錄 *Kwanhaegun ilgi chōngch'obon* 光海君日記 正草本: 66 卷 5 年 5 月 8 日 (1613).

¹⁸⁹ *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* 朝鮮王朝實錄 *Sōnjo sujōng sillok* 宣祖修正實錄: 40 卷 39 年 4 月 1 日 (1606).

¹⁹⁰ *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* 朝鮮王朝實錄 *Kwanhaegun ilgi chōngch'obon* 光海君日記 正草本: 23 卷 1 年 12 月 21 日 (1609).

the bilateral communication started to dwindle except for the occasional return of castaways, Koreans understood what had happened to the Ryukyu Kingdom: the Japanese had physically subjugated a peer country. Furthermore, Korea almost suffered a similar fate as the Ryukyu Kingdom in 1592.

In 1748, the Japanese scholar Yamamiya Setsurō 山宮雪樓 (?-?) brought up the subject of Japanese subjugation of the Ryukyu Kingdom to the Korean official Yi Myōnggye 李命啓 (1714-?). First, Yamamiya asked whether Yi had read the *Zhongshan chuan xin lu* 中山傳信錄 (“Messages from Chūzan”), a text on the Ryukyu history and culture written by the Qing official Xu Baoguang 徐葆光 (1671–1723), which was based on his historical research and his official visit to the country in 1719–1720. When Yi responded that he has not read it, Yamamiya noted that “their local customs are largely identical to those of Japan, primarily because they are subservient to our Satsuma province” 其土俗與日本太同蓋以爲我薩摩州附庸也. Seemingly uncomfortable, Yi tried to change topic. Yamamiya, however, wanted to talk about it some more. Stating that “[the Ryukyu Kingdom] is a vassal of Satsuma to this day” 至今爲薩摩臣, Yamamiya added:

During the Keichō [the Japanese era name from 1596 to 1615], the Satsuma lord [Shimazu] Iehisa [r. 1602–1638] sent troops to destroy the Ryukyu Kingdom and capture their king Shō Nei [r. 1589–1620]. Upon his return, [Iehisa] introduced [Shō Nei] to the [Tokugawa] shogun and [the Ryukyu Kingdom] petitioned to forever become a vassal [of Japan].

慶長中薩摩侯家久遣兵滅中山擒王尙寧而歸見之于大君中山請永爲附庸.

Seemingly annoyed, Yi brusquely responded with just three Chinese characters, “already heard that” 已聞之.¹⁹¹ Yi did not want to hear any more about Japan’s military incursions against a peer kingdom.

Such discursive reframing of early modern Japan as an independent, bona fide empire and Korea as a mere vassal country not only unveiled the weak basis of Korean claims of superiority, but also allowed many Japanese intellectuals to frame visits by Korean missions as overt acts of subservience to Japan. From the start, without question, the relation between early modern Japan and Korea was not a relationship among co-equals. As mentioned, the Tokugawa regime wanted to use the public presence of Korean missions in Japan as a theatrical prop to ideologically bolster their dynasty, and in order to stem the looming possibility of yet another invasion from Japan, the Koreans obliged. However, the cause of “friendship” between the two countries was something even the Japanese side openly espoused during the early phase of interactions between them. Tsushima official Amenomori Hōshū, for example, was the quintessential example of someone who emphasized the importance of “sincerity” 誠信 in the two countries’ relations:

While people speak of sincere relations [between Japan and Korea], many do not clearly understand the meaning of the word. Sincerity denotes genuine intention; sincerity conveys interacting with genuineness without mutual deception or strife.

誠信之交と申事人々申事ニ候へとも、多ハ字義を分明ニ不仕事有之候、誠信と申候ハ實意と申事ニて、互ニ不欺不爭、眞實を以交り候を誠信とは申候。¹⁹²

Of course, such expressions as “sincere relations” do not mean that Hōshū actually believed that the two countries were on an equal footing. Like many of his countrymen, Hōshū,

¹⁹¹ *Wakan hitsudan kunfū hen* 和韓筆談薰風編 (National Library of Korea Rare Book 韓古朝 51-나 204).

¹⁹² Amenomori Hōshū 雨森芳洲, *Kōrin teisei* 交隣提醒, ed. Tashiro Kazui 田代和生 (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2014), 185.

too, displayed some of the same beliefs regarding the superiority of Japan vis-à-vis Korea as many of his countrymen did. First, Hōshū believed in the Empress Jingū's legendary conquest of Korea and how that conquest resulted in centuries of Korean submission to Japan:

It can be seen in our history that [Japan] obtained handsome gains by invading [Korea] when that country was separated into three, calling themselves Silla, Koguryō, and Paekche during the era of Empress Jingū. The rite of sending tributes indeed continued without end.

神功皇后之御宇、彼國三ツに別レ、新羅・高麗・百濟と號したる時、征伐ニ大利を得られたる事國史ニ相見へ、進貢奉獻之儀誠ニ策不絶盡いへとも。¹⁹³

Amenomori Hōshū also noted the supposed institutional superiority of Japan over Korea, arguing that the Japanese system of governance was superior to that of Korea:

When several high-ranking Korean officials were punished, an old man named Pak Sabu secretly said to me, “[Because] our country has [a centralized system of] counties and prefectures, subordinates can easily advance to the upper seat. [Therefore, the people] are often naturally cunning, and even bribery takes place. Flourishing in the morning and declining in the evening, the society is unruly. [I am] therefore envious that all people in your country have their places predetermined.” This has a deep meaning. Those who are thoughtful will know this.

韓國のおもき司する人、大勢とがにあひしおりふし、朴射夫といへる翁、ひそかにかたりしは、わが國は郡縣の世にて、下なるもの上にすすみやすきままに、自然とさかしらごとも多く、またはまいなひも行はれて、旦にはさかえ、夕にはをとろへ、世の中しづかならずさふらふ。その御國のみなひと、その分定まりたるこそ、うらやましとはおぼゆれといへり。これはふかき事なり。よくおもふ人はしるべし。¹⁹⁴

Furthermore, due to his role as an official of the Tsushima domain, which was dependent on Korean food subsidies and trade, Hōshū also displayed a sense of resentment towards the often-patronizing attitudes of Korea vis-à-vis his domain:

¹⁹³ Amenomori Hōshū 雨森芳洲, *Hōshū gaikō kankei shiryō shokanshū* 芳洲外交関係資料・書簡集 (Suita: Kansai Daigaku Shuppanbu, 1982), 270.

¹⁹⁴ Amenomori Hōshū 雨森芳洲, “Tawaregusa” たはれ草, in *Jinsai nissatsu* 仁齋日札. *Tawaregusa* たはれ草. *Fujingen* 不尽言. *Muka ukyō* 無可有郷, eds. Uetani Hajime 植谷元, Mizuta Norihisa 水田紀久, and Hino Tatsuo 日野龍夫 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten 2000), 67.

Their countrymen often say that eliminating subsidies and suspending trade is like weaning an infant for the people of Tsushima. They think that the wisest thing is to deal a blow [to Tsushima].

撤供撤市いたし候へハ、對州之人ハ嬰兒の乳を絶候ことくニ候と彼國之人常ニ申事ニ而、此方ニいた手をあて候第一之上策と存居申候。¹⁹⁵

When the Chinese come to Japan to do trade, [Japan] does not provide food and firewood [to them]. But that country's [Korea's] receiving of dispatched [Tsushima] officials sent for trade has to do with the [Chinese] embracing of barbarians who came to do trade as an [magnanimous] act of aiding men from afar. Providing post horses and food [to barbarians coming for trade] can also be seen in the *History of Song*, and Korea also followed such an example. While [such reception] is a magnanimous gesture from that country [Korea], [such reception] from that country is without unease [for Tsushima].

日本へ唐人共商賣ニ參候而も、糧米・炭柴を給し馳走被成候事も無之候所、貿易のため罷渡候送使を彼方より馳走被致候譯ハ、胡人之開市のため中國ニ來候ハ遠人を綏すると申事ニ而、驛馬を給し糧食を具られ候段宋史ニも相見へ、朝鮮も其例ニ準しられたるにて候、彼方ニとり候而ハ寛大之處置にて、彼方ニとり候而ハ心ニ安しかたき事にて候。¹⁹⁶

Despite Hōshū's belief regarding the historical and inbuilt Japanese superiority over Korea and his unease about Korean patronage vis-à-vis his domain, he nevertheless underscored the need for his countrymen to understand Korea through the lens of cultural relativism in order to maintain "sincere relations" between the two countries:

Using Japanese preferences and customs to understand things about Koreans will inevitably result in mistakes as Japan and Korea differ in preferences and customs.

日本・朝鮮嗜好・風義之違候所ニ、日本之嗜好・風義を以朝鮮人之事を察し候而ハ、必ハ了簡違ニ成可申候。

[The Japanese] consider Koreans to be fools after seeing that Koreans do not readily speak out. [The Japanese] consider Koreans as dim-witted after seeing that Koreans wander around [wearing] long sleeves. Because [Korean] translators are officials working in-between [the two countries], they repeatedly lie in order to manage good relations between the two sides. [But] those who look at that and say Korea is a country of liars are all misguided. [The reason why] Koreans do not readily speak out has to do with circumspect and deep wisdom; it does not appear to be out of dim-wittedness.

朝鮮人之ミたりニ言葉ニあらはし不申候を見申候而、朝鮮人ハおろかなるものと心得、朝鮮人之長袖ニ而立廻り候を見申候而、朝鮮人ハぬるき者と心得、譯官共

¹⁹⁵ Amenomori Hōshū 雨森芳洲, *Kōrin teisei* 交隣提醒, 27.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 37.

ハ中ニ立候役人ニ而候故、毎度雙方取繕候所より虚言を申候を見申候而、朝鮮ハ
うそをつき申國と心得候類、いつれも不了簡たるへく候、朝鮮人之ミたりニ言葉
ニあらはし不申候ハ、前後をふまへたる智慮の深ニ而、おろかなるとは被申間敷
候。

To think of aspects of national customs as something more appropriate [vis-à-vis aspects
relating to other countries' customs] is uniform across different cultures. [But] Koreans
do not verbally argue with the Japanese out of caution and always speak of their country
with humility. The Japanese, however, are always self-satisfied with their country. As for
alcoholic drinks, [the Japanese claim that] the Japanese drink is the best in the three
countries [Japan, Korea, and China] and boast that everyone thinks of it as such. The
Koreans respond in the affirmative, and [the Japanese] thin that everyone thinks of it as
such. [The Japanese] do not realize that [the Koreans] inwardly laugh at such thoughtless
persons after hearing [about their boasting].

銘々の國風よろしきと存候ハ華夷同前之事ニ候へとも、朝鮮人ハ日本人と言葉之
上ニても相争不申様ニいたし候を注意と立居申候故、毎度其國之事を謙遜いたし
候所ニ、日本人ハ却而我國の事を常に自慢のミいたし、酒之一事ニても日本の酒
ハ三國一ニ候故皆達も左様ニ可被存候とほこり候而、朝鮮人之返答ニ成程左様ニ
存候と申候得者、彌其通之事と相心得へ、了簡も無之人ニ候と、内心にはあさけ
り候所ニ心付キ無之候。¹⁹⁷

As much as they spoke of Japanese superiority over Koreans, men such as Hōshū noted the
importance of good relations between the two countries.

As time passed, however, the Japanese increasingly saw the coming of Korean missions
as a matter-of-course. Arai Hakuseki was one of the first to speak on this issue, noting that
Koreans ought to be thankful to the Tokugawa shoguns for allowing them to live in peace after
the war. He even described the Tokugawa decision for peace as a “grace of a new lease of life”

再造の恩 for the Koreans:

While the Ming emperor rescued Korea's ruler and officials from their disaster and
helped them stabilize the country, the [acts of] oppression at the hands of the Ming
army's generals and soldiers stationed in that country was no less than the disaster of war
brought on by our country. As they were trying to resuscitate the country's people, they
heard that Tokugawa Ieyasu's rule sought to revise the mistakes of the past. Furthermore,
some three thousand Korean men and women who were captured by our country's
soldiers have been returned, leading to peaceful relations between the two countries.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 54-56.

Since then, all the people of that country have forgotten about war for a hundred years. The ruler and officials of that country should not forget our country's grace of a new lease on life for a long time.

朝鮮の君臣も明の天子のために其厄難を援けられて其封内をば安堵しけれ共明の兵猶其國に留り鎮めて其將士相驕り國人を凌轢せし事も我國の兵禍に大方かはる事もなかりしかはいかにもして國人を蘇息せん事をおもひしに東照宮御代をしめされて前代の非を改られし事共を傳へ聞又朝鮮の男女我國の兵の爲にとらはれしものとも還し遺はされし所前後三千人に及びければやがて兩國の和事なりて夫より此かた彼國東西の民兵革の事を相忘れし且既に百年に及たり我國再造の恩においては彼國の君臣長く忘るべからざる所也。¹⁹⁸

With regard to the Korean mission, Japanese scholar Kawama Masatane 河間正胤 (?-?) noted that “it has been long since Korea has paid respects to our country” 三韓聘我邦也舊矣, claiming that their repeated coming had to do with Korean “admiration” 慕化 of Japan. “Because of the existence of “the Way” 道 in our country, he wrote, “admiration of neighboring countries is flourishing” 家邦有道隣國慕化之盛也.¹⁹⁹ To further exemplify, Japanese scholar Seo Yōsetsusai 瀬尾用拙齋 (1691–1728) added a work titled “the Examination of Visitations of Korean Officials through the Eras” 列朝韓使來聘考 to the published record of a written conversation between the officials of the 1719–1720 Korean mission and their Japanese counterparts. In this text, Yōsetsusai dated the starting point of Korean mission visits around 1366 CE during the rule of Ashikaga Yoshiakira 足利義詮 (r. 1358–1367), continuing through the era of Hideyoshi and into the Tokugawas. Instead of peacemaking or fence-mending efforts following the Japanese invasions under Hideyoshi, Yōsetsusai reframed the Korean mission visits during his time as something ritualistic that had regularly occurred regardless of what

¹⁹⁸ Arai Hakuseki 新井白石, “Chōsen heishi kōgi” 朝鮮聘使後議, 679.

¹⁹⁹ *Sōkan shōshūshū* 桑韓唱酬集 (National Library of Korea Rare Book 한古朝 43-가 125), 1.

happened during Hideyoshi's rule. In his view, Korea had always sent missions to pay their dues to the Japanese ruler.²⁰⁰

Tanaka Mokuyo 田中默容 (?-?) also framed the arrival of Korean missions as something predetermined, noting that “there had never been a time when [the Korean king] did not dispatch his officials to congratulate our country's shogun on the congratulatory occasion of his succession” 方我朝大君有紹襲之慶未嘗不使冠蓋來而賀焉. After having met the members of the Korean mission in 1719, he even likened the Korean mission visits to something permanent and cyclic, as that of seasonal harvesting, by quoting a poem from the *Classic of Poetry* 詩經 of ancient China titled “Mowing Weed” 載芟. The poem's content noted how the seasonal works in the fields generate harvest in the fall. Tanaka Mokuyo quoted the last two lines of the poem to describe the Koreans' visits to Japan:

匪今斯今 How could it be any different now?
振古如茲 Ever since the ancient times, it has been so.²⁰¹

The Japanese also increasingly framed the Korean missions as outright tribute-bearing missions to Japan, which clearly denoted the hierarchical center-periphery and superior-inferior relationships in the political discourse of traditional East Asia. A particular keyword used here is “coming-to-pay-tribute” 來朝, a term increasingly used to describe Korean missions in the eighteenth century. This term was not new in Japan-Korea relations. Kim Söngil 金誠一 (1538–1593) noted seeing “the expression that the Korean officials came to pay tribute” 朝鮮國使臣來朝之語 in written communications during his official visit to Japan in 1590–1591 under the rule of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, which Kim saw as “a great insult to [our] country”

²⁰⁰ *Sōkan shōwa* 桑韓墳笈 (National Library of Korea Rare Book 古朝 51-나 152).

²⁰¹ *Sōkan shōshūshū* 桑韓唱酬集 (National Library of Korea Rare Book 한古朝 43-가 125).

辱國甚矣。²⁰² While the outward usage of the term in receiving the Korean missions seemed to have ceased in the seventeenth century, however, starting in the eighteenth century, the same expression was increasingly used amongst the Japanese, clearly denoting the waning standing of Korean missions in the eyes of their Japanese counterparts.

Tachibana Genkun 橘元勳 (?-?), for example, described the arrival of the 1748 mission from Korea as tribute-bearing, writing that “the Korean envoy came to pay tribute to the eastern capital [Edo]” 朝鮮國信使來朝于東都。²⁰³ Uezuki Tensoku 上月典則 (?-?) also described the arrival of Korean envoys in Japan as tribute-bearing, describing their arrival in 1748 as “Koreans came to pay tribute” 朝鮮人來朝 and their return following the visit as “Koreans went back to their barbarian land” 韓人歸蕃。²⁰⁴ The Koreans became increasingly aware of this:

With the ascension of the new shogun, [the Japanese] always ask for our mission. When our missions arrive in the country, the [Japanese] decrees over various islands state that Korea has come to pay tribute. The insults to the country have been enormous, but officials sent to Japan [pretend] as if they do not hear it out of fear of creating trouble [between the two countries].

關白新立則必請我使我使至國則號令諸島牌文至稱朝鮮入貢辱國莫甚焉奉使之人每恐生事任之若不聞焉。²⁰⁵

In 1764, Nam Ok 南玉 (1722–1770) also noted seeing a Japanese seal with the words “Koreans came to pay tribute” 朝鮮人來朝。²⁰⁶ In 1789, Suzuki Kōon 鈴木公溫 (?-?) wrote a preface to the abovementioned conversation between Arai Hakuseki and Cho T’aeōk, noting that “Korea

²⁰² Kim Sōngil 金誠一, “Haesarok 海槎錄,” in *Kugyōk haehaeng ch’ongjae* 國譯海行總裁, vol. 1 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe), 46.

²⁰³ *Kankaku hitsutan* 韓客筆譚 (National Archive of Japan Rare Book 178-0576).

²⁰⁴ *Wakan hitsudan kunfū hen* 和韓筆談薰風編 (National Library of Korea Rare Book 한古朝 51-나 204).

²⁰⁵ *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* 朝鮮王朝實錄 *Yōngjo sillok* 英祖實錄: 68 卷 24 年 閏 7 月 30 日 (1748).

²⁰⁶ Nam Ok 南玉, *Ilgwan ’gi* 日觀記 (National Institute of Korean History Rare Book KO B16HD 6).

was originally a dependency of ours” 朝鮮原吾屬國.²⁰⁷ The Japanese scholar Bitō Jishū 尾藤二洲 (1745–1814) also contrasted Korea and Japan, noting that while Korea has historically been “a dependency of China” 漢之屬國, Japan “established its own country without their enfeoffment” 自建國不假彼封. Based on this understanding of Japanese independence vis-à-vis China, Bitō Jishū argued that Japan “is as grand as the Han and Tang dynasties [of China]” 比之漢唐殆有盛焉.²⁰⁸

Ironically enough, along with this shift in the Japanese perception of the Korean missions as something matter-of-course and tribute bearing, the Japanese officials increasingly lost the motivation to continue hosting the costly missions. Despite the weight of tradition, it was deemed not to be worth the cost. Arai Hakuseki was one of the first to raise this point:

Mobilizing people of the five provinces and seven circuits [all of Japan] in receiving the officials of their country is not the best policy for the country.
彼國一行の使を迎えられむ爲に五畿七道の人民を相累され候事國家の長策とは申べからず.

Hakuseki even noted that, in order to cut costs, “that country’s officials should be stopped at Tsushima [before going any further into Japan]” 彼國の使對馬の國に至り止りて.²⁰⁹ While much of Hakuseki’s policy proposals were abandoned after his fall, such ideas continued to circulate. Noting Korea as a “small barbarian [country] that has been a dependency [of Japan] for a thousand years” 千載屬國たる小夷なる, for example, Nakai Chikuzan 中井竹山 (1730–

²⁰⁷ Arai Hakuseki 新井白石, “Zakan hitsugo” 坐間筆語, 721.

²⁰⁸ Bitō Jishū 尾藤二洲, *Seikiken shū* 静寄軒集, ed. Rai Tsutomu 頼惟勤 (Tokyo: Perikansha, 1991), 247.

²⁰⁹ Arai Hakuseki 新井白石, “Chōsen heishi kōgi” 朝鮮聘使後議, 682.

1804) maintained that Japan “should not devote so much of the country’s wealth and crops in hosting them” かくまで天下の財粟を傾けて、應接するには及ばざることなるべし.²¹⁰

The 1763–1764 mission, sent to congratulate the ascension of shogun Tokugawa Ieharu 徳天家治 (r. 1760–1786), thereby became the last full-scale mission sent to Edo. When Ieharu’s successor, Tokugawa Ienari 徳天家齊 (r. 1787–1837), succeeded the Tokugawa dynasty, the leading shogunate official Matsudaira Sadanobu 松平定信 (1759–1829) chose to defer hosting the Korean mission due to the devastation caused by the Tenmei famine (1782–1788) and the policy goal of enforcing austerity through the Kansei Reforms 寛政の改革 (1787–1793). Aside from a brief and cost-saving mission to Tsushima in 1811, the hosting and sending of missions were continuously deferred despite the ascension of four additional shoguns thereafter: Tokugawa Ieyoshi 徳天家慶 (r. 1837–1853), Tokugawa Iesada 徳天家定 (r. 1853–1858), Tokugawa Iemochi 徳天家茂 (r. 1858–1866), and Tokugawa Yoshinobu 徳天慶喜 (r. 1866–1867).

Regardless of the discontinuation of the missions, Rai San’yō 頼山陽 (1780–1832), for instance, interpreted the coming of Korean missions to Japan as a ritualistic sign that Korea became a subservient dependency of Japan. In his “Unofficial History of Japan” 日本外史, Rai San’yō noted that “[Korea] became an everlasting dependency of ours by coming every time the shogunal era changed” 將軍の禪代毎に輒ち來り、永く我が屬國と爲る.²¹¹ In another example, Yoshida Shōin 吉田松陰 (1830–1859) also noted that “Korea has been dependent

²¹⁰ Nakai Chikuzan 中井竹山, *Sōbō kigen* 草茅危言, vol. 2 (Osaka: Kaitokudō Kinenkai, 1942), 51-55.

²¹¹ Rai San’yō 頼山陽, *Nihon gaishi* 日本外史, ed. Hiraizumi Kiyoshi 平泉澄, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Shun’yōdō Shoten, 1938), 465.

upon the celestial dynasty [Japan] from the start” 朝鮮は原と天朝に服屬す.²¹² He also noted that “Korea has now become increasingly insolent despite the fact that it was subordinate to us in ancient times” 朝鮮の如きは古時我れに臣屬せしも、今は則ち寢や倨る. “Korea should therefore be chastised into submitting tribute [to Japan] as was the case in prosperous ancient times” 朝鮮を責めて質を納れ貢を奉ること古の盛時の如くならしめ.²¹³

With the curtailment in the sending and receiving of missions, what persisted in Japan was a firmly entrenched historical memory that, throughout its history, Korea was a subservient tributary state of Japan. From ancient times to the early modern period, the narrative went, Korea has always been a Japanese tributary state that regularly paid its due respects to the ruler of Japan. Despite the conventional emphasis on the cultural interactions between the people of the two countries, in many ways, the end result of such interactions appears to have reaffirmed the traditional Japanese outlook that it always has been an independent bona fide center of a miniature international order, with Korea as its tributary state. The early modern Korean-Japanese debates over civilization, driven by each side’s proto-nationalist claims that staked their own country as the new middle kingdom, ultimately reaffirmed each side’s perspective of the other as inferior. This history thereby provides a broad historical context to the rise of conflict between the two countries in 1868 when the Koreans refused to accept the new Japanese regime’s communications over the issue of language that posited the Japanese emperor as the new ruler of Japan. Both the initial refusal on the Korean side and the widespread Japanese outrage at the Korean refusal can be better understood within this historical context.

²¹² Yoshida Shōin 吉田松陰, “Gaiban tsūryaku” 外蕃通略, in *Yoshida Shōin zenshū* 吉田松陰全集, ed. Yamaguchi-ken Kyōikukai 山口県教育会, vol. 10 (Tokyo: Daiwa Shobō, 1976), 261.

²¹³ Yoshida Shōin 吉田松陰, “Yūshūroku” 幽囚録, in *Yoshida Shōin zenshū* 吉田松陰全集, ed. Yamaguchi-ken Kyōikukai 山口県教育会, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Daiwa Shobō, 1976), 53-54.

Chapter 2: *Paektusan* and *Fujisan*

Another facet of early modern interactions between Korean officials and their Japanese counterparts can be captured through their contentious discussions of mountains in Korea and Japan. Korean literary scholar Yi Hyesun 李惠淳 was perhaps the first to discuss the contentious debates over mountains that took place during the visits of Korean missions to early modern Japan, and more recent works have expanded the source base of such discussions.²¹⁴ Building upon such works, this chapter assesses this facet of early modern Korea–Japan interactions through the lens of Korean and Japanese proto-nationalism that used mountains as physical symbols and proof of their collective beliefs that their countries are the true successor of idealized Chinese antiquity.

The mountains in pre-modern East Asia, as I will show, provided enormous symbolism in shaping a country's sense of collective self. In the cases of Japan and Korea, the discussions of each country's most symbolic mountain—*Paektusan* 白頭山 (Mount Paektu) in Korea and *Fujisan* 富士山 (Mount Fuji) in Japan—stimulated impassioned discourses of the proto-nation, in which the two countries' intellectuals relied on their respective mountains in creating narratives of superiority and dominance over the other, all the while positioning their mountains as the only worthy successor of the mythical Mount Kunlun 崑崙山 of China, which symbolized the idealized notion of Chinese antiquity. Through such interactions, early modern Korean officials and scholars forged narratives that positioned Mount Fuji, and Japan at large, as mere offshoots of Mount Paektu, and essentially argued that Japan represented a physical extension of

²¹⁴ Yi Hyesun 李惠淳, “18-segi Han-Il munsa ūi kŭmgangsan-pusasan uyŏl nonjaeng kwa kŭ ūimi” 18世紀韓日文士の金剛山-富士山の優劣論争과 그意味, *Han'guk hanmunhak yŏn'gu* 韓國漢文學研究 14 (1991): 203-221. For more recent works, see Im Ch'aemyŏng 林采明, “Cho-Il munsa ūi Chosŏn san kwa Ilbon pusasan uyŏl pigyo yŏn'gu” 朝日文士の朝鮮山과日本富士山優劣比較研究, *Pigyo munhak* 比較文學 46 (2008): 215-240.

Korea. On the other hand, their Japanese counterparts looked to Mount Fuji as the location of the divine source of Japan's historical domination over Korea, and the mountain provided visible proof of the projection of Japanese power abroad.

The heated nature of these “debates” was noted by the Japanese medical doctor and herbalist Niwa Shōhaku 丹羽正伯 (1691–1756). He told his Korean counterparts Cho Sungsu 趙崇壽 (1715–?) and Cho Tōkcho 趙德祚 (1709–?) during their official visit in 1748 regarding how some Koreans and Japanese had, during the previous 1719–1720 mission's visit to Japan, “repeatedly fought over the superiority of the two mountains [Mount Fuji 富士山 in Japan and Mount Kūmgang 金剛山 in Korea] and did not stop” 屢爭二山之勝而不止. Niwa Shōhaku added:

I personally say that [this endless argument between Koreans and Japanese is because] they all did not know what makes [each mountain] exceptional. I have generally heard that each one of the 12,000 mountaintops of Mount Kūmgang looks like carved white jade, with ravines decorated with peculiar rocks, strange peaks, and old foliage. While that is most strange for Koreans, Mount Fuji has one towering mountaintop reaching to the sky and its sides are clear and bright. It weighs down on Japan with warmth and abundance, as if it is doing the nursing. [That is why] those who are benevolent like it and we most revere it. The two mountains' strange sceneries are not identical, and [people] celebrate them for the sake of their respective countries, and they do not revere [the mountains] for other countries. Therefore, when one gets compared with the other, the arguments will not end in a thousand years, and one [mountain] cannot be superior to the other.

僕私謂是共不知其所爲勝也蓋聞金剛一萬二千峯箇削白玉怪巖奇峯老楓裝山谷是韓人所最奇而若富岳一峯屹然騰穹窿四面玲瓏壓八州溫潤含蓄仁者所好是吾所最賞也二岳之奇勝不同各爲其國所賞而爲異邦不所崇而以此較彼是千年未了之論而所以不能爲甲乙矣。²¹⁵

Niwa Shōhaku was not the only seemingly “rational” voice in this debate. During the 1711–1712 mission's visit, Japan's Kojima Keihan 兒島景范 (?–?) and Korea's Yi Hyōn 李磻 (1654–?) exchanged mutual praises in their discussion on the topic of mountains. Kojima Keihan

²¹⁵ *Ryōtō hitsugo* 兩東筆語 (National Archive of Japan Rare Book 178-0602).

praised Korea's Mount Changbaek 長白山, an alternative name for Mount Paektu 白頭山, in the following poem:

天地孕神氣 The heaven and earth conceived a divine spirit,
擘出長白山 Opening and protruding Mount Changbaek.
秀色彌宇宙 Extraordinary colors fill up the universe,
岩嶢絕躋攀 Stands so tall that it is unclimbable.

Yi Hyōn immediately returned the compliment with statements on Mount Fuji:

富嶽鬱岩嶢 Mount Fuji is so luxuriantly tall,
卓立朝衆山 It stands to command other mountains.
高峯逼天闕 Its tall peak approaches the heavenly palace,
萬古誰能攀 Who could have climbed it in history?²¹⁶

In another instance, during the 1719–1720 mission's visit to Japan, Japan's Kinoshita Rankō 木下蘭臯 (1681–1752) and Korea's Chang Ŭngdu 張應斗 (1670–1720) also exchanged compliments praising the other country's mountains and scenery. After noting the “tens of noted mountains and large rivers” 名山大川何翅數十 in Korea, Kinoshita asked Chang to “teach him about a few places with magnificent scenery and strange caves that people can enjoy” 其中有一二絕境奇窟可遊之地請見教. After answering his request, Chang returned the compliment: “After looking at the strange peak of Mount Fuji and the grand and splendid sight of Kyoto, I can say that they are the world's greatest sights. This is something even [the ancient Chinese historian] Sima Qian 司馬遷 [145 or 135–86 BCE] had not seen” 看了富士之奇峭京都之雄麗則可謂天下之大觀而此則子長之所未覩也.²¹⁷ In 1748, meeting the Korean officials again almost thirty years later, Kinoshita Rankō wrote to his Korean counterparts:

²¹⁶ *Hankenshū* 班荊集 (National Diet Library Rare Book 241-10).

²¹⁷ *Kyakukan Saisanshū* 客館瓏粲集 (National Archive of Japan Rare Book 178-0610).

金剛富嶽海東西 Mount Kūmgang and Mount Fuji are located west and east of the sea.
此去右提又左携 While distant, one pulls westward and another pulls eastward.
兩國昇平昆季會 We have gathered together in a time of peace in both countries,
不論優劣共相題 Writing poetry together without discussing superiority.²¹⁸

However, those who chose not to argue were a minority in an otherwise fierce and contentious discussion that, by its nature, could not be decided. While seemingly pointless to present-day readers who may look at mountains as mere results of volcanism or tectonic movements, early modern intellectuals in Japan and Korea saw their mountains as both the physical origins of their lands and timeless manifestations of the history and culture of their respective countries. Mountains had long been prominent symbols in the political, religious, and cultural discourse of traditional East Asia; indeed, this had been the case since the beginning of civilization. As the historian Tang Xiaofeng 唐曉峰 noted, “the Five Great Mountains” 五嶽 of China had functioned since antiquity as symbolic coordinates that defined China as a political as well as cultural space.²¹⁹

Furthermore, as James Robson observes, “As visible sources for the formation of clouds that produced rain and the rivers that irrigated fields below, mountains were potent nodes of fertility that sustained China’s premodern agricultural society.”²²⁰ The supposed timelessness of mountains also generated essentialist definitions that outlasted any specific dynasty or era. For example, in a poem titled “Spring Hopes” 春望, the Chinese poet Du Fu 杜甫 (713–770 CE), facing the massive destruction and violence unleashed by the mid-eighth century rebellion by An

²¹⁸ *Wakan shōwa furoku* 和韓唱和附錄 (National Library of Korea Rare Book M 古 3-2001-3).

²¹⁹ Tang Xiaofeng 唐曉峰, *Cong hundun dao zhixu: Zhongguo shanggu dili sixiangshi shulun* 从混沌到秩序: 中国上古地理思想史述□ (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2010), 234-237.

²²⁰ James Robson, *Power of Place: The Religious Landscapes of the Southern Sacred Peak (Nanyue 南嶽) in Medieval China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2009), 19.

Lushan 安祿山 (703–757 CE), noted that “the state is broken, but the mountains and rivers remain” 國破山河在. The dynasty was in a shambles, but the mountains were forever in sustaining the agricultural society of China. As James Robson also remarked:

Within Chinese religious traditions, mountains became divine or numinous sites, the abodes of deities, the preferred locations for temples and monasteries, and the destinations of pilgrims. Over the centuries, religious practitioners were drawn to mountains that were considered storehouses for potent herbs, plants, and minerals—all of which could be employed in magical spells—as well as pure waters, places of refined *qi*, and locales with caves leading to subterranean worlds. Mountains served as auspicious places where deities manifested themselves and were therefore ideal sites to undertake the necessary regimens to attain awakening or ascend as a transcendent.²²¹

In China, the most sacred Daoist temples dotted “the Four Great Mountains of Daoism” 四大道教名山, while Bodhisattvas supposedly resided in “the Four Great Mountains of Buddhism” 四大佛教名山. As Wei-Cheng Lin notes in detail, Chinese Buddhists deliberately cultivated Mount Wutai 五台山 as a sacred site where their adherents could encounter the divine through pilgrimage. The traditional Chinese traditions and cultures could not be imagined without the great and divine mountains representing them in perpetuity.²²²

China’s great mountains also figured prominently for Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200), perhaps the best known and most influential Chinese intellectual after Confucius. Because Song China had lost control of four of “the Five Great Mountains” 五嶽 at the hands of northern invaders by the time Zhu was born, Zhu could only visit Mount Heng 衡山 (also known as “the Southern Mountain” 南岳), which he did in 1167. Prior to climbing the mountain, Zhu noted: “I have come [to the mountain] after a lifetime of yearning” 我來自有平生志. After climbing up the

²²¹ Ibid., 19-20.

²²² Wei-Cheng Lin, *Building a Sacred Mountain: The Buddhist Architecture of China’s Mount Wutai* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2014).

mountain, he remarked that “the Southern Mountain guards the world” 南嶽天下鎮. For Zhu, the experience of climbing this mountain was inspirational. After descending from the mountain, he wrote:

仰止平生事 Looking up to it for a lifetime,
今年得到來 I was able to [finally] visit it this year.
舉頭天一握 Raising my head, I could grab the sky,
倚杖雪千堆 Leaning on a cane, a thousand layers of snow [are beneath me].
講道心如渴 Discussing the Way makes my heart yearn,
哦詩思湧雷 Reciting a poem makes my thoughts thunder.²²³

Mountains in Korea and Japan

Mountains also figure prominently in the political and cultural discourse of traditional Korea and Japan. In the case of Korea, the three largest mountains, Mount Paektu 白頭山 in the northern borderlands, Mount Kūmgang 金剛山 in the east, and Mount Halla 漢拏山 in the southern island of Cheju 濟州, in particular, have conspicuously figured as timeless representations of the country. As I will show, early modern Korean intellectuals interpreted the mountains of their country as demonstrations of proto-national identity, ascribing values and meanings to them.

Perhaps the most conspicuous facet of the Korean articulations of their mountains is the view of the mountains as the source and origin of the land. Mount Paektu figures prominently in such descriptions, and historian Kang Sōkhwa 姜錫和 has shown through his work on the expansion of territorial consciousness of the Chosŏn dynasty through the fifteenth-century conquest and incorporation of the northeastern borderland, Mount Paektu started to assume a

²²³ Zhu Xi 朱熹, Zhang Shi 張栻, and Lin Yongzhong 林用中, *Nanyue changchouji* 南嶽倡酬集 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1935).

central place in the Korean territorial discourse.²²⁴ For instance, Yi Ik 李瀼 (1681–1763) argued that “[Mount] Paektu is the ancestor of Korea’s mountain ranges” 白頭是東方山脉之祖也.²²⁵ Sō Myōngūng 徐命膺 (1716–1787), upon his visit to the mountain, also saw Mount Paektu as the physical origin of Korea itself. In his “Travelogue to Mount Paektu” 遊白頭山記 (1766), he wrote:

Regardless of how high or low, flat or steep, there is not a mountain or river in Korea that does not originate from Mount Paektu. It is like the North Star in the sky, which does not move at all but becomes the body of all moving stars.
東國山河高下平陂無一不本於白頭山是猶天之北極一於不運而爲運之體也。²²⁶

Some one hundred years later, the Korean official Yi Chungha 李重夏 (1846–1917) made a similar comment in his *Paektusan ilgi* 白頭山日記 (1885):

I bow down and pray. The grand and glowing mountain god [of Mount Paektu] is the ancestor of Korea’s mountains. It is the origin of many rivers and the foundation of the throne. It is just like the Zhou dynasty’s Qishan 岐山 [the Zhou dynasty’s first capital] and the Han dynasty’s Fengpei 豐沛 [the birthplace of its founder, Liu Bang 劉邦].
祝曰伏以巍赫嶽靈鎮我大東群山之祖衆流其宗王迹肇基周岐漢豐。²²⁷

Along with the designation of Mount Paektu as the origin of Korea itself, early modern Korean writers also expressed how it measured up against the mountains of China. Such descriptions, of course, have to do with the positioning of Korea in terms of civilization versus

²²⁴ Kang Sōkhwa 姜錫和, *Chosōn hugi Hamgyōng-do wa pukpang yōngt’o ūisik* 朝鮮後期 咸鏡道와 北方領土意識 (Seoul: Kyōngsewōn, 2000); idem, “Chosōn hugi paektusan e taehan insik ūi pyōnhwa” 朝鮮後期 白頭山에 對한 認識의 變化, *Chosōn sidaesa hakbo* 朝鮮時代史學報 56 (2011): 195-224. Also see Kwōn Naehyōn 權乃鉉, “Chosōn yōngjodaek paektusanje sihaeng nonjaeng: Ch’amyō ilmul ūi chujang ūl chungsim ūro” 朝鮮 英祖代 白頭山祭 施行 論爭: 參與 人物의 主張을 中心으로, *Han’guk inmulsa yōn’gu* 韓國人物史研究 15 (March 2011): 273-301.

²²⁵ Yi Ik 李瀼, *Sōngho sasōl* 星湖僊說, vol. 1 (Seoul: Kyōngchi Ch’ulp’ansa, 1967), 13.

²²⁶ *Wayurok* 臥遊錄 (Kyujiangak Institute of Korean Studies Rare Book 古 4790 48).

²²⁷ Yi Chungha 李重夏, *Yōkchu Kamgyesa tūngnok* 譯註 勘界使謄錄, trans. and eds. Yi Wangmu 李旺茂 et al., vol. 1 (Seoul: Tongbuga Yōksa Chaedan, 2008), 229.

barbarism in the context of the Manchu conquest of China, which, in the eyes of Korean intellectuals, had destroyed the original site of civilization and made Korea its last bastion. For example, Yi Ŭich'ŏl 李宜哲 (1703–1778) noted in his “Records of Mount Paektu” 白頭山記 (1751) that Korea’s Mount Paektu might even be superior to “the Five Great Mountains” of China:

As for the strange scenery of Heaven Lake [on the top of Mount Paektu], I do not know that such a thing exists even on “the Five Great Mountains” of China. Sitting on the mountaintop and looking around, the terrain of our country’s mountains is coarse. However, this mountain is entirely without coarseness or turbidity. [Possessing] civilization and pellucidity, it is the greatest of all Korea’s mountains and the origin of all the mountains and rivers [in Korea]. This being so, Korea is thereby “the small civilization.”

至於天池之奇異不知中國五岳亦有是耶坐上峯回望我國山勢則却皆麤壯而此山全身絕無麤濁底氣象文明清淑在東國諸大山似若爲最山川之祖宗既如是脫却則東國之爲小中華。²²⁸

Pak Chong 朴琮 (1735–1793) took a similar stance, but more definitively, Pak’s account of his visit to the mountain opens with a reference to China’s mythological Kunlun Mountain 崑崙山: “[Mount] Paektu is Korea’s [Mount] Kunlun” 白頭東國之崑崙。²²⁹ Of course, Mount Kunlun is a mythological construction and does not exist in reality. Imagined as a paradise dwelled by gods and filled with fantastical plants and animals, not unlike Mount Olympus in Greek mythology, Mount Kunlun represents the idealized version of Chinese antiquity that Koreans of the early modern period sought to partake in through the semi-legendary figure Jizi 箕子. According to Pak:

Besides Mount Kunlun, even the mountains and rivers of China do not measure up [to Mount Paektu]. “The Five Great Mountains” of China are tall, but I have yet to hear that they have a great lake of the size of eighty *li* at the summit. While Mount Hua [of China]

²²⁸ Yi Ŭich'ŏl 李宜哲, *Mun'am chip* 文庵集 (Yonsei University Library Rare Book 고서(I) 811.98).

²²⁹ Pak Chong 朴琮, “Paektusan yurok 白頭山遊錄,” in *Tangjuchip* 鐙洲集, vol. 5 (Kyŏngsŏng: Pak Ch'iyong Ka, 1931), 33.

has a jade spring that must be strange to see, its inferiority to the great lake is apparent. With this, we know that this mountain [Mount Paektu] is the *legitimate heir* of Mount Kunlun and that “the Five Great Mountains” are merely *secondary sons* of a close ancestor. Our country generally gets referred to as “the small civilization” due to its flourishing products of civilization. Even though the world has become barbarized, [we are still] able to maintain civilization. It is evident that the spirit of mountains and rivers [in Korea] are largely based on this mountain. To think about it, the heaven and earth do not have two principles. With the land having already succeeded China as its heir, it is not a coincidence that Heaven did not also dispatch sage Jizi to Korea.

自崑山以下雖中國山川無以及之五嶽崇矣未聞頂上有八十里大澤但華山有玉井奇玩則有之其損於大澤明矣是知此山爲崑崙之嫡傳而五嶽特其近祖之支庶耳蓋吾東文物甚盛稱爲小中華今天下左衽能強保衣冠可見山河之靈基於此山者大矣竊謂天地非二致地既傳統於中州則天亦以箕聖東與者豈偶然哉。²³⁰

Chǒng Yagyong 丁若鏞 (1762–1836) also wrote, “Mount Paektu is the [Mount] Kunlun of the East [Korea]” 白山者東方之昆侖也. He added, “All mountain ranges of the world are interconnected, so Mount Paektu must also be connected to Mount Kunlun. However, it is not right to always treat Kunlun as the ancestor and press down upon Mount Paektu as its descendant” 大瀛之內山脈無不相連白山之脈亦必與昆侖連也雖然其必以昆侖戴之爲祖而白山壓之爲孫非正理也. Based on such perspective that Mount Paektu holds its own against the mythical Mount Kunlun of China, Chǒng stated that Mount Paektu is “undoubtedly a Kunlun [of its own] 儼一昆侖.”²³¹

Early modern Korean intellectuals thus saw Mount Paektu as the physical proof and manifestation of Korea and its civilization. The same was the case for Korea’s other major mountains, particularly the above-mentioned Mount Kūmgang and Mount Halla. Chǒng Tugyǒng 鄭斗卿 (1597–1673), for instance, wrote that even the “Queen Mother of the West”

²³⁰ Pak Chong 朴琮, “Paektusan yurok 白頭山遊錄,” in *Tangjuchip* 鐳洲集, vol. 5 (Kyōngsōng: Pak Ch’iyong Ka, 1931), 49.

²³¹ Chǒng Yagyong 丁若鏞, “Abang kangyōkko” 我邦疆域考, in *Chǒngbon Yōyudang chōnsō* 定本與猶堂全書, eds. Song Chaeso 宋載邵 et al, vol. 32 (Seoul: Tasan Haksuk Munhwa Chaedan, 2012), 267-268.

西王母, the legendary Chinese goddess who supposedly lives on the mythical Mount Kunlun, would want to relocate to Mount Kūmgang:

東海三神在 There are three divine mountains east of the sea
中原五岳低 “The Five Great Mountains” of China are small [in comparison]
群仙爭窟宅 Immortals fight over where to live at
王母恨居西 “The Queen Mother of West” would regret living in the west [China].²³²

Hong Yōha 洪汝河 (1620–1674), for another example, sang of the beauty of Mount Kūmgang in his “Singing Mount Kūmgang” 蓬山謠:

海雲擎出玉芙蓉 As if sea clouds lifted up beautiful lotuses,
萬二千峯似畫圖 Twelve thousand mountaintops look like a painting.

Of course, the meaning ascribed to the mountain did not end with its scenic beauty alone. Its significance was also tied to how it related to the mountains of China. Hong went on in the same poem:

若使此山在中夏 If this mountain was in China,
便知五嶽風斯下 The scenery of “the Five Great Mountains” would be inferior to this.
千古英雄幾浪過 How many heroes of all ages [of China] have passed by in vain,
不到茲山亦夢也 They did not arrive at this mountain even in their dreams.²³³

In another instance, Kim Sōngt’ak 金聖鐸 (1684–1747), during his exile to Cheju Island in 1737-1738, wrote about Mount Halla in his “Singing Halla Mountain” 漢挈山歌:

云是仙人所遊處 They say that this is where immortals play,
往往騎鹿閒來去 Often riding deer to idly come and go.
世上塵客或投足 A small number of guests may have set foot here,
雲霧白日藏真面 But the clouds and mist in the daytime conceal its true light.
自古號爲瀛洲島 It was called Yingzhou [a fabled abode of immortals] in the past,
靈境固非人所見 The sacred place that people have never seen.

²³² Chōng Tugyōng 鄭斗卿, “Tongmyōng chip” 東溟集 in *Yōngin p’yojōm Han’guk munjip ch’onggan* 影印標點韓國文集叢刊, vol. 100 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe, 1992), 426.

²³³ Hong Yōha 洪汝河, “Mokchae chip” 木齋集 in *Yōngin p’yojōm Han’guk munjip ch’onggan* 影印標點韓國文集叢刊, vol. 124 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe, 1993), 343.

秦皇漢武好神仙 The First Emperor of Qin and Emperor Wu of Han liked immortals,
豈識仙山在此中 But how did they not know that immortals are in this mountain?²³⁴

Mountains were also an irreplaceable aspect of the traditional Japanese worldview. As Ōba Iwao 大場磐雄 (1899–1975) noted, they were seen in ancient Japan as immaculate and divine places where gods resided. The Japanese “ancient graves” 古墳 were, in fact, man-made mountains intentionally designed to host ancestral gods.²³⁵ Among all the mountains of Japan, Mount Fuji figures most prominently in the Japanese cultural landscape.²³⁶ Mount Fuji was selected as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2013. Notably, it was selected as a *cultural* heritage site rather than a *natural* heritage site because it has “inspired artists and poets and been the object of pilgrimage for centuries.”²³⁷ The famous ancient Japanese poet Yamabe no Akahito 山部赤人 (fl. 724–736), for instance, spoke of Mount Fuji in the most sacred terms in the following poem recorded in the eighth-century anthology “Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves” 萬葉集:

Since heaven parted from the earth
there has been standing high
Mt. Fuji in Suruga’s skies.
When I look up, I see the sun
itself quite hidden by the mount;
even the moon rides all obscured;
the white clouds dare not pass its front.
Our songs of praise shall never end:

²³⁴ Kim Sōngt’ak 金聖鐸, “Chesanjip” 霽山集 in *Yōngin p’yojōm Han’guk munjip ch’onggan* 影印標點韓國文集叢刊, vol. 206 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe, 1998), 227.

²³⁵ Ōba Iwao 大場磐雄, “Kōkogaku ue kara mita waga jōdaijin no takai kannen” 考古学上から見た我が上代人の他界観念, in *Sorei shinkō* 祖霊信仰, ed. Akata Mitsuo 赤田光男 (Tokyo: Yūzankaku, 1991), 53-71.

²³⁶ Kamigaito Ken’ichi 上垣外憲一, *Fujisan: Sei to bi no yama* 富士山: 聖と美の山 (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 2009).

²³⁷ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, “Fujisan, sacred place and source of artistic inspiration,” <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1418>.

Oh Fuji peerless, Oh divine!²³⁸

The Japanese aristocrat Miyako no Yoshika 都良香 (834–879) revealed interesting aspects of the ancient Japanese perception of Mount Fuji in “Record of Mount Fuji” 富士山記. He first noted the incomparable size of Fuji: “Its peak soars up until it touches the sky. Its height is immeasurable, and there is no higher mountain if one looks at the written records” 峰如削成直聳屬天其高不可測歷覽史籍所記未有高於此山者也. He also observed that Fuji could not be climbed completely: “The mountain is made of white sand. Climbers can only go as far as its middle part and cannot reach the top, as the white sand continues to flow downwards” 白沙成山其攀登者止腹下不得達上以白沙流下也. Furthermore, he noted that at least part of Mount Fuji was supposedly created by divine forces in a matter of days. Referring to “a small mountain at the eastern foot of [Mount Fuji]” 山東脚下有小山, he noted: “The land [where the small mountain is now] was originally flat. In the third month of the twenty-first year of Enryaku (802 CE), the mountain was suddenly formed after ten days of dark clouds and mist. It is a divine creation” 本平地也延曆廿一年三月雲霧晦冥十日而後成山蓋神造也.²³⁹

Religious movements centered on mountains have existed for much of Japan’s written history.²⁴⁰ The perceived divinity of Mount Fuji resulted in the development of a number of religious movements that were based there. Shinto shrines dedicated to Mount Fuji had begun to appear by at least the ninth century CE, and by the mid-Heian period, Mount Fuji had become

²³⁸ H. H. Honda, *The Manyōshū: A New and Complete Translation* (Tokyo: Hakuseido Press, 1967), 31.

²³⁹ Miyako Yoshika 都良香, “Fujisan ki” 富士山記, in *Gunsho ruijū* 群書類從, vol. 9 (Tokyo: Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai, 1977), 318-319.

²⁴⁰ Murayama Shūichi 村山修一, *Yamabushi no rekishi* 山伏の歴史 (Tokyo: Hanawa Shobō, 1970).

the heartland of Shugendō 修驗道, a syncretic Japanese religious group.²⁴¹ By the early modern period, hundreds of religious sects devoted to Mount Fuji had emerged, with Fujikō 富士講, a Shugendō offshoot, being the best known. Hundreds, if not thousands, of shrines dedicated to Mount Fuji sprang up in the early modern period, and some of those shrines operate to this day.

The Japanese scholar Hayashi Razan 林羅山 (1583–1657) offers a telling example of early modern Japanese perceptions and discourses concerning Mount Fuji. Noting that the “mountains of the world are like little children” 天下諸峯似小兒 to Mount Fuji, Razan spoke of Fuji’s unparalleled greatness through a comparison with the aforementioned mythical Mount Kunlun:

山於天外無應比 The mountain is incomparable but to the sky [in its height],
唯與崑崙共大哉 And its size is comparable only to [the legendary] Mount Kunlun.²⁴²

Razan’s son and another prominent Japanese scholar Hayashi Gahō 林鶯峰 (1618–1688) also wrote of Mount Fuji. Speaking of its “towering presence and power that broke into the skies” 巍巍其勢絕入雲霄, Hayashi Gahō noted its dominating presence as “uplifting the heavens and standing on top of the earth” 載乾履坤. He also perceived Fuji as forming the central basis of Japanese topography, with “Kai, Shinano, Izu, and Sagami provinces forming its stomach and back” 甲信豆相爲腹爲背 and “[Mount] Hakone and [Mount] Ashigara appearing to be its child and grandchild” 箱根足柄似兒似孫.²⁴³

²⁴¹ H. Bryon Earhart, “Mount Fuji and Shugendō,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 16, no. 2-3 (1989): 205-226.

²⁴² Hayashi Razan 林羅山, *Hayashi Razan shishū* 林羅山詩集, ed. Kyōto Shisekikai 京都史蹟会, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Perikansha, 1979), 16 and 104.

²⁴³ Hayashi Gahō 林鶯峰, *Gahō Rin gakushi bunshū* 鶯峰林学士文集, ed. Hino Tatsuo 日野龍夫, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Perikansha, 1997), 59.

Yanagisawa Yoshiyasu 柳澤吉保 (1658–1714), the lord of Kōfu domain 甲府藩 from 1704 to 1709, and Ogyū Sorai 荻生徂徠 (1666–1728), one of the most prominent intellectuals of early modern Japan who worked for the Yanagisawa house as a resident scholar and advisor from 1696 to 1709, also wrote about Mount Fuji. After becoming lord of the Kōfu domain, Yanagisawa Yoshiyasu decided to dedicate a stele to Mount Fuji. The text used in its description of Mount Fuji is surprisingly similar to how the contemporaneous Koreans spoke of Mount Paektu. For example, Yoshiyasu also brought up the mythical Mount Kunlun of China in drawing parallels vis-à-vis Mount Fuji:

Mount Fuji is the [Mount] Kunlun of our country. Kunlun’s mountain ranges have spread all over the world, and all the mountains of the world are descendants of Kunlun. But Mount Fuji is like [Mount Kunlun] in that all the mountains of our country are descendants of Mount Fuji without exception.

富嶽吾東方之崑崙也崑崙之脈支分條絡布瀟曼綿乎天下而天下之山悉崑崙之苗裔也而富嶽亦爾吾東方之山孰非富嶽之雲仍。

The stele itself, completed in 1706, began with the following lines:

Just as there is the North Star in heaven, there is [Mount] Fuji on earth. Mount Fuji is the tall and imposing pillar of heaven. If a treasure ship loses direction in the vast ocean, how could it find its course? Fuji is the North Star [one should look to].

天曰北辰地曰富士富士之山天柱屹峙淼茫大洋寶舶迷津何以指迷富士北辰。

Sorai, after seeing the epitaph during his visit to Mount Fuji in 1706, praised Yoshiyasu’s text as something “granted by heaven” 天授. The aspect of the epitaph Ogyū Sorai most appreciated was the fact that Yanagisawa Yoshiyasu “removed [the mentioning of Mount] Kunlun from the epitaph after comparing Kunlun and Fuji in the prologue, [instead] inserting [the mention of] the North Star” 序以崑崙富士比起而銘乃御却崑崙添入北辰. “The sole veneration [therefore]

went to Fuji” 獨尊于富士。²⁴⁴ For Sorai, Mount Fuji was even greater than the mythical Mount Kunlun.

In a similar vein, the Japanese scholar Muro Kyūsō 室鳩巢 (1658–1734) also noted Fuji’s exceptionalism. Speaking of Mount Fuji’s unparalleled beauty by asking “what god so superbly carved this white jade lotus” 何神秀削成白玉蓮, Muro Kyūsō stated that “foreigners praise the mountain of Japan” 外海客誇看日本山。²⁴⁵ In another example, Itō Tōgai 伊藤東涯 (1670–1736) spoke of Mount Fuji as “dominating the sixty provinces of Japan” 氣壓秋津六十國 as well as being “capable of sustaining the universe” 能持乾紐與坤維。²⁴⁶ The Japanese scholar Dazai Shundai 太宰春台 (1680–1747) observed Fuji’s exceptionalism in a different way, noting that “[Mount Fuji] is the foremost mountain of the three countries [of China, Japan, and Korea]” 三國第一山。²⁴⁷ Moreover, according to Minagawa Kien 皆川淇園 (1734–1807), “All countries have mountains 萬國非無山, but Mount Fuji is said to be the greatest 芙蓉稱最大。”²⁴⁸

Another Japanese scholar, Shibano Ritsuzan 柴野栗山 (1736–1807), wrote the following poem titled “Mount Fuji” 富士山:

²⁴⁴ Ogyū Sorai 荻生徂徠, “Fūryūshishaki genbun” 風流使者記原文, in *Ogyū Sorai zenshū* 荻生徂來全集, eds. Imanaka Kanshi 今中寬司 and Naramoto Tatsuya 奈良本辰也, vol. 5 (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 1977), 931-933.

²⁴⁵ Muro Kyūsō 室鳩巢, *Kyūsō Sensei bunshū* 鳩巢先生文集, ed. Sugishita Motoaki 杉下元明 (Tokyo: Perikansha, 1991), 69-70.

²⁴⁶ Itō Tōgai 伊藤東涯, *Shōjutsu Sensei bunshū* 紹述先生文集, ed. Miyake Masahiko 三宅正彦 (Tokyo: Perikansha, 1988), 702.

²⁴⁷ Dazai Shundai 太宰春台, *Shundai Sensei Shishien kō* 春臺先生柴芝園稿, ed. Kojima Yasunori 小島康敬 (Tokyo: Perikansha, 1986), 56.

²⁴⁸ Minagawa Kien 皆川淇園, *Kien shibunshū* 淇園詩文集, ed. Takahashi Hiromi 高橋博巳 (Tokyo: Perikansha, 1986), 92.

誰將東海水 Who is going to take the water of the eastern sea
濯出玉芙蓉 To wash down and reveal the jade-like Mount Fuji?
蟠地三州盡 It has spread across the lands of three provinces,
挿天八葉重 Its protrusion into the sky is [as beautiful as] eight overlapping petals.
雲霞蒸大麓 Clouds and mist rise from the great foot of the mountain,
日月避中峰 [Even] the sun and the moon avoid its peak.
獨立原無競 Standing alone without a challenge from the beginning,
自爲衆岳宗 It became the leader of all the mountains [of the world].²⁴⁹

Kamei Nanmei 龜井南冥 (1743–1814) expressed Mount Fuji’s supremacy over its Chinese counterparts by arguing for its superiority over all the mountains of China: “There are many tall and arrogant mountains [in China] from Fujian to Beijing, but there is not one as beautiful and exceptional as Mount Fuji” 自福至北京多高山喬嶽而如富士之美而獨絕者未之有也。²⁵⁰

Bitō Jishū 尾藤二洲 (1745–1814) also wrote of the international supremacy of Mount Fuji:

其高天下表 Its stature is exemplary to the world
其大天下宗 Its magnitude is consummate to the world
高大不必說 There is no need to speak of its stature or magnitude
仰之欽儀容 As its venerable appearance [alone] elicits veneration.²⁵¹

In another example, Yamada Hōkoku 山田方谷 (1805–1877) noted that Mount Fuji possesses the “quintessence” 精華 of Japan itself:

皇國精華氣 As for the quintessence of the imperial realm [Japan],
應知此地鍾 One ought to know that it is concentrated in this land [Mount Fuji].²⁵²

²⁴⁹ Shibano Ritsuzan 柴野栗山, *Ritsuzandō shishū* 栗山堂詩集, ed. Nakagawa Mokudō 中川默堂, vol. 1 (Japan: Shōfū Chikugetsukyo, 1906), 17.

²⁵⁰ Kamei Nanmei 龜井南冥, *Kamei Nanmei Shōyō zenshū* 龜井南冥・昭陽全集, ed. Araki Kengo 荒木見悟 et al, vol. 8:pt.1 (Fukuoka: Ashi Shobō, 1980), 129.

²⁵¹ Bitō Jishū 尾藤二洲, *Seikiken shū* 静寄軒集, ed. Rai Tsutomu 頼惟勤 (Tokyo: Perikansha, 1991), 36.

²⁵² Yamada Hōkoku 山田方谷, *Yamada Hōkoku zenshū* 山田方谷全集, ed. Yamada Jun 山田準, vol. 1 (Okayama: Yamada Hōkoku Zenshū Kankōkai, 1951), 326.

Fujisan versus Paektusan

Upon their arrival in early modern Japan, Korean officials soon realized that the Japanese also perceived and articulated their mountains, particularly Mount Fuji 富士山, as something preordained and divine. During his official business to Japan in 1624–1625, Kang Hongjung 姜弘重 (1577–1642) noted that the Tsushima official Kihaku Genbō 規伯玄方 (1588–1661) proudly claimed that Japan's Mount Fuji and Lake Biwa 琵琶湖 were divinely created. Genbō supposedly said to Kang:

Both the Ōmi Province's Lake Biwa and the Suruga Province's Mount Fuji did not exist in antiquity and were suddenly created in a morning. The Chikubu Island located inside the lake [was created when] a brilliant deity sprang out of the sea. Blue bamboos appeared within a night, and they are located inside a shrine and are still as blue as ever. 近江州之琵琶湖駿河州之富士山皆非古有也一朝忽然開出湖中又有竹生島明神自海湧出青竹生於一夜之間至今在神殿裏青青不枯。²⁵³

Nam Yongik 南龍翼 (1628–1692), who officially visited Japan in 1655–1656, also noted a legend about Mount Fuji that he encountered in Japan:

According to a popular account, the mountain was [newly] created after ten days of pitch-black clouds and mists in the twenty-first year of Enryaku [802 CE] in [the reign of] Emperor Kanmu. They say that its shape is like a lotus with eight [overlapping] petals, and there is a pond at the mountaintop. Its water is blue in color, sweet in taste, and can cure illnesses. They say that water holes around the pond are shaped like the rising sun. 俗稱桓武天皇延曆二十一年雲霧晦冥十日而後成山形如蓮花八葉層層上有窪水色青味甘可以療疾池旁水穴形如初日云。²⁵⁴

Sin Yuhan 申維翰 (1681–1752) also remarked on hearing a comparable story during his 1719–1720 official trip to Japan:

²⁵³ Kang Hongjung 姜弘重, “Tongsarok” 東槎錄, in *Kugyōk haehaeng ch'ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 3 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch'ujinhoe), 33.

²⁵⁴ Nam Yongik 南龍翼, “Pusangnok” 扶桑錄, in *Kugyōk haehaeng ch'ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 5 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch'ujinhoe), 57.

[They claim that] Mount Fuji arose within a single day and Lake Biwa opened up in a single day. Because they were created by the work of god, those who come to visit from all directions must perform ablutions in order to avoid the divine wrath: ten full days for Mount Fuji and just one day for Lake Biwa.

曰富士山一日自出琵琶湖一日自開此其靈變之所設故四方游觀者必齋而後免於殃禍富士則齋滿一旬乃可琵琶則齋一日亦可。²⁵⁵

The early modern Korean officials sent to Japan clearly understood the significance of such symbolism. As the great mountains of Korea, headed by Mount Paektu, supposedly nourished and sustained Korea, Mount Fuji, Japan's greatest mountain, supposedly did the same for Japan. The early modern Korean observers of Mount Fuji, who passed by Fuji on their journey to Edo and back, sometimes linked its imposing presence to the wealth and prosperity of Japan. Sŏng Taejung 成大中 (1732–1812), for example, observed that the “wealth and power of Edo is dependent on this mountain” 江戸之富强頼有此鎮之耳. In another example, Nam Ok 南玉 (1722–1770) saw Mount Fuji as “a testament to the flourishing national power and thriving peoples [of Japan]” 可驗國力之富人物之盛也。²⁵⁶

At the same time, Korean officials sent to Japan saw Mount Fuji as a threat that sustained the traditional Japanese defiance of the Chinese world order, which was now supposedly represented by Korea. For example, having visited Japan in 1636–1637, Kim Seryŏm 金世濂 (1593–1646) wrote of Mount Fuji's imposing presence while linking it to Japanese independence:

雄蹲大地知無敵 Imposing itself on the earth without a rival,
獨立中天孰敢干 Standing alone in the sky, who could dare to go against it?
聞自太初留積素 I hear that it has been rising up from the beginning of time
欲將長白較巒岫 Does it want to compare its height with Mount Paektu?²⁵⁷

²⁵⁵ Sin Yuhan 申維翰, “Haeyurok” 海遊錄, in *Kugyŏk haehaeng ch'ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 2 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch'ujinhoe), 4.

²⁵⁶ Nam Ok 南玉, *Ilgwan'gi* 日觀記 (National Institute of Korean History Rare Book KO B16HD 6).

²⁵⁷ Kim Seryŏm 金世濂, “Sasangnok” 槎上錄 in *Kugyŏk haehaeng ch'ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 4 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch'ujinhoe), 36.

Some twenty years later, Nam Yongik 南龍翼 (1628–1692) saw Mount Fuji and metaphorically compared it to the first Vietnamese emperor, Triệu Đà 趙佗 (C. Zhao Tuo, better known as Wei Tuo 尉佗), who rebelled against China and ruled a vast territory stretching from northern Vietnam to southern China from 203 to 137 BCE while claiming to be an emperor in his own right. Triệu Đà became a symbol of intransigence and rebellion against the Chinese world order, and Nam’s reference clearly framed Mount Fuji as a symbol of the Japanese insubordination against Chinese civilization and the Chinese world order, now sustained by Korea. In short, Fuji was the symbol of Japan’s indomitability in history.

Nam’s “Song of Mount Fuji” 富士山歌 begins with repeated exclamations, calling Mount Fuji “precipitous” 危哉, “strange” 奇哉, and “exceptional” 異矣哉. After several lines describing the awe-inspiring sight, the poem repeats the exclamations of the first line, with the addition: “Who created [Mount Fuji]” 誰所肇? It then introduces how it measures up against its counterparts in China and Korea: “Have you not seen? Towering Mount Kunlun came from the sky, and the famous mountains of China made it their ancestor, assisted it [in overseeing the country], and succeeded it” 君不見崑崙之山突兀架空自天來中國名山以此爲祖輔佐而繼紹. The poem then brings up Korea’s Mount Paektu, asking: “Have you also not seen our country’s towering mountain” 又不見我國之山輪囷斗起立? It adds that Mount Paektu gave birth to all of Korea’s mountains, which, in turn, gave “birth to Korea’s monarchs, generals and ministers, sages and virtuous men, and civil and military officials” 出帝將相聖賢與文武. The poem then goes back to Mount Fuji:

Looking at this mountain, while it is as far [inferior to the mountains of China and Korea] as to [the difference between] heaven and earth, it still does not surrender to “the Five Great Mountains” [of China] and the three mountains [of Korea]. It stands exceptive to

sacred edification [Confucianism], just like the presumptuous claim of Nam Viet's Triệu Đà to be the emperor. Accustomed to hearing about “the Five Great Mountains” and having seen the three mountains in person, I was not surprised after hearing about it [Mount Fuji], and I despised it after seeing it [in person]. I hope the Highest Deity will reorder Kua'e [the Chinese mythological figure who supposedly moved mountains] to throw this mountain between China and our country to instill benefits [upon it] by restraining its extreme arrogance.

觀此山不啻天壤杳此山猶不屈服五岳與三山魁居自在聖化外有若南越尉佗之僭矯我自耳慣五岳目三山聞此不驚見亦藐我願上帝更命夸娥擲此山於中國我國間俾霖雨露制強躋。²⁵⁸

Nam's work displays astonishment at the mountain's size and beauty as well as fear and resistance toward what it supposedly stood for: Japanese independence and indomitability vis-à-vis the outside world.

The representation of Mount Fuji as a symbol of the Japanese challenge to the Chinese world order is further evident in the ways that the Japanese framed Mount Fuji with respect to the mountains of Korea. For example, Shōhaku 紹栢 (?-?) and Chūtatsu 中達 (?-1661), Japanese monks who accompanied the 1655–1656 Korean mission, brought up Mount Fuji to Nam. According to Nam's record from his trip to Japan in 1655, “the two monks successively sent poems [about Mount Fuji] with the apparent intention of boasting, so I repeatedly replied back to humble them” 兩僧連呈詩頗有誇大之意疊次折之. Part of Chūtatsu's poem reads:

朝鮮諸嶽爭高否 How tall are Korea's mountains?
 試看扶桑第一峯 Take a look at the tallest peak of Japan,
 玉立秋山勢最尊 Standing like jade, its features are most respectable in autumn.
 山頭積雪四時存 Accumulated snow at the mountaintop stays for four seasons.

衝北夜爭星斗迥 Protruding northward, it challenges the Big Dipper.
 壓東朝礙日車翻 Pressing eastward, it obstructs the sunrise.
 三韓形勝誰高下 [Compared to] Korea's scenery, whose is greater?
 欲喚仙人仔細論 I want to summon an immortal to discuss this in detail.

²⁵⁸ Nam Yongik 南龍翼, “Pusangnok” 扶桑錄, in *Kugyōk haehaeng ch'ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 5 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch'ujinhoe), 57-58.

Of course, arguing for the superiority of Mount Fuji over its Korean counterparts meant that Chūtatsu was actually arguing for the relative superiority of Japan over Korea. In addition to courteous praises about Mount Fuji, Nam responded with assertions on behalf of Korea by mentioning the “twelve thousand peaks of Mount Kūmgang that stand like jade”

玉立金剛萬二峯。²⁵⁹ Such an uncompromising back-and-forth characterized much of the “debate” between the two parties in the subsequent meetings between the Korean officials and their Japanese counterparts.

A particularly heated encounter regarding the mountains occurred during the 1711–1712 mission’s visit to Japan. The Japanese Buddhist monk Soen Betsusō 祖緣別宗 (?–?) began the dispute with several provocative poems about Mount Fuji, which were sent to the Korean mission’s officials. Parts of them stated:

東遊歷過富山陞 Passing by the vicinity of Mount Fuji going eastward,
朝靄夕暉景狀奇 Morning mists and evening sunset are strange sights.
定識神靈多喜色 I certainly know that the divine spirit is very happy that
三韓嘉客競題詩 Korean guests are competing to submit poems [on Mount Fuji].

我國神仙宅 Our country is home to immortals.
名巒處處饒 There are famous peaks everywhere.
富士稱第一 Fuji is called the first [of all the mountains of Japan].
山湧孝靈朝 The mountain soared up in Emperor Kōrei’s reign.
根蟠三州裡 Its roots spread to three provinces.
頂聳插層霄 Its peak upheaved itself into the heavens.
形全蓮八葉 Its shape resembles the eight leaves of the lotus.
嵌竇起寒飈 The empty cavern generates a cold windstorm.
寶光常發現 Precious lights appear constantly.
時聞奏仙簫 Sometimes I hear immortals playing a bamboo flute.
炎天飄白雪 White snow blows even in the hot summer.
四序積瓊瑤 Four seasons pile up jade marbles.

聞說鷄貴域 I hear that in the land of Korea,

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 58.

金剛最岩嶢 [Mount] Kūmgang is the tallest peak.
不知能配否 I don't know if it can be compared [to Mount Fuji],
想像萬里遙 I imagine about it ten thousand *li* away.²⁶⁰

While the Korean responses to Betsusō included, out of courtesy, some praise of Mount Fuji, they also put forth a collective defensive effort. The Korean official Yi Hyōn 李磻 (1654–?) wrote: “I want to guide the teacher [Betsusō] to go” 我將携師去, “floating westward toward Korea in a single rowing” 一棹西指鷄林浮, “to reach [Mount] Kūmgang and [Mount] Myohyang” 踏盡金剛與妙香. Nam Sōngjung 南聖重 (1666–?) wanted to double-team Mount Fuji, as if he needed two mountains to compete with Fuji. After bringing up Mount Halla and Mount Kūmgang in Korea, he noted: “Japan has one but Korea has two” 和得其一韓得二. He then asked, “Comparing the two countries’ sceneries, whose is superior” 兩國較勝誰爲優? According to Cho T’aeōk 趙泰億 (1675–1728):

吾邦亦有金剛雄 Our country also has the grandeur of [Mount] Kūmgang,
金剛一萬二千峰 The twelve thousand peaks of [Mount] Kūmgang.
箇箇削玉多青楓 Each of them is sharpened like jade and there is blue foliage.
安得與君一陟毗盧頂 How can I go to the summit of Mount Kūmgang with you,
細論二山形勝同不同 And discuss the two mountains’ differences in detail?²⁶¹

The Korean Origins of Japan, the Japanese Domination of Korea

As can be seen from such encounters, the early modern Korean and Japanese discourses on these mountains increasingly became instruments to prove the supposed superiority of one country over the other, with each side sticking to particular narratives that had become dominant in their respective countries. On the Korean side, the Koreans increasingly spoke of Mount

²⁶⁰ *Sakaku tsūtōshū* 槎客通筒集 (National Library of Korea Rare Book 古 6-18-45).

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*

Paektu, in particular, as the physical and spiritual origin of not only the Korean peninsula but also of Mount Fuji and the Japanese islands, thereby refuting Japanese claims concerning the total independence of their lands and civilization. In other words, Korea gave birth to Japan. This argument, of course, supported the proto-nationalist narrative that Korea had become *the* center of civilization.

As early as 1614, Yi Sugwang 李睟光 (1563–1628) made such arguments about Mount Paektu. After noting that “all of our country’s mountains originate from Mount Paektu” 我國諸山皆發源於白頭山, he quoted Nam Sago’s 南師古 (1509–1571) statement that Paektu’s mountain range “must have gone into the sea and become the Japanese islands” 當是隱伏海中爲日本諸島.²⁶² Kim Seryöm 金世濂 (1593–1646), who officially visited Japan in 1636–1637, also remarked on the mountains and geography of Japan. After noting that “Mount Fuji had fathered all the mountains of Japan” 倭國諸山皆以富士作祖, he observed:

I heard that Mount Fuji originates from Mutsu [a region of northeastern Japan]. Mutsu is closest to our country’s barbarian lands to the north, separated by only four hundred *li*. Men and horses cannot travel there because its land is muddy. Mutsu’s topography must originate from Mount Paektu.

聞富士山來自陸奧陸奧最近我國北方胡地相去纔四百里泥濘不通人馬云陸奧地形當以白頭山爲本矣。²⁶³

Cho Myōngch’ae 曹命采 (1700–1764), who visited Japan in 1748, made a similar claim upon seeing Mount Fuji:

I have read in Matteo Ricci’s book that Japan’s Mount Fuji is a famous mountain of the world. It distributes soil and supports the feet of mountains throughout the sixty-six provinces [of Japan]. Abundance in the mining of copper and production of gold in Japan all depend on the treasures produced in the mountain. It is said that this mountain is a part of Mount Paektu’s range that went into the sea [and arrived at Japan].

²⁶² Yi Sugwang 李睟光, *Chibong yusöl* 芝峰類說 (Seoul: Kyōngin Munhwasa, 1970), 22.

²⁶³ Kim Seryöm 金世濂, “Haesanok” 海槎錄 in *Kugyōk haehaeng ch’ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 4 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe), 11.

曾見利瑪竇書中以日本富士山謂之天下名山而分砂支麓遍布六十六州倭國之採銅鑄金邦內殷富者皆賴此山之產寶而此山即白頭山一派之流入海中云者。²⁶⁴

Cho Ŏm 趙曦 (1719–1777), who visited Japan in the subsequent 1763–1764 mission, made a similar remark:

I have heard that the mountain ranges of Japan have come from our country. Some say that the Changgi mountain range [of southeastern Korea] crossed over the sea via Tsushima and Ikki and entered [Japan], and some say that parts of the mountain range of Mount Paektu came [to Japan] across the northern sea. Generally speaking, the part of Mount Paektu's range that went southward created Korea, and the one that went northward went extremely far and may have crossed over [to Japan] through the Amur River. Northward or southward, [the mountain ranges of Japan] look like a branch of Mount Paektu. Now, Mount Fuji also has a white head and they say that it also has a lake at the top. It may be an offspring of Mount Paektu.

曾聞日本山脈來自我國而或傳自長髻石脈渡海由馬島歧島而入或傳以白頭山餘脈由北海而來蓋白頭山麓之南來者爲朝鮮北去者甚遠安知不由黑龍江而渡也以南以北似是白頭山支派矣今者富士山亦白其頭頂上又有澤云其或是白頭山之兒孫耶。²⁶⁵

Korean scholars who had never visited Japan also made the same argument regarding the Korean origins of Japanese lands. Yi Ik 李瀾 (1681–1763) argued, for example, that Mount Paektu generated two primary mountain ranges. One went southward to the tip of southern Korea, ending in Mount Chiri 智異山. It physically created the Korean peninsula as well as its civilization—Yi Ik noted that this mountain range supposedly “produced endless men of talent” 養成無限人材, including celebrated Korean scholars such as Yi Hwang 李滉 (1502–1570) and Cho Sik 曹植 (1501–1572). The other mountain range supposedly went into the sea and created Japan, “becoming this island and becoming that island” 爲島爲嶼也。²⁶⁶ The Korean official Sin

²⁶⁴ Cho Myōngch'ae 曹命采, “Pongsa ilbonsi mun'gyōnnok” 奉使日本時聞見錄, in *Kugyōk haehaeng ch'ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 10 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch'ujinhoe), 44.

²⁶⁵ Cho Ŏm 趙曦, “Haesa ilgi” 海使日記, in *Kugyōk haehaeng ch'ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 7 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch'ujinhoe), 28.

²⁶⁶ Yi Ik 李瀾, *Sōngho sasōl* 星湖僊說, vol. 1 (Seoul: Kyōngchi Ch'ulp'ansa, 1967), 13.

Kyōngjun 申景濬 (1712–1781) made a similar argument. After stating that Mount Paektu was “the ancestor of many mountains of the three countries” 三國衆山之祖, Sin noted how the branches of Mount Paektu supposedly expanded into parts of Manchuria and Korea. He argued that “its one branch extended eastward and became the various mountains of Japan” 其東迤一枝爲日本之衆山. Sin also observed that “Paektu’s mountain range went eastward into the great sea and became Japan” 白頭山脉東入大海爲日本.²⁶⁷

On the Japanese side, Mount Fuji was similarly seen as the source and symbol of the Japanese power that extended beyond its borders into places like Korea. In this regard, historian Ronald Toby described two particular narratives developing around Mount Fuji in early modern Japan through the chapter titled “The Mountain That Does Not Need Translators: Dialogue between Mount Fuji and Foreigners” 通詞いらぬ山—富士山と異国人の対話.²⁶⁸ First, examining paintings such as Katsushika Hokusai 葛飾北斎’s (1760–1849) “Hara” 原 (today’s Numazu 沼津 in the Shizuoka Prefecture) from *The Fifty-three Stations of the Eastern Sea Road* 東海道五十三次 and “Tribute-receiving [Mount] Fuji” 來朝の不二 from the third volume of *One Hundred Views of Mount Fuji* 富嶽百景, Toby showed that the Japanese increasingly viewed Mount Fuji as the source of Japanese power in eliciting submission from foreigners. These paintings, juxtaposing the imposing views of Mount Fuji alongside Korean officials coming into Japan to pay their respects, reinforced the notion that Japan’s power extended beyond its borders and made foreigners submit to its will.

²⁶⁷ Sin Kyōngjun 申景濬, “Kanggyego” 疆界考, in *Yōam chōnsō* 旅菴全書, vol. 1 (Seoul: Kyōngin Munhwasa, 1976), 268.

²⁶⁸ Ronald Toby, “*Sakoku*” to *iu gaikō* 「鎖国」という外交, 275-328.

Second, by studying paintings such as Hokusai's "Manchuria's [Mount] Fuji" 兀良哈の不二 from *One Hundred Views of Mount Fuji* and Watanabe Nobukazu's 渡邊延一 (1872–1944) 1893 work "Katō Kiyomasa Gazing at [Mount] Fuji from Korea" 加藤清正朝鮮ヨリ富士ヲ望ム, Toby showed that many Japanese increasingly saw Mount Fuji as the mythical source of strength behind the Japanese "conquest" of Korea in the late sixteenth century, linking the mountain's supposed extent of visibility with the extent of Japanese power by suggesting that Mount Fuji was visible even in foreign lands like Korea. As for the above-noted two paintings, the first by Hokusai shows a Korean prince, supposedly captured by Katō Kiyomasa's army during the late sixteenth century Japanese invasion of Korea, looking across the sea toward Mount Fuji from Korea. The second painting shows Katō Kiyomasa himself gazing at Mount Fuji, again from Korea.

I would like to add to Ronald Toby's work by discussing one particularly telling painting that he did not include. This untitled painting shows an armed Japanese military man on his knees looking at Mount Fuji across the sea. There is some text written on the painting. On the right, it says "Katō Hishū" 加藤肥州. "Katō" most likely refers to Katō Kiyomasa 加藤清正 (1562–1611), while "Hishū" refers to the Higo Province 肥後國 of Kyushu where Katō Kiyomasa had his domain. There is no doubt that the man on his knees looking at Mount Fuji is Katō Kiyomasa and that he is looking at the mountain during the war in Korea. The remaining text reads:

Yearning for my country in conquering a faraway land,
It was the solemn Mount Fuji that [instilled in me] the profundity of loyalty and valor at
times of advance and retreat.
遠き國に征伐して吾國をこひしのぶ
進退度あり忠勇の見識たるやいみじき富士山にたり。

Without a doubt, the message of this painting is that Mount Fuji was inspiring, if not remotely controlling, the Japanese war in Korea.

A similar perspective regarding Mount Fuji is evident in textual materials. The Japanese scholar Minagawa Kien 皆川淇園 (1734–1807) wrote the following poem on Mount Fuji and its power in sustaining Japanese dominance over foreign nations:

一從天下戢鎧 The whole world put away its arms in submission,
草木偃風三百載 Bending over like grass under the wind for three hundred years.
萬國朝來道不迷 All countries come to submit [to Japan] without straying in their paths,
芙蓉元國表東海 As Fuji shows the “East Sea Road” 東海道 to them from the start.²⁶⁹

In another instance, the famed mid-nineteenth century Japanese politician Saigō Takamori 西郷隆盛 (1828–1877) wrote the following lines in his poem dedicated to Mount Fuji:

百蠻呼國稱君子 A hundred barbarians praise [our] country to be virtuous,
爲有高標不二巔 As it has peerless [Mount Fuji] as its highest point.²⁷⁰

To conclude, debates on the symbolism of *Paektusan* and *Fujisan* crystalized into two irreconcilable narratives, each supporting early modern Korea and Japan’s proto-nationalist assertions of identity and superiority over each other. Mount Paektu, as the most important mountain in Korea, came to speak for Korean civilizational superiority over Japan, as well as the supposedly Korean origins of Japanese lands and civilization, whereas Mount Fuji became the command center that empowered Japan to dominate Korea in perpetuity. In this sense, the mountains were appropriated as the physical proof and manifestations of Japanese and Korean proto-nationalist assertions of supremacy.

²⁶⁹ Minagawa Kien 皆川淇園, 420.

²⁷⁰ Saigō Takamori 西郷隆盛, *Saigō Takamori zenshū* 西郷隆盛全集, ed. Saigō Takamori Zenshū Henshū Inkaikai 西郷隆盛全集編集委員会, vol. 4 (Tokyo: Daiwa Shobō, 1978), 119.

Chapter 3: Equestrian Riders and Toyotomi Hideyoshi

A particularly noticeable aspect of Japan-Korea interactions in the early modern period were discussions regarding military capabilities and military history, with both sides seeking to demonstrate that they could or did defeat the other at war. On the Korean side, in an effort to showcase its military power to Japanese audiences, this took on the form of ostentatious demonstrations of Korean martialism and fighting skills in Japan. On the Japanese side, this involved widespread Japanese revisionism of the once-hated tyrannical warlord Toyotomi Hideyoshi 豊臣秀吉 (1536–1598) over the course of the early modern period, whose costly failure in his attempt to conquer Korea was reconstructed as the glorious victory of Japan over Korea. As I will demonstrate, the advent of such revisionism stimulated talk of yet another conquest of Korea in the nineteenth century. The line of thinking was that as Hideyoshi had so easily “won” against Korea, another invasion would also produce a rapid victory.

This ideological emphasis on military capabilities was rooted in the concept of proto-nationalism itself, as the notion of competition was essential in positioning one’s country as the ultimate successor of the idealized Chinese antiquity vis-à-vis its rivals. This aspect of proto-nationalism can be seen in the ways in which the Koreans and Japanese subsequently interpreted their wars against the later Chinese dynasties. For example, the Koreans continuously celebrated the supposed “victories” against the Chinese power as a signature moment in which they showed their military might against a much larger country. After decades of wars between the Koguryō Kingdom and the Sui 隋 (581–618 CE) and Tang 唐 (618–907 CE) dynasties of China, the Tang ultimately destroyed Koguryō in 660. Despite the ultimate result, the subsequent generations of Koreans revisiting the history of this period often overemphasized the victories in battle, overturning the history of defeat into one of momentous upsets.

For instance, the *Samguk sagi* 三國史記 (“History of the Three Kingdoms,” 1145 CE), the earliest extant historical text of Korea, specifically accentuated the fact that the armies of Koguryŏ had defeated the Emperor Taizong of Tang 唐太宗 (r. 626–649). As the editors of the *Samguk sagi* noted, Taizong was widely considered to be an “extraordinary ruler” 不世出之君 who appeared “invincible” 無敵 in war.²⁷¹ It was only the Koguryŏ Kingdom, they noted, that defeated him. The editors of the *Samguk sagi* ridiculed Taizong by quoting the *New Book of Tang* 新唐書, an official Chinese historical text covering the history of the Tang dynasty, in describing Taizong as someone who “liked big things and enjoyed [obtaining] distinctions” 好大喜功 and thereby “committed troops to faraway places” 勤兵於遠. They also quoted the eighth century text *Sui-Tang jiahua* 隋唐嘉話 (“Fine Stories from the Sui and Tang dynasties”) to note how Taizong “displayed fear” 有懼色 after looking at the Koguryŏ forces, and “the emperor became extremely afraid” 帝大恐 after being surrounded by the Koguryŏ soldiers in battle. The editors ended their jeering with an upbraiding of Chinese historians, who did not speak of “such dread” 危懼如彼 in order to “hide it for the sake of [their] country” 爲國諱之者乎.²⁷²

In another example, Cho Chun 趙浚 (1346–1405) wrote a poem celebrating the Battle of Salsu 薩水 in 612 CE when the Koguryŏ forces supposedly obliterated the Sui army of some 300,000 men in a single battle around the Salsu River. Part of it reads:

薩水湯湯漾碧虛 When the clear water of the Salsu [River] rippled

²⁷¹ *Samguk sagi* 三國史記 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe, 1973), 164.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 166-167.

隋兵百萬化爲魚 The million men army of Sui turned into fish.²⁷³

Koguryō's supposed "victories" were continuously recalled by subsequent generations of Koreans well into the later periods. Yun Hyu 尹鑄 (1617–1680), for instance, noted at the court in 1675 how "Emperor Yang of Sui [r. 604–618] sought to conquer Koguryō with the million men army but was defeated by [the Koguryō general] Ŭlchi Mundök [at the Battle of Salsu]" 隋煬帝嘗以百萬之師伐高麗爲乙支文德所敗.²⁷⁴ In yet another example, in 1703, King Sukchong 肅宗 (r. 1674–1720) recalled at the court how the Koguryō Kingdom "was able to resist the million men army of the Sui and Tang dynasties" 能抗隋唐百萬之師.²⁷⁵

On the Japanese side numerous scholars also expressed their belief in the supremacy of Japanese military power. By providing alternative scenarios in which the Japanese forces defeat Ming China, for instance, they note that Japan *could have* defeated Ming China during the Hideyoshi invasions of Korea (1592–1598). Viewing the invasion of Korea also as a war between Japan and China, these scholars wanted to reinterpret the history of failure into a mere lost opportunity, thereby preserving the notion that Japan is militarily competitive vis-à-vis later Chinese dynasties. Motoori Norinaga made such an argument, noting that Hideyoshi should have attacked [China] by "moving in from the south, first seizing the place called Nanjing" 南のかたより物して。まづ南京といふをとるべき也。After that, Norinaga reasoned, Hideyoshi could have "marched northward and certainly seize Beijing" 北の方へおしもてゆきなんには。北京

²⁷³ Cho Chun 趙浚, "Songdang chip" 松堂集, in *Yōngin p'yojōm Han'guk munjip ch'onggan* 影印標點韓國文集叢刊, vol. 6 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch'ujinhoe, 1990), 409.

²⁷⁴ Yun Hyu 尹鑄, "Paekho chip" 白湖集, in *Yōngin p'yojōm Han'guk munjip ch'onggan* 影印標點韓國文集叢刊, vol. 123 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch'ujinhoe, 1993), 209.

²⁷⁵ *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* 朝鮮王朝實錄 *Sukchong sillok* 肅宗實錄: 38 卷 29 年 12 月 7 日 (1703).

もまた御手にいりぬべく。²⁷⁶ Noting that “attacking Korea also means attacking the Ming” 伐朝鮮是亦伐明者, Minagawa Kien 皆川淇園 (1734–1807) also maintained that sending additional forces to attack “their Fujian and Guangdong provinces” 彼閩廣 would have forced the retreat of the Ming expeditionary forces in Korea, which would have resulted in a Japanese victory.²⁷⁷ Yamada Hōkoku 山田方谷 (1805–1877) also noted that Japan could have “overran their two capitals [Beijing and Nanjing] and thirteen provinces without hindrance” 彼二都十三省縱橫鼓行 had Hideyoshi diverted forces to attack China proper.²⁷⁸ Such proto-nationalist beliefs in military power became a contentious issue in the early modern Korean-Japanese interactions when Koreans sought to overturn the notion of the capability of Japanese military power in defeating it by making a public statement regarding its own military power in Japan.

Korean Equestrian Riders in Japan

Public demonstrations of Korean martialism and fighting skills in Japan occurred during the Korean missions’ visits to early modern Japan. Beginning with the 1636–1637 mission, a number of military officers were dispatched along with civil officials on every subsequent mission to showcase skills such as archery and horseback riding to the Japanese officialdom and public. After the utter shellacking that the Korean forces suffered during the initial phase of the Japanese invasions of Korea in 1592 and the Korean military defeat at the hands of the Manchus

²⁷⁶ Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長, “Gyojū gaigen” 馭戎慨言, in *Motoori Norinaga zenshū* 本居宣長全集, ed. Ōno Susumu 大野晋, vol. 8 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1972), 113.

²⁷⁷ Minagawa Kien 皆川淇園, 136-137.

²⁷⁸ Yamada Hōkoku 山田方谷, *Yamada Hōkoku zenshū* 山田方谷全集, ed. Yamada Jun 山田準, vol. 3 (Okayama: Yamada Hōkoku Zenshū Kankōkai, 1951), 191.

in 1627 and 1637, these displays were meant to compensate for these embarrassments and to demonstrate that Korea also had significant military capabilities.

Ironically, these demonstrations coincided with an overall decline in the status of Korean military men and an institutional hollowing out of the Korean military that continued into the mid-nineteenth century.²⁷⁹ The Korean military was once used to launch overseas expeditions during the Chosŏn dynasty's first century; however, the late Chosŏn Korean military's strategic aim was primarily reduced to only protecting the capital city. In this light, the propagandistic intention of the military displays in Japan becomes even more obvious. Following a display of equestrian martial arts at Edo in 1682, Hong Set'ae 洪世泰 (1653–1725) told a group of Japanese scholars and officials that “the people of our country esteem horseback riding and archery” 弊邦尚騎射 and that “there are many people who are capable of [equestrian martial arts] 故人多能之此等輩甚多.”²⁸⁰ It would not be an exaggeration to say that he was wildly exaggerating.

Disdain for martial arts and military men was growing across the country by the midpoint of the Chosŏn dynasty's history. For example, King Sŏnjo 宣祖 (r. 1567–1608) criticized the excessively bookish culture of the southeastern Kyŏngsang province in 1593 and said that people of the province viewed military men “as they view slaves” 如視奴隸.²⁸¹ In 1625, Yi Sugwang 李睟光 (1563–1628) told his king that martialism was in sharp decline even in northern Korea,

²⁷⁹ James B. Palais, *Confucian Statecraft and Korean Institutions: Yu Hyŏngwŏn and the late Chosŏn Dynasty* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996), 391-577; Carter J. Eckert, *Park Chung Hee and Modern Korea: The Roots of Militarism, 1866-1945* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2016), 15-26.

²⁸⁰ *Kanshi shukōroku* 韓使手口錄 (National Archive of Japan Rare Book 178-0534).

²⁸¹ *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* 朝鮮王朝實錄 *Sŏnjo sillok* 宣祖實錄: 43 卷 26 年 10 月 22 日 (1593).

where people traditionally had a soldierly reputation owing to their location in the northern borderlands. According to Yi, “Hamgyōng province was [traditionally] referred to as the land of archery and horseback riding” 咸鏡道素稱弓馬之地. More recently, however, Yi noted that “there was not a person who held a bow and made martial arts his occupation” 絕無操弓業武者.²⁸² While Yi was certainly exaggerating to make a point, this trend was actually spreading across the country. Nonetheless, this did not stop Korean officials from exaggerating for the sake of propaganda.

During the 1719–1720 mission, Sin Yuhan 申維翰 (1681–1752) was asked by his Japanese counterpart Hayashi Ryūkō 林榴岡 (1681–1758) whether “all military men are just as capable of [riding horses as the equestrian riders sent to Japan]” 公營武士皆能如是乎. Sin replied that “all skilled military men are capable of doing that” 營武士善藝者皆能若是. However, earlier in the same conversation, Sin had told Ryūkō about the low standard for Korean military officials vis-à-vis civil officials. According to Sin, “only one in thousands of scholars who assiduously study until their hair whitens *can* pass [the civil service examination]” 爲文之士白頭矻矻其能及第者千百中一人. Military officials, on the other hand, faced such a low standard that “those who *cannot* pass [the military examination number] only one in a hundred” 不能登科者百中一人. Because of this disparity in standards and the resulting low prestige of military men in Korea, Sin told Ryūkō that “there were many [military officials] who cannot even earn a stipend” 多有不得祿者.²⁸³ Despite the irony, the Korean missions continued to showcase Korean fighting skills to Japanese audiences.

²⁸² *Sŭngjōngwŏn ilgi* 承政院日記 Injo 仁祖 3 年 9 月 15 日 (1625).

²⁸³ *Chōsenjin tai shishū* 朝鮮人對詩集 (National Archive of Japan Rare Book 178-0607).

As Kim Seryöm 金世濂 (1593–1646), a member of the 1636–1637 mission, noted, the military officers who participated in the mission were selected to go because “their skills at martial arts were the best in the country” 其武藝爲國中第一. At the 1636–1637 mission’s first stop at Tsushima, the Korean officers publicly premiered their skill in archery 射候 and equestrian martial arts 馬上才.²⁸⁴ According to Im Kwang 任統 (1579–1644), the Tsushima officialdom, their family members, and other local onlookers “girded the mountains and filled the fields” 遍山填野 to watch the presentation of Korean fighting skills. Japanese viewers were supposedly “astonished at the accuracy of arrow shooting and ability to stand up while horseback riding” 莫不嘖舌稱善於射夫中數之妙馳馬曳立之能.²⁸⁵ Han Pömsök 韓範錫 (1672–1743), a military officer who was a part of the 1711 mission to Japan, also noted the “lines of men and women” 男女堵立 who gathered to watch the Korean performances of martial arts starting from their first stop at Tsushima.

In another instance, according to the records of Cho Myöngch’ae 曹命采 (1700–1764), Korean military officers showed off their mounted archery skills at Edo in 1748. Cho described how a military officer named Yi Ilche 李逸濟 looked as if he was “almost going to fall off” 幾將墜下 the horse while riding it, but was “able to sit back up straight and shoot the remaining arrows on target” 能踴身正鞍馳中餘矢. According to Cho, “there was not a spectator who was

²⁸⁴ Kim Seryöm 金世濂, “Haesanok” 海槎錄 in *Kugyök haehaeng ch’ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 4 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe), 4.

²⁸⁵ Im Kwang 任統, “Pyöngja ilbon ilgi” 丙子日本日記, in *Kugyök haehaeng ch’ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 3 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe), 52.

not astonished and impressed” 觀之者莫不嘖舌歎服。²⁸⁶ In addition to skills in horse riding and archery, Korean military officers were selected to impress the Japanese with their physical strength and size. Korean official Sin Yuhan 申維翰 (1681–1752) of the 1719–1720 mission reported one instance when a Korean military officer’s physical strength shocked the Japanese public:

When the Japanese looked at our country’s great bow, they became shocked and were afraid [of its size]. The shogun picked a particularly strong [Japanese] man to draw the bow, but [he] could not draw it. [When we] ordered our military officer Yang Pongmyōng to fully draw it and shoot an arrow, all [Japanese] spectators were shocked. 倭人見我國大弓皆驚恟關白別擇力士彎之不能開弦使我軍官楊鳳鳴引滿發矢上下觀者皆絕倒。²⁸⁷

Before the departure of the 1763–1764 mission, Cho Ŏm 趙曦 (1719–1777) noted that “men of great strength” 壯士 were taken to Japan to “showcase their physical strength to the people [of Japan]” 其勇力之視人. At the 1763–1764 mission’s first stop in Tsushima, “the Japanese saw the gigantic size of the hands and body of the military officer Kim Sangok” 倭人見金營將相玉身手壯大, and “out of shock” 驚, they “asked his name and about his physical strength” 問其姓名勇力. “When the interpreter [answered] with wild exaggerations” 譯官鋪張而誇耀, the Japanese started referring to him as “General Kim” 金將軍. Owing to his appearance, Yi Haemun 李海文, another military man of great size, was referred to by the Japanese as the legendary Chinese general Zhang Fei 張飛 (?–221 CE). After hearing the praise these two men received, Cho Ŏm expressed his “happiness that [Korea] avoided scorn from a

²⁸⁶ Cho Myōngch’ae 曹命采, “Pongsa ilboni mun’gyōnnok” 奉使日本時間見錄, in *Kugyōk haehaeng ch’ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 10 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe), 42.

²⁸⁷ Sin Yuhan 申維翰, “Haeyurok” 海遊錄, in *Kugyōk haehaeng ch’ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 2 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe), 8.

foreign country” 喜其得免見侮於他國.²⁸⁸ After the military men’s performances at Edo in 1764, Cho also expressed his satisfaction that “the Japanese [onlookers] could not stop their laudations” 倭人稱歎不已云矣.²⁸⁹ Wŏn Chunggŏ 元重舉 (1719–1790) of the same 1763–1764 mission also notes an instance when the Korean military officials showcased their bodily strength to the Japanese audience by drawing a particularly powerful bow. When a Japanese man attempted to draw it himself:

He used all of his strength while his eyes glared and mouth opened, but still could not draw the bow. He also put it on the floor and pulled it with his hands, but [still] could not draw the bow. In the end, he opened his eyes and stuck his tongue out and left.
努目呀口盡力而不得開弦又着地手引亦不能開弦遂張眼吐舌而去.²⁹⁰

Korea’s King Yŏngjo 英祖 (r. 1724–1776) was also mindful of how the Japanese would perceive Korea’s military power. Before the departure of the 1763–1764 mission, the king noted that, since “the military officials [sent to Japan] are selected among the best” 軍官皆極選矣, “they [the Japanese] will say that Korea has sufficient military power” 彼必曰朝鮮足武矣.²⁹¹ Upon this mission’s return, Cho Ŏm noted that “the king asked whether or not the military officials showed their skills” 上曰諸軍官試才乎 to the Japanese. When Cho told him of the “exploits” of Kim Sangok, for example, “the king said he was proud [of Kim]” 上曰壯矣. After Cho reported the performance of several military officers, the king happily observed that “All the

²⁸⁸ Cho Ŏm 趙曦, “Haesa ilgi” 海使日記, in *Kugyŏk haehaeng ch’ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 7 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe), 10.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 33.

²⁹⁰ Wŏn Chunggŏ 元重舉, *Sŭngsarok* 乘槎錄 (Korea University Library Rare Book 六堂 B8 A28).

²⁹¹ *Sŭngjŏngwŏn ilgi* 承政院日記 Yŏngjo 英祖 39 年 7 月 24 日 (1763).

military officials were outstanding in their martial arts” 軍官輩武技皆善爲之。²⁹² The king was pleased by the fact that these military officials had, as planned, successfully demonstrated Korea’s military power to the Japanese.

Obviously aware of Korean intentions, some Japanese responded negatively to the Korean displays of military strength in various ways. For example, Hayashi Ryūkō 林榴岡 (1681–1758), for example, bluntly told his Korean counterpart Sin Yuhan 申維翰 (1681–1752) that Korean military officers “would not be able to do as they wish riding our country’s horses” 若騎吾邦馬恐不能如志耶。²⁹³ The Japanese also exaggerated the extent of militarism and martial arts in Japan. Following the 1588 “sword hunt” 刀狩, which disarmed all commoners and led to the establishment of the hereditary class system, wearing swords became an exclusive status symbol of the warrior class in early modern Japan. However, the shogunate official Arai Hakuseki 新井白石 (1657–1725) exaggerated the extent of militarism in Japan even to the point of deliberately covering up the existing distinctions among hereditary classes that forbade those outside of the warrior class, such as farmers and merchants, from wearing swords. In 1711, Hakuseki said the following to his Korean counterpart Cho T’aeök 趙泰億 (1675–1728):

According to our country’s customs, those above the rank of foot soldier all carry two swords on their waists. When at war, they carry an extra sword. The lengths and sizes [of the swords] are designed to match their respective uses. Even among the farmers and merchants, there is not a person who does not carry swords.
本邦之俗卒伍以上皆腰雙刀戎事則又佩一刀長短大小各適其用若農商亦無不佩一刀者。

²⁹² Cho Ŏm 趙曦, “Haesa ilgi” 海使日記, in *Kugyök haehaeng ch’ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 7 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe), 84.

²⁹³ *Chōsenjin tai shishū* 朝鮮人對詩集 (National Archive of Japan Rare Book 178-0607).

Furthermore, Hakuseki also insisted that the Japanese had unique fighting skills that could not be replicated:

And what good would it be if one carries [a sword] on the body but cannot use it? There is a particular skill for drawing a sword. As it is based on a mysterious skill, one cannot predict its movement—as soon as a hand touches the sword handle, it splashes blood and spouts mist like a flash of lightning and a fluttering wind. While it looks like the sword has not come out of the sheath, a man half a step away has already lost his head and sits down upright. Such things are a minor skill. Many people are capable of doing it.
身已佩之不堪運用亦何爲又有拔刀之術其法神機出入變動不測隻手纔及刀頭電掣風飛灑血吐霧鋒刀如未始出乎室者而跬步間有人既喪其元駢肩而坐焉是等小技人人能之。²⁹⁴

Toyotomi Hideyoshi Revisited

An even more effective method for countering the Koreans involved selectively accentuating the most recent instance of Japan’s military dominance over Korea during the first several months of Hideyoshi’s invasion of Korea in 1592. For example, consider Ogyū Sorai 荻生徂徠 (1666–1728)’s response to a display of Korean equestrian martial arts. In a poem entitled “Korean Barbarians Playing with Horses” 麗奴戲馬歌, Sorai starts with descriptions of the supposedly spectacular scene of Korean equestrian martial arts, which displayed “unspeakably severe and solemn heavenly might” 天威不言秋嚴肅 and his observation that “thousands and tens of thousands of people held their breaths and waited” 千人萬人屏息俟 for the show. After these descriptions, however, Sorai turned to how such fighting skills measured up against the Japanese military power as showcased by Hideyoshi. Sorai started by asking if they had “not seen King Toyotomi’s hundred thousand man army” 不見豐王十萬兵, which was “commanded to cross over the great sea like a tempest and lightning” 叱吒風雷度大瀛。

²⁹⁴ Arai Hakuseki 新井白石, “Zakan hitsugo” 坐間筆語, 723.

Recalling how Hideyoshi's army "captured the two capitals [of Korea] in ten days" 二都浹旬拔 and "conquered eight provinces [all of Korea] in three months" 八道三月平, Sorai rhetorically insinuated how laughable Korean fighting skills truly were.²⁹⁵ This presentation of Hideyoshi as a symbol of Japanese military prowess was part of the extensive revisionism of Hideyoshi that occurred in early modern Japan.

For Japan, Hideyoshi's invasions of Korea (1592–1598) were ultimately costly and futile adventures that consumed tens of thousands of Japanese lives without territorial gain. Despite the series of resounding early victories, the war soon turned into a quagmire. Anti-Hideyoshi sentiments emerged among the Japanese people as they grew tired of war. The Japanese interpreter Kakehashi Shichidayu 梯七太夫 (?–1598), who is referred to as "Yoshira" 要時羅/要矢羅 in Korean sources, told the Korean official Hwang Sin 黃慎 (1560–1617) during Hwang's participation in the 1596 peace negotiations that Hideyoshi's end might be near, as the Japanese people as a whole were severely unhappy with his rule. According to Hwang's record of the trip, Kakehashi reportedly said the following to him:

The tyranny of *kampaku* [Hideyoshi] has lost the hearts of the people, and he commits vices without repentance. The way things are will be untenable within three to five years. If Korea can come up with a stratagem to run out the time, it will be safe.
關白橫失人心爲惡不悛不出三五年勢必難保朝鮮若能以計羈縻撐過日子則終必無事矣。

Kakehashi Shichidayu added:

The *kampaku* is not someone born in the depths of the palace. He is not ignorant of the common people's hardships. He rose from the same humble circumstances; he knows the pain of walking and the agony of carrying [bags of] rice on the back. He knows that people get angry when beaten or scolded, and he knows that people become happy when complimented for their hard work. However, he treats his subordinates like this and does not feel pity for their sufferings. All the people of Japan have bone-deep resentments, and

²⁹⁵ Ogyū Sorai 荻生徂徠, *Sorai shū*; *Sorai shū shūi* 徂徠集; 徂徠集拾遺, 12-13.

there is no way this will end well. He knows this and often says, “I have made my own nephew my son and made him rich and prestigious, but in return he sought to harm me. I know that all of the country’s people want to kill me. Instead of meeting disaster while living, I would rather exercise power as I please and die.” What [Hideyoshi] means is that, once at ease, he thinks the Japanese people will come up with sinister schemes [to kill him]. He therefore wants to make them toil for year after year and has no reason to withdraw the army [from Korea]. He will eventually bring on his own downfall and only then [the war] will end.

又曰關白非生長深宮不知民間疾苦者渠亦曾自下賤崛起知徒步之苦知負薪負米之苦知人打罵之爲可慍知受人獎勞之可喜而今渠遇下如此不恤勞苦日本大小之人皆怨入骨髓決無善終之理渠亦自知之常曰我以親姪爲子富之貴之而反欲害我我固知舉國大小之人皆欲殺我我與其生而受禍寧肆志逞威而死也其意蓋以日本之人稍安迭則必生兇謀故欲使連歲勞苦必無戢兵之理將自取顛覆而後已也。²⁹⁶

Chǒng Hūidūk 鄭希得 (1573–1623), who lived in Japan as a captive from 1597 to 1599, wrote of his experience there. At the time of Hideyoshi’s death in 1598, he wrote about the national perception of Hideyoshi: “When Hideyoshi was alive, there were many who resented his viciousness. That is why many Japanese have misgivings to this day”

秀吉生在之日怨其毒者多故到于今倭徒皆疑懼。²⁹⁷ According to Kang Hang 姜沆 (1567–

1618), who was a captive in Japan from 1597 to 1600, the Japanese scholar Fujiwara Seika 藤原惺窩 (1561–1619) reportedly told Kang that “there was never a time [in history] when the sufferings of the Japanese people were as extreme as at this moment”

日本生民之憔悴未有甚於此時. Fujiwara also added that the Korean and Chinese armies could even “conquer” 伐 Japan as long as they “show willingness to save the people from [the torment of] water and fire and do not harm the people in the army’s path in the least”

以示救民水火之意師行所過秋毫不犯. Seika was not being merely unpatriotic. In his view, the

²⁹⁶ Hwang Sin 黃愼, “Ilbon wanhwan ilgi” 日本往還日記, in *Kugyōk haehaeng ch’ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 8 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe), 52.

²⁹⁷ Chǒng Hūidūk 鄭希得, “Haesangnok” 海上錄, in *Kugyōk haehaeng ch’ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 8 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe), 88.

Japanese people's suffering under Hideyoshi's rule were that extreme, and, out of the concern he had for the people's sufferings, Seika was even willing to invite foreign powers to oust Hideyoshi.²⁹⁸

However, revisionism vis-à-vis Hideyoshi started to occur within a generation. Oze Hoan 小瀬甫庵 (1564–1640)'s *Taikōki* 太閤記 (1626), a biography of Hideyoshi, depicted the Korean invasions as successes and glorious achievements.²⁹⁹ Oze Hoan recognized that the invasions of Korea “distressed all classes” 上下をくるしめ in Japan and were extravagantly expensive.³⁰⁰ Nevertheless, he saw Hideyoshi as a national hero who “conquered Japan and even brought Korea into submission” 日本はをきぬ、高麗までしたがへ給ひて.³⁰¹ Indeed, widespread revisionism started to take hold in Japan, with people considering the Korean invasions a successful venture by focusing almost exclusively on the first months of the war while viewing Hideyoshi as a national hero who had brought glory to the country by “succeeding” in his foreign adventure. Even before the publication of *Taikōki*, Kang Hongjung 姜弘重 (1577–1642), during his official visit to Japan in 1624–1625, read works written by the Japanese scholar Nanpo Bunshi 南浦文之 (1555–1620), who openly praised Hideyoshi for his supposed success in overseas adventures.³⁰²

²⁹⁸ Kang Hang 姜沆, “Kyangnok” 看羊錄, in *Kugyōk haehaeng ch'ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 2 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch'ujinhoe), 28.

²⁹⁹ Kim Sidōk 金時德, “Taikōki ūi imjin waeran kisa e taehan koch'al” 太閤記の 壬辰倭亂 記事に 對 於 考 察, *Ilbon hakbo* 日本學報 56 (September 2003): 159-174.

³⁰⁰ Oze Hoan 小瀬甫庵, *Taikōki* 太閤記, eds. Hinotani Teruhiko 檜谷昭彦 and Emoto Hiroshi 江本裕 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1996), 164.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 475.

³⁰² Kang Hongjung 姜弘重, “Tongsarok” 東槎錄, in *Kugyōk haehaeng ch'ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 3 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch'ujinhoe), 38.

According to what Nam Yongik 南龍翼 (1628–1692) learned from his time in Japan from 1655 to 1656, some Japanese people publicly revered Hideyoshi, referring to him as “the Great Luminous Deity of Our Bountiful Country” 豐國大明神.³⁰³ The Japanese scholar Hayashi Gahō 林鷺峰 (1618–1688) also praised the victories of Hideyoshi and his generals over their Korean and Chinese foes:

[His armies] annihilated Korea and shook up China. From the year 1592 to the year 1598, our generals marched through the Eight Provinces [all of Korea] and battled the Ming dynasty, achieving offensive victories. The number of [enemy] soldiers killed or captured was not few.

鏖殺三韓震動中華自文祿壬辰至慶長戊戌我諸將行軍於八道會戰於大明立攻勝之功勵斬獲之勇者不爲不多。³⁰⁴

This is not to say that criticisms of Hideyoshi and his invasions entirely disappeared in Japan. For example, the Japanese scholar Kaibara Ekken 貝原益軒 (1630–1714) wrote the following in the introduction to the Japanese edition of the Korean official Yu Sōngnyong 柳成龍 (1542–1607)’s historical work on the war, the “Book of Corrections” 懲毖錄, which was published in Kyoto in 1695:

Hideyoshi’s invasion of Korea can be considered as a war of greed, arrogance, and anger. It cannot be considered a just war.

曩昔豐臣氏之伐朝鮮也可謂貪兵兼驕與忿不可爲義兵。

He was a belligerent person, and heaven hated him for it. This is why he was eventually destroyed.

所謂好戰者也是天道之所惡其終亡者固其所也。³⁰⁵

³⁰³ Nam Yongik 南龍翼, “Mun’gyōn pyōllok” 問見別錄, in *Kugyōk haehaeng ch’ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 6 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe), 6. Deification of Hideyoshi under such title had started after his death in 1598 in order to strengthen the legitimacy of his dynasty within the context of Japanese religious tradition. See Satō Hiroo 佐藤弘夫, *Hitogami shinkō no keifu* ヒトガミ信仰の系譜 (Tokyo: Iwata Shoin, 2012), 150-153.

³⁰⁴ Hayashi Gahō 林鷺峰, *Gahō Rin gakushi bunshū* 鷺峰林学士文集, ed. Hino Tatsuo 日野龍夫, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Perikansha, 1997), 305.

³⁰⁵ Yu Sōngnyong 柳成龍, *Chōhiroku* 懲毖錄 (Harvard-Yenching Rare Book TJ 3487.5 4250.3).

In the same vein, the Japanese official Amenomori Hōshū 雨森芳洲 (1668–1755) described Hideyoshi as “vicious” 強暴.³⁰⁶ He also criticized Hideyoshi’s invasion of Korea as “an unjustifiable war” 無名之師 that “killed a countless number of people in both countries” 兩國無數之人民を殺害せられたる事.³⁰⁷

This negative perspective continued into the eighteenth century. The Korean official Im Sugaŋ 任守幹 (1665–1721) noted during his trip to Japan (1711–1712) that the Japanese people were still aware that Hideyoshi’s invasions of Korea “not only severely devastated Korea but also exhausted their country, [leaving it] barely standing” 東土雖甚創殘其國亦虛耗僅存. He further noted that because of this, the Japanese people “criticize Hideyoshi [by calling him] ‘traitor Toyotomi’ to this day” 至今罵秀吉爲豐賊.³⁰⁸ The Japanese scholar Bitō Jishū 尾藤二洲 (1745–1814) even compared Hideyoshi to the infamous Emperor Yang of Sui 隋煬帝 (r. 604–618). According to Bitō Jishū, in his recounting of how the said emperor was eventually killed by a countrywide rebellion sparked off by the failed invasions of the Koguryō 高句麗 during the early seventh century, Hideyoshi would have met the same fate had he lived for a few more years:

Arrogant Toyotomi [Hideyoshi] started an unjustifiable war by attacking Korea. He did not care for the [Japanese] people’s sufferings, and he was indeed gravely malevolent. Had he lived a few more years, [he also could have ended up like] the Sui [emperor] in the Incident of Jiangdu [that resulted in Emperor Yang’s death]. It is immeasurably fortunate that his early death prevented [direct physical harms] to his body.
豊國驕氣起無名之師以擊朝鮮弗顧人民愁苦其不仁亦甚若使其壽延數年則隋氏江都之變亦不可量幸早其死以免其身耳。

³⁰⁶ Amenomori Hōshū 雨森芳洲, *Hōshū bunshū* 芳洲文集 (Suita: Kansai Daigaku Suppan Kōhōbu, 1980), 13.

³⁰⁷ Amenomori Hōshū 雨森芳洲, *Kōrin teisei* 交隣提醒, 93.

³⁰⁸ Im Sugaŋ 任守幹, “Tongsa ilgi” 東槎日記, in *Kugyōk haehaeng ch’ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 9 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe), 95.

Emperor Yang attacked Koguryō by conscripting some 1,130,000 soldiers from all directions. Those sent to carry the supplies doubled [the number of soldiers]. The world was in uproar and the common people became exhausted. Because of this, the people started to gather together and became thieves. Dou Jiande and others started armed rebellions [against Sui China], eventually resulting in the Incident of Jiangdu. The case of Toyotomi [Hideyoshi] was quite similar. It is fortunate that his [early] death prevented [direct physical harms] to his body.

煬帝擊高麗徵四方兵百十三萬餽遺者倍之天下騷動百姓窮困始聚爲盜已而竇建德等兵起終致江都之變豐國事頗似之其亡不及身者幸也。³⁰⁹

Despite the lingering sense of criticism, however, the view of Hideyoshi's invasion of Korea as a symbol of Japanese military prowess seemed to be grow over time in early modern Japan. For example, the Japanese scholar Itō Tōgai 伊藤東涯 (1670–1736) responded to the abovementioned *Chingbirok* 懲毖錄 (“Book of Corrections”) by the Korean official Yu Sōngnyong in a different way vis-à-vis Kaibara Ekken. Yu Sōngnyong, of course, wrote the book as a form of self-criticism and as a way of locating the root causes of Korea's military failures in the war. This is why Kaibara Ekken also attributed the “forgetting of war” 忘戰 on the Korean's part in addition to Hideyoshi's bellicosity in assessing the book and the war. While Itō Tōgai appears to do the same, noting that “both sides have committed mistakes in this war” 此役也彼我共失之矣, the actual content of his response lies in pointing out Korea's weakness rather than anything to do with Hideyoshi's belligerence. While Tōgai does insinuate that the invasion ultimately contributed to the destruction of the Toyotomi house, noting that “the [Toyotomi] dynasty was overthrown even before the soil of [Hideyoshi's] tomb dried” 墳土未乾宗社顛覆, he describes the Japanese invasion in dazzling terms and focuses on the overwhelming power of Japan vis-à-vis the overall weakness of Korea:

They [the Koreans] have excessively indulged in peace and became accustomed to safety in administration. They only esteemed civil affairs and abandoned military preparations.

³⁰⁹ Bitō Jishū 尾藤二洲, *Seikiken shū* 静寄軒集, ed. Rai Tsutomu 頼惟勤 (Tokyo: Perikansha, 1991), 248.

Our country [Japan], on the other hand, had powerful soldiers after some three hundred years of [civil] war. Valiant officials and strategists gathered like clouds and trees in forests, accumulating power to the seat of Lord Toyotomi through repeated victories. [Japan] was merely subjugating a weak country. Routed and exhausted, they [the Koreans] scattered at the mere sight [of the Japanese forces]. Despite the westward [invasion] of our military, could things have ended up as such if they had made [adequate] preparations? 彼承昇平之餘狃治安之規專尚文事武備委地我國屬三百餘年戰爭之後兵強卒武猛臣謀將雲集林會豐公席累捷之積威伐單虛之弱國奔潰蕩盡望風靡散然而吾師之西也使彼有豫備豈至於如此哉。³¹⁰

While Kaibara Ekken's response emphasized Hideyoshi's belligerence and vanity, Itō Tōgai's response to the same historical narrative accentuated Korean weakness and unpreparedness against the overwhelming strength of the Japanese forces.

Such historical reframing of Hideyoshi and his invasion of Korea was particularly useful for early modern Japanese intellectuals in refuting the Korean missions' pretensions regarding Korea's military power through public demonstrations of Korean fighting skills in Japan. For example, the Japanese scholar Ogyū Sorai 荻生徂徠 (1666–1728), in referencing the wars that the kingdom of Koguryō had waged against Sui China when speaking about Hideyoshi's "victory" over Korea, wrote in a letter to Irie Jakusui 入江若水 (1671–1729) that "Korea was praised in the *Book of Sui* for its ferocity and bravery, but it was unable to defeat 'the monkey-faced king' [Toyotomi Hideyoshi]" 夫三韓獷悍見稱于隋史而不能與君猿面王爭勝也。³¹¹

When meeting with Korean officials at Edo in 1711, the Japanese scholar Andō Tōya 安藤東野 (1683–1719), a student of Sorai, again referenced Hideyoshi in a letter addressed to the Korean official Yi Hyōn 李磻 (1654–?). This letter suggested through a clever pun that Korean missions to Japan could be read as acts of submission to the Japanese military power

³¹⁰ Itō Tōgai 伊藤東涯, *Shōjutsu Sensei bunshū* 紹述先生文集, ed. Miyake Masahiko 三宅正彦 (Tokyo: Perikansha, 1988), 77.

³¹¹ Ogyū Sorai 荻生徂徠, *Sorai shū; Sorai shū shū* 徂徠集; 徂徠集拾遺, 275.

symbolized by Hideyoshi. He started the letter with references to ancient China, claiming that, despite being separated by the sea, Korea and Japan are as intimately connected as the neighboring ancient Chinese states of Lu 魯 (1042–249 BCE) and Wei 衛 (1040–209 BCE). He went on to explain the nature of the interaction between Korea and Japan, stating that Confucianism and Buddhism came to Japan via the ancient Korean kingdom of Silla 新羅 (?–935 CE), and that rites and music came to Japan from the subsequent Koryō 高麗 dynasty (918–1392 CE) of Korea.³¹²

Next, he mentioned the acts of “hauling over that jade and unfolding that silk” 齎彼玉陳彼帛, likely referring to the gifts the representatives of the next Korean dynasty, Chosŏn, brought over to Japan for the rites involved in meeting the Tokugawa shogun. He then asked, “Do not such acts amount to having a ‘King of Bounty’ 豐王 shouldering the banner of the king and bearing the flag of the feudal lord? This would be a rare sight even in the ancient times” 豈勑豐王荷其纛儋其旂婁見上世. This suggests that such gifts were a sign of respect that ritually legitimized the recipient. This line can be read in two ways. Given the earlier references to ancient China, it could refer to King Feng 豐王 of the ancient Xirong 西戎 barbarians, whom Duke Xiang of Qin 秦襄公 (r. 777–766 BCE) bribed by having him marry his sister Mouying 繆嬴. On the other hand, given the references to the Korean kingdoms, in which the Korean kingdoms gave Japan Confucianism and Buddhism (Silla), rites and music (Koryō), and jade and silk (Chosŏn), “King of Bounty” 豐王 may refer to Toyotomi Hideyoshi, whose display of Japanese military power in Korea caused the Koreans of the Chosŏn dynasty to pay tribute to Japan. Commenting on Andō Tōya’s quote in the *Monsa nishu* 問槎二種, Ogyū Sorai

³¹² *Monsa nishu* 問槎二種 (National Diet Library Rare Book 詩文-3580).

荻生徂徠 (1666–1728) noted, “Having read this, the Koreans will have fear in their hearts”

韓人一見又將心悸.³¹³

The Korean official Cho Myōngch’ae 曹命采 (1700–1764) also noted that the Japanese people often referred to Toyotomi Hideyoshi as “the Great Luminous Deity of Our Bountiful Country” 豊國大明神 during his trip to Japan in 1748. According to Cho, one Japanese person even stated that the Koreans should be thankful to Hideyoshi for having united Japan, as the political unification under Hideyoshi stamped out the pirates of western Japan who had frequently raided Korea. Cho noted the following:

While Toyotomi’s invasion of 1592 created enmity with Korea, [Hideyoshi] also did a great favor [for Korea]. If Toyotomi had not united the different islands [of Japan], how could Korea withstand the aggressions of the coastal Japanese?
豊臣壬辰之舉雖構怨朝鮮亦有莫大之惠若非豊臣之統合諸島朝鮮何以堪沿海倭人侵掠之患云.³¹⁴

Hideyoshi was even evoked in literary contests as a metaphor for Japanese victory over Korea. During the 1763–1764 Korean mission’s visit to Japan, for example, the Japanese scholar Hayashi Tōmei 林東溟 (1708–1780) recalled Hideyoshi in describing how the fellow Japanese scholar Kitayama Kitsuan 北山橋菴 (1731–1791) supposedly “defeated” the Koreans at a literary contest held in Osaka:

My friend Kitayama Kitsuan of Kawachi [the eastern part of today’s Osaka] is that person who sings lofty songs. He truly possesses the bravery of “the monkey-faced king” [Hideyoshi] in literary battles. There was no need to verbally rebuke the Koreans in fighting against them with poetry and composition at Osaka. By merely reciting a number of poems with smiles, the Koreans realized again that they could not stand against “the monkey-faced king” [Hideyoshi].

³¹³ Ibid.

³¹⁴ Cho Myōngch’ae 曹命采, “Pongsa ilbonsi mun’gyōnnok” 奉使日本時間見錄, in *Kugyōk haehaeng ch’ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 10 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe), 56.

余友河内北元章者郢曲高調盖其人也其於筆陣實有猿面王之勇也亦以詩賦鬪於浪華鷄林壇奚必啗噉咤第以譚笑屢能先鳴焉韓人知其不可復敵乎猿面王也。³¹⁵

Indeed, the widespread revisionism regarding Hideyoshi had started to take hold in Japan. One example of this is the Japanese scholar Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長 (1730–1801), who strongly praised and revered Hideyoshi for his military exploits in Korea, reinterpreting a costly and ultimately failed foreign expedition as a successful display of Japanese military power that brought glory to the country. In his *Gyōjū gaigen* 馭戎慨言 (“Outline of the Suppression of Barbarians”), which narrated the diplomatic history of Japan from its beginning to the beginning of the Tokugawa shogunate, Norinaga dedicated about one-fifth of the entire text to discussing Hideyoshi and his war in Korea. Norinaga also exclusively referred to Hideyoshi with the titles of the highest respect, calling him “the Deity of Our Bountiful Country” 豊國神 and “the Retired Imperial Regent” 太閤.

Norinaga’s discussion of Hideyoshi’s invasions of Korea begins with the following lines:

The subjugation of Korea by “the Deity of Our Bountiful Country” started during the reign of Emperor Go-Yōzei in 1592. At that time, [Hideyoshi] had conceded the duty of *kampaku* to Lord [Toyotomi] Hidetsugu and was called “the Retired Imperial Regent.” Going personally to the Nagoya military base located at Hizen’s Matsūra, [Hideyoshi] appointed the Bizen lord Ukita Hideie 宇喜多秀家 as the chief commander and Katō Kiyomasa 加藤清正 and Konishi Yukinaga 小西行長 as vanguards. Along with many other feudal lords, a grand Japanese army crossed over the sea and marched forward, easily driving away the king [of Korea] and taking over all of their country without exception.

そもそもこの豊國神の。てうせんの國をうち給ひしは。後陽成天皇の御世にして。文祿元年より事始まりき。その程ははやく關白のつかさをば。秀次君にゆづり聞え給ひて。太閤となん申ける。御みづからは肥前國松浦郡なる。那護屋の御營にましまして。備前宰相秀家卿を。すべてのいくさの君とし。加藤主計頭清正小西攝津守行長をさきてとして。その外あまたの大名たち。おびたたしき御軍おしわ

³¹⁵ *Keidan ōmei hitsuwa* 鷄壇嚶鳴・筆話 (Osaka Prefectural Nakanoshima Library Rare Book 甲和/420#).

たりて。たやすくかの國王をばおひおとして。その國をのこりすくなくうちとり。³¹⁶

By focusing exclusively on the initial string of victories, Norinaga's narrative of the war largely ignores the fact that the Japanese forces soon lost almost all of their initial territorial gains and entered into a quagmire of attrition for the next several years. This perspective on the war is even more evident in the way Norinaga describes the eventual withdrawal of Japanese forces from Korea:

Despite several years of fighting, not a single person at the level of feudal lord had died. Even during retreat, given the good command, all people came back without any serious mishaps. Demonstrating the brave and remarkable might of great imperial Japan, [such achievements] have been and still are being recorded as magnificent events in Korea and China for posterity. This certainly is the accomplishment of “the Deity of Our Bountiful Country.”

そもそもわが御軍は。としごろあまたたびの戦にも。大名とあるきはの人とては。一人もうたれず。今はたしりぞくきはにも。事よくおきてしかば。殊なるあやまちもなく。みな人つつがなくてかへり來ぬる者をや。かくのみたけくすぐれたる皇大御國のひかりをかがやかしおき給ひて。こまもろこしの後の代まで。いみしかりける事に。かたりつたへかきつたへたるは。さはいへど。此豊國神の御いさをになん有ける。³¹⁷

Without question, early modern Japanese discourse on Hideyoshi decisively changed over time. From someone who brought much pain and misery to Japan by engaging in a costly and ultimately fruitless war, Hideyoshi eventually became widely revered as someone who brought much glory to the country by “successfully” demonstrating Japanese military might abroad through his invasion of Korea. This shift became even more apparent by the nineteenth century. In fact, the text *Ehon Taikōki* 繪本太閤記 (1797–1802) does not even recognize Korea

³¹⁶ Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長, “Gyojū gaigen” 馭戎慨言, 97.

³¹⁷ Ibid., 117.

as an actual combatant in Hideyoshi's war.³¹⁸ Korea was effectively turned into a theatrical stage on which Japanese military might was showcased to the startled Chinese and Korean audiences until the curtains fell with the exit of Japan's hero, Hideyoshi.

The narrative in *Ehon Taikōki* 繪本太閤記, perhaps even more so than that in the abovementioned “Outline of the Suppression of Barbarians” 馭戎慨言, portrays Hideyoshi as a unique historical hero who exalted the country in both domestic and foreign arenas. The *Ehon Taikōki* 繪本太閤記 starts with the following lines:

[Quoting Chinese philosopher Xun Kuang 荀況 (313–238 BCE; better known as Xunzi 荀子)] “When soil gathers into a mountain, wind and rain will arise from it. When water gathers into a stream, a flood dragon will be born.” Without stopping in the slightest in [strength] gathering, [the dragon] became powerful. During the Tenbun era [1532–1555] of Emperor Go-Nara's reign [r. 1526–1557] in Japan, heaven sent down a hero. This person quelled generations of great disturbance [in Japan], saved the people from misery, and unified the realm through domination. He subjugated faraway Korea, making that country's people fear him like thunder and revere him like a god. He is a son of the peasant Chikuami of Nakamura village in the Owari province's Aichi district. His childhood name was “Hiyoshi-maru” 日吉丸. After growing up, he was called Kinoshita Tōkichirō 木下藤吉郎, and his later title was Lord Hashiba of Chikuzen 羽柴筑前守. After unifying the realm, following the position of imperial regent, he was titled the “Retired Imperial Regent of the First Rank” and “Great Luminous Deity of Our Bountiful Country.”

積土成山風雨興焉、積水成川蛟龍生焉。微少も積て止ざれば必強大に至る。本朝後奈良院の朝廷、天文の時に當て、天一人の英雄を降し、此人歴世の大亂を鎮め、萬民の塗炭を救ひ、四海一統掌に握り、夫が餘り遠く朝鮮を征し、彼邦人をして雷霆のごとく恐れしめ、鬼神のごとく敬しむ。是尾州愛知郡中村の土民筑阿彌が子にして、童名を日吉丸を呼び、生長て木下藤吉郎と名乗り、後の稱は羽柴筑前守、天下一統の後、終に關白職を経て、豊臣太閤贈正一位豊國大明神と號し奉り。³¹⁹

³¹⁸ Kim Sidök 金時德, “Ehon Taikōki ūi imjin waeran kisa yōn'gu: Imjin waeran kisa ūi kujo punsōk ūl chungsim ūro” 繪本太閤記の 壬辰倭亂 記事 研究: 壬辰倭亂 記事の 構造 分析を 中心으로, *Ilbon hakbo* 日本學報 61 (November 2004): 411-423.

³¹⁹ Takenouchi, Kakusai 武内確齋 and Okada Gyokuzan 岡田玉山, *Ehon Taikōki* 繪本太閤記, ed. Tsukamoto Tetsuzō 塚本哲三, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Yūhōdō, 1926), 17.

This dragon-like heaven-sent hero demonstrated Japanese power overseas by invading Korea. Instead of depicting Korea as an object of conquest, however, the *Ehon Taikōki* 繪本太閤記 depicts it as an object of pity even before the invasion commenced. According to the narrative, Hideyoshi supposedly sent a relief shipment of rice to Korea as the Japanese forces prepared to land there:

As Korea is a poor country, they will be in sore need with the shortage of supplies and food once the Japanese army abruptly arrives. Because of this, send three million *koku* of rice to make that country abundant.

元來朝鮮は貧國なれば、日本の軍勢卒に至らば、物乏しく食足ずして困窮すべし。此故に三百万石の米を與へ、彼國を潤し置き。³²⁰

Was Hideyoshi's expedition to Korea an invasion or a humanitarian relief mission? The radicalism of this representation is further highlighted when one looks at historical records that describe the widespread food shortages that plagued Japanese armies in Korea for almost the entire duration of the war. The Portuguese Jesuit missionary Luís Fróis (1532–1597) wrote of this issue in his work on Japanese history that covers the war. According to Fróis, the food shortage quickly became a problem as Japanese forces started to advance further into Korean territory:

At that time, the Japanese army started to point to the shortage of necessary foodstuffs for such a large force, because some 140,000 troops had been dispatched to Korea. During the same year, Korean farmers did not sow seeds because of the fear of war, and wheat rotted [in the fields] because it was not harvested in time. Furthermore, Koreans burned lots of food [to deprive the Japanese].

この頃、日本軍においては、その大軍団に必要な食糧の不足が叫ばれ始めた。なぜならすでに十四万前後の兵員が朝鮮に赴いており、同年、朝鮮の農民たちは戦乱の恐怖から穀物の種子を蒔かなかつたし、小麦は収穫期に刈り取られなかつたので腐敗していった。また朝鮮人は多くの食糧を焼き払った。³²¹

³²⁰ Takenouchi, Kakusai 武内確齋 and Okada Gyokuzan 岡田玉山, *Ehon Taikōki* 繪本太閤記, ed. Tsukamoto Tetsuzō 塚本哲三, vol. 3 (Tokyo: Yūhōdō, 1927), 114.

³²¹ Luís Fróis, *Kan'yaku Furoisu Nihon shi* 完訳フロイス日本史, trans. Matsuda Kiichi 松田毅一 and Kawasaki Momota 川崎桃太, vol. 5 (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 2000), 221.

Despite the looming logistical disaster of supply shortages, a problem that was exacerbated by the string of initial victories that had thinly stretched the Japanese army, Hideyoshi was only focused on the immenseness of the initial string of victories. Fróis wrote, “After hearing the report from Agostinho [Konishi Yukinaga] of the numerous captured forts and the entrance into Seoul, the *kampaku* was so satisfied and ecstatic that he looked like a madman” アゴスチイノから、数多の城塞を占拠し、都に入ったとの報道に接して以後、関白は異常な満足と過度の歓喜のために呆然自失した者のようになり。³²²

Hideyoshi then started preparing for his own visit to Korea to proclaim his victory. However, he eventually accepted the pleas of his officials to delay his visit to at least the following year. Even after agreeing, however, instead of dealing with the burgeoning problems at the battlefield, Hideyoshi refused to recognize them altogether. Fróis wrote:

He deployed sentinels at major ports, giving a particular order to vigilantly prevent those sent abroad from attempting to come back to Japan. At that time, we can easily surmise the anger, dissatisfaction, and great anxiousness of all military men stationed in Korea. Surrounded by enemies in an unfamiliar foreign land, they were put into countless difficulties and hardships. In particular, the majority succumbed to diseases due to food shortages, and a great number of people were heartbroken and anguished from watching [their peers] completely abandoned and dying.

彼は主要な港に衛兵を配置して、あちらに渡っている者が日本に帰ることがないように監視させ、その警戒には特に注意を払うようにと命じた。ここにおいて、朝鮮の地にいるすべての武将たちの怒りや不満、大いなる焦躁ぶりを容易に推察し得るのである。彼らは、不馴れな異国にあって、しかも敵の真只中に置かれ、無数の困難と貧苦に囲まれ、とりわけ食糧に窮し、大多数が病に倒れ、夥しい人々がまったく放置されたまま息絶えてゆく様に接して心を痛め、苦悩していたのである。³²³

In sum, the radical revisionism of Hideyoshi’s rule even turned the historical fact of widespread wartime food shortages and starvation, a problem at least partly caused by Hideyoshi

³²² Ibid., 223.

³²³ Ibid., 230-231.

himself, into a story of great abundance involving three million *koku* of extra rice rations. This reinterpretation of Hideyoshi and his invasions of Korea, no doubt, reflected the gradual passage of time and first-hand memory as well as the establishment of a Japan-centered world order under the Tokugawa shogunate, in which Japan claimed historical and concurrent dominance over some of its immediate neighbors, including Korea. Furthermore, when faced with Korea's proto-nationalist assertion of its military power through public demonstrations, invoking Hideyoshi proved to be useful for shutting down such pretensions.

Aware of the growing popularity of the *Ehon Taikōki* 繪本太閤記, the Tokugawa authorities soon banned the work from being printed or played in theaters. This, however, did not stop the growing revisionism on Hideyoshi, and some even started to perceive Hideyoshi as a political symbol to selectively interpret and rally around. According to the “Call to Action” 激文 declaration of the Tengu Insurrection (1864–1865) against the Tokugawa shogunate, for example, the rebels brought up the example of Hideyoshi. Along with Hōjō Tokimune 北條時宗 (r. 1268–1284)'s defiant resistance to the invading Mongols, “acts such as the retired imperial regent Toyotomi's conquest of Korea” 豊太閤之朝鮮を征する類 were pointed to as examples in history that upheld “the radiant teachings of imperial ancestors that brandished the indigenous and righteous courage of Japan” 神州固有之義勇を振ひ天祖以來之明訓.³²⁴ Such demonstration of Japanese power abroad, of course, was considered a critical counterexample to the Tokugawa shogunate's submission to the European and American military threats during the 1850s and 1860s.

³²⁴ The quoted text is included in the appendix of historian J. Victor Koschmann's book, *The Mito Ideology: Discourse, Reform, and Insurrection in Late Tokugawa Japan, 1790-1864* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987). My interpretation, however, is a bit different from Koschmann's translation. For the original source, see *Mito-han shiryō* 水戸藩史料, vol. 3, (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1915), 576.

Furthermore, the shift in discourse surrounding Hideyoshi and the perceived “quick success” of Hideyoshi’s war in Korea made it easy to speak of yet another invasion in the mid-nineteenth century. Tsushima official Ōshima Tomonojō 大島友之允 (1826–1882) argued in a written opinion submitted to the Tokugawa shogunate in 1864 that Japan ought to use military threats to make Korea more pliable to Japanese interests in the context of European and American intrusions. While Ōshima Tomonojō’s proposal prioritized nonviolent suasion, he also understood that Korea would be unsusceptible owing to their suspicion dating back to Hideyoshi’s invasions. Therefore, force would be necessary:

[Korean suspicion towards Japan] first has to do with the deep resentment and pent-up anger from the invasion of 1592, which did not disappear overnight. The harmful consequences [of the war] affected later generations. Even after the rapprochement and the expression of sincerity in the two countries’ relationship, the truth was that [the Korean side] harbored old grudge and apprehension [toward the Japanese]. It really was not a relationship based on rapport.

第一壬辰之亂彼國深怨積怒一朝一夕之故に無御座、其弊害後世に及、御通交御再修之後、兩國誠信を表にして相交候と雖、其實常に舊怨を含、疑懼を懷、實意親睦之交際に無之。

The best plan is to prioritize grace and favors to gradually win over their hearts with good will. However, if they, mired in their backward practices, do not abide by [our] virtuous influence, we must make a resolute decision to apply fierce punishment.

兎角御恩徳を被先、和親を以深民心を結、漸々服従爲仕候儀萬全之御良策と奉存候。萬一渠自國之陋習に泥み、御徳化に服不申候はば、其節赫然膺懲之御勇斷に被爲出度。³²⁵

As for the “fierce punishment” 赫然膺懲 for Korea’s disobedience to Japan, Ōshima recommended the following:

I ask that [the shogunate] dispatch warships to Korea, engaging in naval training in its coastal waters. Or start a great military drill session to showcase tireless training in land marching and swordmanship and display the bravery and martialism of the imperial realm by echoing the sounds of roaring guns and swords to faraway places. I ask that [the

³²⁵ Ōshima Tomonojō 大島友之允, “Chōsen tonō kankei ni tsuki ikensho” 朝鮮との関係につき意見書, in *Kaikoku* 開国, ed. Tanaka Akira 田中彰 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1991), 109.

shogunate] suddenly overrun their entire country at a single order to make their blood curdle in terror.

御軍艦彼地え往來可仕に付、其節々には邊海に於て海軍之操煉被命、或は大に演武場を開、三兵陸戰之驅引、擊劍刺戟之習學日夜不相怠、咆聲槍劍之響遠近に相轟き、皇國義勇尙武之氣象、韓人親敷致見分、一言之下闔國忽蹂躪之禍を蒙可申哉と大に恐懼を抱き、常に其膽を寒からしめ候様。³²⁶

While the shogunate refused to accept Ōshima's suggestion, the debate over invading Korea reemerged a few years later. The prominent nineteenth century Japanese political leader Kido Takayoshi 木戸孝允 (1833–1877), for example, spoke of invading Korea soon after the establishment of the new regime in 1869 without any concern for the negative consequences such a move might bring:

For one thing, we should determine without delay the course our nation is to take, then dispatch an envoy to Korea to question officials of that land about their discourtesy to us. If they do not acknowledge their fault, let us proclaim it publicly and launch an attack on their territory to extend the influence of our Divine Land across the seas to cover their territory. If this be done, the reactionary traditions of our nation will be altered overnight. By fixing our goals on an overseas land, we shall make advances in developing all sorts of practical skills and technology; and we shall wash away our undesirable practices of spying on one another, criticizing and reproaching each other, rather than reflecting each on his own self. The great advantages of this policy to the country are incalculable.³²⁷

As can be seen, Kido Takayoshi did not take into account the possibility that the war would not go as planned, either because of Korean resistance through conventional or unconventional warfare or because of military intervention from Beijing. By this time, the historical precedent regarding what had happened when Japan unilaterally attacked Korea in the late sixteenth century had been completely reconfigured. Instead of seven years of attritional warfare in which Japan ultimately gained nothing after enormous sacrifice of lives and resources, thereby partially contributing to the regime change in which the Tokugawa overthrew the

³²⁶ Ibid., 114.

³²⁷ Kido Takayoshi 木戸孝允, *The Diary of Kido Takayoshi: Volume I: 1868–1871*, trans. Sidney Devere Brown and Akiko Hirota (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1983), 167–168.

Toyotomi house, the historical memory of this war had been so drastically altered in Japan that Japanese policymakers naturally expected a quick and easy victory over Korea.

The Japanese debate regarding the idea of invading Korea reached an epochal point in 1873, when the new Meiji government stopped just short of dispatching Saigō Takamori 西郷隆盛 (1828–1877) to Korea as the *ultima ratio* in starting a war. Correspondence between Saigō and his colleague Ijichi Masaharu 伊地知正治 (1828–1886) immediately after the retraction of the invasion reveals how some members of the Meiji leadership evaluated Korea. The physical size and population of Korea, for example, were noted as being less than a third of their actual size and number: “[Korea is] roughly [the size] of our Mutsu and Dewa provinces put together” 大凡我が奥羽二國を合せし位 and “its population is around five million” 人口五百萬位. Such estimates suggest that Korea was only around one-sixth of the size of Japan at the time, with a population around one-seventh of that of Japan. More importantly, the correspondence notes how Hideyoshi’s armies only took “the total of twenty days” 都合二十日 in “capturing the [Korean] capital city” 京城を取る.³²⁸ The focus on the first twenty days of war, of course, ignores the last seven years of attritional warfare that ultimately ended with Japanese withdrawal without any territorial gain.

Within months of its overthrow of the Tokugawa shogunate, the new Meiji regime decided to restore Hideyoshi’s shrine at Kyoto—the same shrine Tokugawa Ieyasu had closed in 1615. The reopening of the Toyokuni Shrine 豊國神社 on April 28, 1868 and the official promotion of Hideyoshi as a national hero paved the way for his subsequent appropriations in

³²⁸ Saigō Takamori 西郷隆盛, Saigō Takamori zenshū 西郷隆盛全集, ed. Saigō Takamori Zenshū Henshū Inkaishi 西郷隆盛全集編集委員会, vol. 5 (Tokyo: Daiwa Shobō, 1979), 516-518.

modern Japan.³²⁹ Once a hated tyrant during the final years of his rule, the popular Japanese perception of Hideyoshi radically shifted throughout the early modern period, ultimately leading to his resurgence as a symbol of Japanese military power and a precedent in a swift military “victory” over Korea. Such transformation, I argue, is rooted in the nature of the proto-nationalist discourse and its emphasis on competition. In this sense, the early modern history provided an ample historical context within which to stimulate the rise of modern Japanese interventionism in Korea.

³²⁹ As Susan Furukawa has shown, the emergence of Hideyoshi as a national hero in modern Japan included his representation as a shrewd human resource manager for the country’s corporate salarymen in postwar Japan as well as the military commander who led the country toward expansion into continental East Asia during the Pacific War, the latter of which was done primarily through the serialization of Hideyoshi’s story at *Tokyo Asahi Shimbun* 東京朝日新聞 from 1939 to 1945 by the Japanese novelist Eiji Yoshikawa 吉川英治 (1892–1962). See Susan Westhafer Furukawa, “The Afterlife of Toyotomi Hideyoshi: *Taikōki* and the Reinterpretation of Japan’s Past,” (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 2013).

Chapter 4: Your Myth, My History: The Silla Invasion of Japan

Contentions over interpretations of ancient history were one of the most significant aspects of early modern Japanese-Korean interactions and involved the mytho-historical narratives found in the oldest extant historical texts of Korea and Japan. As I will demonstrate, the writers of these texts have worked in the service of their respective states in projecting each state's ideological agendas onto the past, constructing narratives of the distant past in accordance with their proto-nationalist claims of grandiosity and divine founding of their countries, which rendered them exceptional and ultimately worthy of succeeding the idealized Chinese antiquity. The Korea-Japan debates surrounding ancient history were initially precipitated by the unprecedented introduction of the oldest Japanese historical texts to Korean audiences and vice versa. Bent on strengthening their own narratives, both sides defended their own texts as factual while dismissing those of the other side mythical. After discussing the initial reactions to reading the historical texts of the other side, I display the manner in which the Korean side developed a new ideological narrative of the ancient Korean conquest of Japan, which they sought to frame as a historical fact.

Much of the twentieth-century scholarship on myth focuses on discrediting and dispelling it as a primitive artifact, one that conveys backward, pre-modern sensibilities. Writing in the tradition of Enlightenment-era modernism, Ernst Cassirer (1874–1945) argued for the lurking dangers of myth in his posthumous work *The Myth of the State* (1946). With his aim to reveal the intellectual origins of Nazi Germany, Cassirer emphasized the inherent irrationality of myth, tracing it back to the ancient Greek dichotomy of *logos* and *mythos*, and explained how the unchecked proliferation of myths in Germany led to the unspeakable violence of the Second

World War and the Holocaust.³³⁰ Cassirer made his point clear: objective rationality must subjugate and displace myth in order to prevent more humanitarian tragedies in the future.

Departing from the dominant view of the twentieth century, Bruce Lincoln offered perhaps the most cogent revision of this theory on myth. Lincoln first dismantled the supposedly neat dichotomy of *logos* and *mythos* in ancient Greece. He argued that the conventional narrative that the *mythos* of the *Iliad* and *Shield of Heracles* was eventually replaced by the more rational and objective *logos* of Plato and Socrates was itself a “myth,” because this binary between *logos* and *mythos* simply never existed. Ancient Greeks frequently used the term *logos* in speech intended to deceive and mislead, and employed *mythos* in expressions of candor. The Greek distinction between “truth” and “myth,” therefore, involved “highly consequential semantic skirmishes fought between rival régimes of truth.”³³¹ Only the power of persuasion distinguished *logos* from *mythos* and truth from falsehood; in this sense, myths are merely stories whose nature implies nothing about truth or falsity. Furthermore, as Mircea Eliade noted, all traditional cultures have fantastical origin myths designed to frame their founding as sacred and paradigmatic.³³² Myths are thus part of every country’s history and reveal much about a particular state’s ideological agenda, perhaps more than anything else.³³³

Given their ideological nature, myths are constantly evolving in order to meet the specific needs of a time and place.³³⁴ Lincoln noted an especially interesting divergence in the myths

³³⁰ Ernst Cassirer, *The Myth of the State* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1946).

³³¹ Bruce Lincoln, “Competing Discourses: Rethinking the Prehistory of *Mythos* and *Logos*,” *Arethusa* 30, no. 3 (Fall 1997): 341-367.

³³² Mircea Eliade, *Myth and Reality*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 17-19.

³³³ Bruce Lincoln, *Theorizing Myth: Narrative, Ideology, and Scholarship* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

³³⁴ Karen Armstrong, *A Short History of Myth* (New York: Canongate, 2005).

surrounding Harald Fairhair, the first king of Norway who unified and subsequently ruled the country from circa 872 to 930 CE. While appraisals of Harald Fairhair in the medieval Norwegian accounts remained overwhelmingly positive, medieval Icelandic variants of the same myth included modifications that undermined and even ridiculed Norwegian efforts to legitimize the unified state through Harald Fairhair. Not coincidentally, medieval Icelanders were the descendants of those who fled Harald in search of political freedom; thus they adapted Norwegian myths to meet the ideological needs of their own country.³³⁵

Societies sometimes create entirely new myths to meet their particular ideological needs. Jacques Le Goff, for example, showed that the concept of Purgatory was invented in the late twelfth century amid the unprecedented and widespread social, intellectual, and economic growth in medieval Europe, a period later called “the Renaissance of the Twelfth Century” by historians such as Charles Haskins.³³⁶ These developments, and the related increasing societal complexities resulted in the decline of eschatology and the growth of secularism, which stimulated the creation and popular acceptance of the notion of there being an intermediate place between Heaven and Hell that people had the power to influence.³³⁷ A new myth, Purgatory, was thus formed to meet that ideological need.

Hyökköse and Empress Jingū

³³⁵ Bruce Lincoln, *Between History and Myth: Stories of Harald Fairhair and the Founding of the State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014).

³³⁶ Charles H. Haskins, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1927).

³³⁷ Jacques Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984); idem, *The Medieval Imagination*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 67-77.

This new theory on myth allows for understanding the early modern Korean-Japanese conflict over ancient history as a feud between “rival régimes of truth,” in which each side sought to defend its own “myths” as facts and discredit the other’s by framing them as fictitious. The two countries’ bodies of historical texts narrating their origins contradicted each other, and the introduction of each other’s texts meant the early modern Japanese-Korean discursive conflict over ancient history was unavoidable. The *Samguk sagi* 三國史記 (“History of the Three Kingdoms,” 1145 CE), the oldest surviving Korean historical text, was designed to provide ideological support to internal unity against external threats. As historian No Myōngho 盧明鎬 notes, the *Samguk sagi* did subtly position one of the three kingdoms, Silla 新羅, as more legitimate vis-à-vis the other two by linking only Silla to the legendary ancient Chinese sage Kija 箕子 that marked the supposed beginning of Korean history in Kim’s scheme.³³⁸ However, it also recognized the three countries as coequals by organizing all three countries’ histories as “basic annals” 本紀 while using the first-person pronoun “we” 我 for all three countries.

In addition to strengthening the official narrative that the Koryō 高麗 dynasty (918–1392 CE) had unified the three equally “Korean” ancient states of Silla 新羅, Paekche 百濟, and Koguryō 高句麗, the *Samguk sagi* recounts the seemingly ceaseless wars with foreign invaders that the “Korean” peoples eventually overcame. Moreover, the structure of the *Samguk sagi* suggests a division of labor among the three states in repelling foreigners. The *Samguk sagi* noted the almost incessant attacks on Paekche by the Mohe 靺鞨 people, likely ancestors of the Jurchen people who founded the Jin Empire (1115–1234). The main enemies of Koguryō were

³³⁸ No Myōngho 盧明鎬, *Koryō kukka wa chiptan ūisik: Chawi kongdongch’e, Samguk yumin, Samhan ilt’ong, Haedong ch’ōnja ūi ch’ōnha* 高麗國家와 集團意識: 自衛共同體, 三國遺民, 三韓一統, 海東天子의 天下 (Seoul: Sōul Taehakkyo Ch’ulp’an Munhwawōn, 2009), 121-124.

Inner Asians, such as the Xianbei 鮮卑, the likely ancestors of the Mongol people, and various Chinese polities. Meanwhile, Silla's designated enemies were the Japanese, whose attacks were repelled at least twenty-seven times during the first five centuries of Silla's history, according to the *Samguk sagi*. Silla's primary role in Korean history appears to be as a bulwark against Japanese threat.

The myths in the *Samguk sagi* also work to legitimize the ancient dynasties by presenting their opposition to external threats. For example, Silla founder Hyökköse 赫居世, supposedly born from an egg, thwarted a Japanese invasion using his strange, mythical abilities: “The Japanese dispatched an army wanting to violate [our] borders, but they retreated upon hearing that [our] founder possessed divine virtue” 倭人行兵欲犯邊聞始祖有神德乃還. Also during the rule of Hyökköse, Chinese forces from the Lelang Commandery 樂浪郡 invaded Silla but soon turned back, impressed by its governance. Perhaps to confirm the sagacity of Hyökköse through testimony from the mouth of an enemy, the *Samguk sagi* introduces a character named “Lord of Gourd” 瓠公, “originally Japanese who crossed the sea [to come to Silla] with a gourd tied to his waist” 本倭人初以瓠繫腰渡海. Hogong praised Silla, and said that the Japanese and the Chinese [of Lelang] held Silla in “awe” 畏懷.³³⁹ The compiler of the *Samguk sagi* expressed his skepticism here, calling such myths “strange and unbelievable” 詭恠不可信, but also noted that “[the country's] customs did convey these accounts through the generations as actual events” 世俗相傳爲之實事.³⁴⁰

³³⁹ *Samguk sagi* 三國史記 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch'ujinhoe, 1973), 9-10.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 110.

Subsequent historical writings from the Koryŏ period further propagated these themes, as did the writings from the succeeding dynasty, Chosŏn 朝鮮, which also produced a comprehensive history of Korea, the *Tongguk t'onggam* 東國通鑑 (“Comprehensive Mirror of the Eastern Kingdom”), as a state project in 1485 CE. The compilers of the *Tongguk t'onggam* deemed the founding myths of the three kingdoms to be “strange” 可怪, but nevertheless accepted the divinity of the dynastic founders.³⁴¹ For example, they noted that the birth of Silla founder Hyŏkkŏse “differs from that of ordinary people, and that must be providence” 異於常人是蓋天命. They also added:

The Japanese were impressed by [his] virtues and did not attack. Pyŏnhan [of southeastern Korea] gave up their territory and surrendered. Lelang admired [his country] for having the Way, Okchŏ [of northeastern Korea] said it considered [Hyŏkkŏse] to be a sage. Possessing the country for sixty years, the households [of Silla] were well off, and the people prospered and did not experience war. The throne of a thousand years, therefore, was heaven-sent.
倭人感德而不犯 卞韓舉國而來降樂浪服其有道沃沮稱爲聖人享國六十年之間家給人足民不見兵以基一千年之業其殆天授乎.³⁴²

The compilers of the *Tongguk t'onggam* thereby retained the traditional treatment of ancient history: Korean history started with the divine monarchs of the coequal kingdoms of Silla, Koguryŏ, and Paekche, who fiercely and routinely resisted all forms of foreign intrusion throughout history.

On the other hand, the Japanese had a profoundly different understanding of their interactions with the ancient kingdoms across the sea in the Korean Peninsula. The two oldest extant Japanese historical texts, the *Kojiki* 古事記 (“Account of Ancient Matters,” 712 CE) and the *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 (“Chronicles of Japan,” 720 CE), were published just decades after

³⁴¹ *Tongguk t'onggam* 東國通鑑, vol. 1 (Seoul: Kyŏngin Munhwasa, 1974), 27.

³⁴² *Ibid.*, 292.

the Japanese warred against Tang China and Silla in an effort to save their allies in the Korean Peninsula. In defiance of the Chinese world order, as noted by Japanese historian Kōnoshi Takamitsu 神野志隆光, these two texts were composed to bolster the legitimacy of the nascent emperor-centered state by arguing that Japan once imposed its own imperial order, holding the ancient kingdoms of Korea as subservient tributaries.³⁴³

To support such claims, the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki* presented the legendary conquest of Korea by Empress Jingū 神功皇后 as the marquee moment in establishing Japan's overseas empire. While the narratives differ slightly, both the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki* state that divine interventions guided Empress Jingū's conquest; the gods not only told her to invade Korea but also aided the Japanese forces' crossing of the sea with favorable winds and waves, and even the fish swam to the surface of the sea to lift up the ships that bore Empress Jingū and her soldiers. Great waves crashed so deep into the Korean land that, according to the *Nihon shoki*, the Silla king wondered whether "the country was becoming [a part of] the sea" 國爲海乎. Calling Japan "the divine country" 神國, "its holy king the emperor" 聖王謂天皇, and its army "the divine army" 神兵, the Silla king declared that he had no chance against the Japanese forces, tied himself up, and surrendered, promising to be a loyal subject of Japan. While the *Kojiki* ends its conquest narrative with the surrender of Silla, the *Nihon shoki* offers further embellishments: the kings of neighboring Paekche 百濟 and Koguryō 高句麗 heard what happened to Silla and voluntarily surrendered, kowtowing to Empress Jingū and promising unending tribute to Japan.³⁴⁴

³⁴³ Kōnoshi Takamitsu 神野志隆光, "Constructing Imperial Mythology: *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*," in *Inventing the Classics: Modernity, National Identity, and Japanese Literature*, eds. Haruo Shirane and Tom Suzuki (Stanford University Press, 2000), 52-53.

³⁴⁴ *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀, 337-339.

Today's scholars consider this fantastical episode of conquest to be a later construct. Tsuda Sōkichi 津田左右吉 (1873–1961) first ventured this claim, suspecting it was likely that the Jingū conquest narrative was forged sometime during the sixth century.³⁴⁵ Despite the works of scholars such as Higo Kazuo 肥後和男 (1899–1981) who persisted in historicizing Jingū as a historical figure despite the legendary nature of her accounts, Naoki Kōjirō 直木孝次郎 further refined Tsuda's seminal thesis in the postwar period, positing that it was likely Empress Jingū herself was modeled on Japanese empresses of the seventh century, a time when Silla emerged as a serious threat to traditional Japanese interests in the Korean peninsula.³⁴⁶ On the other hand, works such as the *Samguk sagi* do suggest that numerous Japanese invasions of Silla occurred during ancient times. Legible portions of the “Kwanggaet'o stele” 廣開土王陵碑 (414 CE), for example, also note Japanese military presence in Silla. According to the stele, in 399 CE, Silla notified Koguryō that “barbarians [the Japanese] were inside of that country's borders” 殘人滿其國境. When the Koguryō armies reached the Silla capital in 400 CE, they also discovered that “the Japanese” 倭 were “inside [of the Silla capital]” 其中.³⁴⁷ The writers of the Jingū conquest narrative most likely took motifs from existing stories of past Japanese invasions of Silla and reorganized them into a single, dramatic narrative in response to the Japanese

³⁴⁵ Tsuda Sōkichi 津田左右吉, *Kojiki oyobi Nihon shoki no shin kenkyū* 古事記及び日本書紀の新研究 (Tokyo: Rakuyōdō, 1919), 135-215. This critique was part of a larger intellectual effort in critically historicizing the Japanese antiquity. Also see Tsuda Sōkichi 津田左右吉, *Jindaishi no kenkyū* 神代史の研究 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1924). As an overview of Tsuda's work in the context of his time, see Ōi Kensuke 大井健輔, *Tsuda Sōkichi, Dai Nihon Teikoku to no taiketsu: Tennō no gunpuku o nugaseta otoko* 津田左右吉、大日本帝国との対決: 天皇の軍服を脱がせた男 (Tokyo: Bensei Shuppan, 2015).

³⁴⁶ Higo Kazuo 肥後和男, *Jingū kōgō* 神功皇后 (Tokyo: Kōbundō, 1957); Naoki Kōjirō 直木孝次郎, *Nihon kodai no shizoku to tennō* 日本古代の氏族と天皇 (Tokyo: Hanawa Shobō, 1964), 153-172. idem, *Kodai Nihon to Chōsen, Chūgoku* 古代日本と朝鮮・中国 (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1988), 76-106.

³⁴⁷ *Kwanggaet'o Taewang pi* 廣開土大王碑, 54-58.

ejection from the Korean Peninsula, culminating in the 663 CE rout of the Japanese expeditionary force sent in a last-ditch effort to save the kingdom of Paekche.

Prior to the twentieth century, however, the Jingū conquest narrative was considered a historical fact in Japan; it was widely circulated by the early eighth century and noted by, for example, local gazetteers in Japan. The *Harima no kuni fudoki* 播磨國風土記 (“Gazetteer of Harima,” 713 CE) cited the conquest narrative to explain the origin of the place name “Idate” 因達:

The name Idate comes from the time when Okinagatarashihime [Empress Jingū] wanted to conquer Korea and crossed the sea. The god Idate was enshrined in the bow of [her] ship, and it is [now] enshrined there. That is why the god’s name is used for the name of the village.

稱因達者息長帶比賣命欲平韓國渡坐之時御船前伊太代之神在於此處故因神名以爲里名。³⁴⁸

There is also evidence of this belief in the conquest narrative of medieval times. In his historical work “Jottings of a Fool” 愚管抄 (c. 1220 CE), the Japanese aristocrat Jien 慈円 (1155–1225 CE) noted that Empress Jingū “conquered the three countries of Silla, Koguryō, and Paekche while dressed as a man” 男ノスガタヲシテ新羅、高麗、百濟三ノ國ヲ討取テ。³⁴⁹ Kitabatake Chikafusa 北畠親房 (1293–1354) recorded in “Chronicles of the Authentic Lineages of the Divine Emperors” 神皇正統記:

[Empress Jingū] conquered Silla, Paekche, and Koguryō. Because a god of the sea appeared and protected her ship, [Empress Jingū] could subdue the country as she planned. Such an appearance of divine power so long after the age of gods must have been unexpected [to Empress Jingū].

³⁴⁸ *Fudoki* 風土記, trans. and ed. Uegaki Setsuya 植垣節也 (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1997), 42.

³⁴⁹ Jien 慈円, *Gukanshō* 愚管抄, eds. Okami Masao 岡見正雄 and Akamatsu Toshihide 赤松俊秀 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1967), 50.

新羅・百濟・高麗をうちしたがへ給き。海神かたちをあらはし、御船をはさみまぼり申しかば、思の如く彼國を平げ給。神代より年序久くつもれりしに、かく神威をあらはし給ける、不測御ことなるべし。

Korea has paid annual tribute ever since then, and a government office has been established in that country [Korea] by this country [Japan] in order to protect it. With the [submission of the] western tributaries, the country [Japan] has prospered.
是より三韓の國、年ごとに御つきをそなへ、此國よりも彼國に鎮守のつかさをおかれしかば、西蕃相通て国家とみさかりなりき。³⁵⁰

Sometimes, the conquest narrative was embellished in order to highlight the Japanese dominance of Korea. The medieval Japanese religious text *Hachiman gudōkun* 八幡愚童訓 (c. 1308–1318 CE) expands the narrative, including a sentence that was carved on a stone: “The great Silla king is a Japanese dog” 新羅國大王日本國犬也。³⁵¹ The late fourteenth-century historical epic “The Chronicle of Great Peace” 太平記 also describes this carving:

Using the tip of Empress Jingū’s bow, [the Japanese] wrote on a stone wall that the Korean king is Japan’s dog and then returned [to Japan]. Korea has submitted to our dynasty ever since, submitting tribute for many years.
神功皇后御弓の末筈にて、高麗王はわが日本の犬なりと、石の壁に書きつけて歸らせ給ふ。これより高麗わが朝に順つて、多年その貢を奉る。³⁵²

The assumption of the historicity of the conquest narrative remained unchallenged into the early modern era. Japanese scholar Hayashi Gahō 林鷺峰 (1618–1688) noted:

Respectfully examining [our] country’s history, all of Korea has submitted to our country since the conquest of Empress Jingū. The sending of tribute [from Korea since then] has been without fail.
謹檢國史則神功皇后征伐以來三韓悉服從於我朝來貢無闕。³⁵³

³⁵⁰ Kitabatake Chikafusa 北畠親房, *Jinnō shōtōki* 神皇正統記, ed. Iwasa Masashi 岩佐正 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1976), 58-59.

³⁵¹ “Hachiman gudōkun” 八幡愚童訓, in *Gunsho ruijū* 群書類從, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai, 1977), 395.

³⁵² *Shinkō Taiheiki* 新校太平記, ed. Takahashi Sadaichi 高橋貞一, vol. 2 (Kyoto: Shibunkaku, 1976), 534.

³⁵³ Hayashi Gahō 林鷺峰, *Gahō Rin gakushi bunshū* 鷺峰林学士文集, ed. Hino Tatsuo 日野龍夫, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Perikansha, 1997), 286.

Gahō repeated this view in another text:

Empress Jingū conquered Silla in ancient times, and Koguryō and Paekche all submitted to our country. According to [our] country’s history, Korea’s submission of tribute [to Japan] has continued throughout the generations.

昔神功皇后征新羅以來與高麗百濟悉臣服於我朝故國史載三韓入貢世世不絕矣。³⁵⁴

A similar observation was made by Japanese scholar Yamaga Sokō 山鹿素行 (1622–1685):

Empress Jingū personally conquered the three Koreas. [The kings of] the Koreas tied themselves up and submitted [to Japan], bringing honor to the virtue of our military power abroad. From this point on, the Koreas have paid tribute every year so that the paddles [of the ships carrying tribute] have not dried.”

神功帝親征三韓三韓面縛服從耀武德於外國自是三韓每年朝聘獻貢不乾船楫。³⁵⁵

Yet another Japanese scholar, Arai Hakuseki 新井白石 (1657–1725), claimed in his “Additional

Discussions from Explication of History” 讀史餘論 that “Empress [Jingū] personally subjugated

Silla, promptly bringing it to submission” 皇后自ラ新羅ヲ討給ヒシニコレモヤガテ從ヒマイ

ラス。³⁵⁶

A few generations later, Japanese scholar Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長 (1730–1801)

expressed similar views on Empress Jingū’s supposed conquest of Korea:

Following divine guidance, [Empress Jingū] conquered Silla in person. Their king promptly paid his respects before the royal ship, making a number of vows and liege homage. [Since then,] the tributary payments carried by numerous ships have become customary. Koguryō and Paekche also started paying tribute at that time. The fact that the three barbarian kingdoms of Korea, as well as the other surrounding kingdoms, all served the [Japanese] imperial court by following its laws is known to the people of the world.

神の御教にしたがひて。御みづから新羅の國をことむけにおはしまししに。其王やがて大御船のまへにまゐりて。くさぐさのちか言をたてて。まつろひしより。

³⁵⁴ Ibid., 305.

³⁵⁵ Yamaga Sokō 山鹿素行, “Chūchō jijitsu” 中朝事實, in *Yamaga Sokō zenshū* 山鹿素行全集, ed. Hirose Yutaka 廣瀬豊, vol. 13 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1940), 265.

³⁵⁶ Arai Hakuseki 新井白石, “Tokushi yoron” 讀史餘論, in *Arai Hakuseki zenshū* 新井白石全書, vol. 3 (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1906), 461.

つねに八十艘のみつぎを奉る例とはなれりけり。此時高麗百濟のふたぐにも。同じさまにまつろひ参りてよりこなた。この三の韓のから國。またそのわたりの國々も。ひたぶるに皇朝のみのりにしたがひて。つかへまつりし事は。世の人もよくしれるが如し。³⁵⁷

Norinaga's contemporary, Nakai Chikuzan 中井竹山 (1730–1804), also declared that “Korea has submitted and paid tribute [to Japan] ever since [Empress] Jingū's expedition. It has not stopped being our dependent throughout history” 神功の遠征已來、韓國服從朝貢し、我屬國たること、歴代久しく絶ざりしに。³⁵⁸

The story of Jingū's conquest became so widespread in early modern Japanese society that the site where the empress supposedly asked for divine guidance on launching a military expedition to Korea was identified. For example, in “Treatise on Stones” 雲根志, Kiuchi Sekitei 木内石亭 (1724–1808) borrowed the story from the *Nihon shoki* and identified a “fishing rock” 釣石 as the place where the empress sought divine guidance “when Empress Jingū eradicated Korea” 神功皇后三韓退治の時。³⁵⁹ The purported ancient Japanese subjugation of Korea legitimized Japan as a bona fide empire with overseas holdings, and this was taken as historical fact in pre-modern times.³⁶⁰

Korean officials sent to Japan on official diplomatic missions noted the contradictions between the two countries' narratives. For example, Sin Sukchu 申叔舟 (1417–1475) provided

³⁵⁷ Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長, “Gyojū gaigen” 馭戎慨言, 25-26.

³⁵⁸ Nakai Chikuzan 中井竹山, *Sōbō kigen* 草茅危言, vol. 2 (Osaka: Kaitokudō Kinenkai, 1942), 50.

³⁵⁹ Kiuchi Sekitei 木内石亭, *Unkonshi* 雲根志, ed. Masamune Atsuo 正宗敦夫, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Nihon Koten Zenshū Kankōkai, 1930), 12.

³⁶⁰ Richard W. Anderson notes the prevalence of the Empress Jingū myth in southwestern Japan in the nineteenth century. See Richard W. Anderson, “Jingū Kōgō Ema in Southwestern Japan: Reflections and Anticipations of the Seikanron Debate in the Late Tokugawa and Early Meiji Period,” *Asian Folklore Studies* 61 (2002): 247-270.

an extensive description of Japan in his “Record of the Countries East of the Sea” 海東諸國紀 (1471), based on his official visit to Japan in 1443 and his analyses of the Japanese historical texts he collected. Although he read Japanese historical works such as the *Nihon shoki*, Sin Sukchu did not repeat the historic Japanese assertions of dominance over Korea to his countrymen. Believing that conflict with Japan should be avoided, he deliberately omitted the conquest narrative in his discussion of the era of Empress Jingū 神功皇后 and reframed the history of Korea-Japan interactions, describing the ancient Korean officials who visited Japan as “envoys” 使臣, with no undertones of submission.

By the seventeenth century, however, this strategy of textual omission became unfeasible. The Japanese at least partly justified their invasions of Korea between 1592 and 1598 by claiming that Korea had historically been its subservient tributary. During the 1594 peace negotiations, for example, the Korean negotiator Yujōng 惟政 (1544–1610) realized that he and his Japanese counterpart Katō Kiyomasa 加藤清正 (1561–1611) had conflicting understandings of what had happened in ancient history. On the seventh month and thirteenth day of 1594, according to Yujōng’s records, Kiyomasa claimed that “Korea belonged to Japan from the ancient times. People [cannot] hide [that fact]” 自昔朝鮮屬日本人焉廋哉.³⁶¹

Furthermore, Korean officials dispatched to early modern Japan also purchased and brought back numerous Japanese texts in an effort to study the country. For example, during his official trip to Japan in 1711–1712, Im Sugaŋ 任守幹 (1665–1721) noted: “I was able to see the general history of their rise and fall by secretly purchasing their historical works at high prices”

³⁶¹ Yujōng 惟政, *Songun Taesa Punch’ung sōnallok* 松雲大師奮忠紓難錄, trans and eds. Sin Yuhan 申維翰 and Yi Sanghyōn 李相鉉 (Seoul: Tongguk Taehakkyo Ch’ulp’anbu, 2015), 97.

高價而潛購其史其興廢之迹槩可見也。³⁶² The variety of Japanese books imported into Korea is indicated in such texts as *Haedong yōksa* 海東繹史 (“History of Korea,” 1823) by Han Ch’iyun 韓致齋 (1765–1814), which lists at least twenty-two Japanese works, including historical texts like the *Nihon shoki*. By the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Japanese historical records became public knowledge in Korea.³⁶³

Faced with ancient historical narratives that contradicted their own, Korean scholars chose to defend their national narrative and to dismiss the Japanese narratives as “myths.” Korean official Nam Yongik 南龍翼 (1628–1692), who made an official visit to Japan in 1655–1656, was one of the first to comment on the ancient history of Japan. Having read Japanese historical texts as well as Sin Sukchu’s aforementioned treatment of ancient Japanese history, Nam stated:

Sin Sukchu lists from [Emperor] Jimmu to [Emperor] Shōkō in his “Record of the Countries East of the Sea.” There are several mistakes and omissions, and [I have] addressed them by appending and abridging [his work]. [I have also] added the next ten generations [of Japanese emperors].

自神武至稱光已載於申叔舟海東記中而頗有舛漏故更加詳略續之以其下十代。³⁶⁴

To address Sin Sukchu’s “mistakes and omissions,” Nam first dismissed much of the early Japanese narrative as fiction. For instance, Sin Sukchu recorded numerous supernatural accounts asserting the divinity of the early Japanese imperial lineage without challenging them. On the mythical Emperor Jimmu 神武天皇, Sin Sukchu wrote that “[Jimmu’s] mother was Tamayori” 母玉依姬, who was “generally referred to as a daughter of the sea god” 俗稱海神女.

³⁶² Im Suga 任守幹, “Tongsa ilgi” 東槎日記, in *Kugyōk haehaeng ch’ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 9 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe), 95.

³⁶³ Han Ch’iyun 韓致齋, *Haedong yōksa* 海東繹史, vol. 1 (Seoul: Kyōngin Munhwasa, 1974), 18-19.

³⁶⁴ Nam Yongik 南龍翼, “Mun’gyōn pyōllok” 問見別錄, in *Kugyōk haehaeng ch’ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 6 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe), 1.

Sin Sukchu also recorded that “the great god Amaterasu descended” 天照大神降 to the earth during the reign of Emperor Suinin 垂仁天皇, prompting “the initial construction of the Ise Grand Shrine” 初置伊勢國齋宮. Sin Sukchu further claimed that Emperor Chūai 仲哀天皇 was “10 *chi* tall” 身長十尺.³⁶⁵ Traditional East Asian unit of length, *chi* has been defined differently in different countries and eras, one *chi* equaled approximately thirty centimeters in traditional Japan and Korea, making Emperor Chūai around three meters tall. Nam questioned such descriptions. He disclaimed the supposedly divine figures of Japanese mythology, even calling Amaterasu “absurd” 荒誕. Regarding the aforementioned mother of Emperor Jimmu, whom Sin called “a daughter of the sea god” 海神女, Nam altered her description to that of “a little girl of the sea” 海童小女. Nam also omitted Amaterasu’s descent during the reign of Emperor Suinin and did not mention Emperor Chūai’s height.³⁶⁶

Similar views are observable in the works of other Korean officials who studied the history of Japan. For example, Cho Myōngch’ae 曹命采 (1700–1764) described the records of ancient Japanese emperors as “extremely absurd” 多涉荒誕.³⁶⁷ In *Hwagukchi* 和國志 (“Records of Japan”), Wōn Chunggō 元重擧 (1719–1790) also questioned the credibility of Japanese historical records and labeled the mythological aspects of these records as “deceptive” 謾.³⁶⁸ By undermining the plausibility of Japanese historical records, Korean scholars raised doubts about

³⁶⁵ Sin Sukchu 申叔舟, “Haedong chegukki” 海東諸國紀, in *Kugyōk haehaeng ch’ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 1 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe), 5-6.

³⁶⁶ Nam Yongik 南龍翼, “Mun’gyōn pyōllok” 問見別錄, in *Kugyōk haehaeng ch’ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 6 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe), 1.

³⁶⁷ Cho Myōngch’ae 曹命采, “Pongsa ilbonsi mun’gyōnnok” 奉使日本時間見錄, in *Kugyōk haehaeng ch’ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 10 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe), 55.

³⁶⁸ Wōn Chunggō 元重擧, *Hwagukchi* 和國志, ed. Yi Usōng 李佑成 (Seoul: Asea Munhwasa, 1990), 81.

the validity of the Japanese historical texts themselves, and negated Japanese claims that Japan had dominated ancient Korea. As for the Jingū conquest narrative, Wŏn Chunggŏ wrote that

“such a theory is ridiculous and unreasonable, and it is not worth writing about”

一說荒誕無理不足書之。³⁶⁹ Likewise, in Han Ch’iyun doubted whether “the armies of countries like Silla and Paekche received their domination” 羅濟諸國兵何嘗受其節制耶. He concluded that Japanese assertions of dominance over ancient Korea were merely “self-aggrandizing statements” 自夸之辭也。³⁷⁰

Making of a Legend: The Silla Invasion of Japan

In this battle between rival régimes of truth, Koreans chose their own myths over those of the Japanese. Much like the creation of Empress Jingū’s 神功皇后 mythical conquest of Korea, prompted by the loss of traditional Japanese interests in the Korean Peninsula during the sixth and seventh centuries and the emergence of Silla as a hostile power across the sea, Koreans constructed their own mythical conquest narrative. It is probable that this was spurred by the still-recent memory of Hideyoshi’s invasions (1592–1598) and the widespread dissemination of Japanese narratives that asserted the country’s historical domination over Korea.

The Korean official Yi Kyŏngjik 李景稷 (1577–1640) was the first to mention this conquest myth on making an official visit to Japan in 1617. He wrote:

Japan is located far away to the east. [Surrounded by] great seas on all sides, foreign armies have not reached it. Having looked at their “chronicle,” however, [it said that] the army of Silla entered [the country] in the twenty-second year of Emperor Ōjin 應神天皇. Another book says that the army of Silla entered Akashiura, which is separated from Osaka by about one hundred *li*. There is a mound located east of Akamagaseki. The

³⁶⁹ Ibid., 176.

³⁷⁰ Han Ch’iyun 韓致齋, *Haedong yŏksa* 海東繹史, vol. 1 (Seoul: Kyŏngin Munhwasa, 1974), 663.

Japanese pointed to it and said, “This is the white horse mound. The army of Silla had come deep into Japan. The Japanese asked to make peace, so they sacrificed a white horse to make a pledge [of peace] and buried the horse in the mound.”

日本邈在天東四面大海外兵不入但見其年代記其所謂應神之二十二年新國兵軍來一本則曰新羅兵入明石浦石浦距大坂纔百有餘里赤間關之東有一丘壟倭人指之曰此是白馬墳新羅兵深入日本日本人請和解兵刑白馬以盟埋馬於此故云。³⁷¹

This narrative is problematic for at least two reasons. First, the two locations mentioned by Yi Kyōngjik, Akashiura 明石浦 (located in today’s Hyōgo Prefecture) and Akamagaseki 赤間關 (in today’s Yamaguchi Prefecture) are at least 400 kilometers apart. If the Silla army did reach Akashiura, why would the mound be built near Akamagaseki? Second, Yi Kyōngjik did not name the specific chronicle he read, and the event he described does not appear in the official histories of Korea nor Japan.

Certain clues may have led him to forge such a narrative. For example, Sin Sukchu’s *Haedong chegukki* 海東諸國紀 (“Record of the Countries East of the Sea”) includes unsubstantiated claims that Silla had attacked Japan: “Silla came and attacked the western border [of Japan] in the third year [of Emperor Bidatsu 敏達天皇 (574 CE)]” 三年癸卯新羅來伐西鄙, and “in the fourth year [of Emperor Genshō 元正天皇 (718 CE)], Silla [again] came and attacked the western border [of Japan]” 四年庚申新羅來伐西鄙.³⁷² Furthermore, although unsupported by official historical records in both Korea and Japan, there were written accounts of Silla invasions of Japan in ancient and medieval times, which also circulated within Japan.

According to historian Satō Hiroo 佐藤弘夫, at least one recorded Silla attack took place in Kyushu during 869 CE. While the attackers reportedly had only two ships and left quickly

³⁷¹ Yi Kyōngjik 李景稷, “Pusangnok” 扶桑錄, in *Kugyōk haehaeng ch’ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 3 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe), 24.

³⁷² Sin Sukchu 申叔舟, “Haedong chegukki” 海東諸國紀, in *Kugyōk haehaeng ch’ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 1 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe), 6-7.

after looting, this act was nevertheless considered serious enough to be discussed as a national issue at the Ise Shrine.³⁷³ In another instance, a mid-fourteenth-century chorographical text from the Harima Province 播磨國 notes the story of a mid-eighth-century Silla invasion that was interrupted by a typhoon:

During the Emperor Junnin 淳仁天皇's rule in 763 CE, a five-legged calf was born in Ibo County's Fuse village [in Harima Province]. [When] the story was reported to the court, [a fortune-teller] predicted that foreign enemies would invade and create a great disturbance. The following year, some 20,000 Silla warships attacked this province [Harima], encamping at Ieshima and Takashima.

大炊天皇御宇天平寶字七年ニ當揖保ノ郡布施ノ郷ニ五足ノ犢子ヲ生ズ。子細ヲ奏ス。異賊責來テ大兵亂ノ由シ占ヒ申ス。翌年新羅ノ軍船二萬餘艘當國マデ責入テ家島高島ニ陳ヲ取ル。

At that time, a typhoon suddenly blew, ultimately sinking 732 enemy ships. The government army collected the head of the enemy general and placed it on top of a tall shelf.

爰ニ俄ニ大風吹テ。異賊七百三十二艘沈没シ畢ヌ。官軍彼ノ異賊ノ大將ノ頸ヲ昇來テ高棚ニ上テ守ル。³⁷⁴

This story appropriates the typhoon motif from accounts of the thirteenth-century Mongol invasions of Japan, and combines it with the documented diplomatic conflicts between Silla and Japan during the eighth century. First, according to the *Shoku Nihongi* 續日本紀 (“Continued Chronicles of Japan,” 797 CE), in 735 CE, Silla officials visiting Japan “suddenly changed the country’s name to the ‘capital city’ 王城國, and because of this, their officials were repelled [from Japan]” 輒改本號曰王城國因茲返却其使. This name change asserted centrality and hegemony in accordance with the traditional political language of East Asia, and the Silla officials most likely attempted to patronize Japan as a lesser power than Silla. Two years later, in

³⁷³ Satō Hiroo 佐藤弘夫, *Shinkoku Nihon* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 2006), 90-93.

³⁷⁴ “Hōsōki” 峰相記, in *Zoku Gunsho ruijū* 續群書類從, vol. 28, part 1 (Tokyo: Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai, 1959), 241-242.

737 CE, “[Japanese] officials sent to Silla reported that Silla discourteously refused to accept communication” 遣新羅使奏新羅國失常禮不受使旨. Such entries in the *Shoku Nihongi* indicate great tensions in relations between Silla and Japan during the mid-eighth century.³⁷⁵ Next, considering that the Silla invaders, like the Mongols, were repelled by a typhoon, the story of a massive Silla invasion involving 20,000 ships might have been added to dramatize and underscore Japan’s ultimate victory. Regardless of factuality, there is an indication that this story, or similar stories regarding a Silla invasion of Japan, was circulated in early modern Japan, and Yi Kyōngjik might have picked up on them during exchanges with his Japanese counterparts.

Similar stories of Silla invasions continued to circulate in Japan into the early modern period. For example, in his discussion of history, Amenomori Hōshu 雨森芳洲 (1668–1755) included the story of a Silla invasion of Kyushu:

An army from Silla was dispatched to invade the Kyushu region, and it exhausted the strength of the installed defenses. This can be seen in historians’ old records.
新羅方軍兵をさしむけ築紫の地方を侵し、兵衛を設け防禦の力を被盡たる事、史氏の舊記に相見へ。³⁷⁶

Motoori Norinaga also once mentioned Silla raids in the western provinces of Japan, without naming any of the primary materials that reported the raids:

Among the three Koreas, Paekche was established as a directly administered province and has been ruled in the same manner as provinces in the imperial realm [Japan] since the reign of Empress Jingū. [Japan] has given especially generous favors [to Paekche], which has loyally served [Japan] over the generations. Silla, however, has been disloyal and often rebellious. There were [even] occasional instances of it attacking the western provinces [of Japan].
さて此三の韓國の中にも。百濟は。かの姫尊の御代より。内官家國と定め給ひて。皇國の内の御縣にもことならず。殊にあつき御恩をかけ給ひて。御代御代をへて。

³⁷⁵ *Shoku Nihongi* 續日本紀, ed. Kuroita Katsumi 黑板勝美 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2000), 137-143.

³⁷⁶ Amenomori Hōshu 雨森芳洲, *Hōshū gaikō kankei shiryō shokanshū* 芳洲外交関係資料・書簡集 (Suita: Kansai Daigaku Shuppanbu, 1982), 270.

まめやかにつかへまつり來にしを。新羅ぞまめならずして。ともすればそむきまつりて。西のほとりの國にあたせし事なども。をりをり有しを。³⁷⁷

What could possibly account for these persistent stories of Silla invasions in early modern Japan? The vast corpus of “war tales” 軍記物語, a form of then-popular literature, may provide a clue. These largely fictional works depicting Japanese wars against the Korean, Ryukyuan, and Ainu peoples often deploy the notion of “righteous war” 征伐 to justify the Japanese attacks, and frequently feature external provocations that vindicate Japanese invasions overseas.³⁷⁸ Such subplots could be responsible for the circulation of the stories of ancient Silla’s attacks in early modern Japanese society. Historian Hong Sŏnghwa 洪性和, for instance, argued that the availability of similar materials in early modern Japan and the history of Korean participation in the Mongol invasions of Japan in the thirteenth century must have caused the formation of Silla conquest narrative.³⁷⁹

Even more important than the existence and circulation of such stories in Japan, however, is that Korean officials and scholars themselves felt an ideological need to create a myth of Korean conquest. Fully conscious of the enormous devastations caused by the still-recent late sixteenth-century Japanese invasions, many Koreans felt frustrated that the war had only been waged on Korean soil and that they had not yet gained revenge against these unprovoked Japanese attacks. During the war, as one example, Chŏng Ch’ŏl 鄭澈 (1536–1593) wrote of his desire for revenge:

³⁷⁷ Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長, “Gyojū gaigen” 馭戎慨言, 26.

³⁷⁸ Kim Sidŏk 金時德, *Ikoku seibatsu senki no sekai: Kan Hantō, Ryūkyū Rettō, Ezochi* 異国征伐戦記の世界: 韓半島・琉球列島・蝦夷地 (Tokyo: Kasama Shoin, 2010).

³⁷⁹ Hong Sŏnghwa 洪性和, “T’ongsin sahaengnok e poinūn kodaesa kwanryŏn kisul” 通信使行錄에 보이는 古代史 關聯 記述, *Han-Il kwan ’gyesa yŏn ’gu* 韓日關係史研究 43 (December 2012): 269-274.

戰舸張帆截大洋 Battleships cross the sea with unfurled sails,
亂峯無數劍攢鎡 [Sail] peaks look like countless sword-points.
東邊直擣扶桑穴 If we sail straight eastward to the den of the Japanese,
不用金湯禦犬羊 We would not need the fortresses to stop the beasts.³⁸⁰

In 1617, Yi Kyōngjik, who first created the myth of a Silla invasion of ancient Japan, also described his inner torment at partaking in diplomatic ceremonies with those he still considered enemies. After a ceremonial meeting during which he bowed to the Tokugawa shogun at Edo, he wrote:

I did know that I would have to bow down to this enemy, but after kneeling, [I felt like] my heart and internal organs were being ripped apart. Afterward, I refused food and shed tears with [my colleague] Chōng Ch’ungsin. I could not suppress my resentment and anger. Ah! What should I do?
拜此讎賊初非不知到此屈膝心膽欲裂歸來廢食與鄭忠信相對下淚不勝慷慨憤惋咄咄奈何。³⁸¹

Another Korean official, Kim Seryōm 金世濂 (1593–1646), wrote the following poem during his official mission to Japan in 1636–1637:

飲血健兒憤 Vigorous youth drink blood in anger,
張膽烈士痛 Patriots’ gall bladders swell in agony.
百世必可復 We will have our revenge even after a hundred generations.
九廟能無慟 How could one withhold tears at the sight of the [destroyed] royal shrine?³⁸²

The seventeenth-century creation and popular reception of fictional works such as *Imjillok* 壬辰錄 (“Record of 1592”), which rewrites the history of the Hideyoshi invasions, also attest to the widespread desire for vengeance spawned by the war. In this novel, Korean defenders not

³⁸⁰ Chōng Ch’ōl 鄭澈, “Songgang chip” 松江集 in *Yōngin p’yojōm Han’guk munjip ch’onggan* 影印標點韓國文集叢刊, vol. 46 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe, 1989), 144.

³⁸¹ Yi Kyōngjik 李景稷, “Pusangnok” 扶桑錄, in *Kugyōk haehaeng ch’ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 3 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe), 11.

³⁸² Kim Seryōm 金世濂, “Sasangnok” 槎上錄 in *Kugyōk haehaeng ch’ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 4 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe), 34.

only repel but also chase the invaders into Japan itself, ultimately achieving a military victory deep within Japanese territory.

Even the Japanese took note of the Korean appetite for revenge. Prominent Japanese scholar Ogyū Sorai 荻生徂徠 (1666–1728) recalled the story of the revenge of Duke Xiang of Qi 齊襄公 (r. 697–686 BCE) as a possible analogy for the Koreans’ feelings toward the Japanese. In ancient China, the Marquis of Ji 紀侯 slandered Duke Xiang’s distant ancestor and predecessor, the Duke Ai of Qi 齊哀公, who was consequently boiled to death in 863 BCE. In 690 BCE, almost two hundred years later, Duke Xiang destroyed the Ji state to avenge the events of nine generations earlier. Sorai observed that Korea “fears our [country] because of the lingering [memory] of King Toyotomi’s martial glory” 豐王威龕之餘則其所以慮我者, but “if a conflict arises [in the future], they will have the will of [Duke] Xiang of Qi [who took revenge even after] nine generations” 萬一釁啓毋迺弗有齊襄九世之志乎.³⁸³

The Korean desire for revenge provided an ideological drive that sustained the Silla conquest narrative over the years following its first appearance in Yi Kyōngjik’s writings. Regardless of the validity of Yi’s original claims, his successors endorsed and propagated his narrative. For instance, Kim Seryōm, who made an official visit to Japan in 1636–1637, included a slightly abridged version of Yi’s story in his travelogue:

Japan is located far away to the east. [Surrounded by] great sea on all sides, foreign armies have not reached it. Having looked at their “chronicle,” however, [it is said that] the army of Silla entered Akashiura in the twenty-second year of Emperor Ōjin. Akashiura is separated from Osaka by 100 *li*. There is a mound located east of Akamagaseki. The Japanese pointed to it and said, “This is the white horse mound. The army of Silla had come deep [into Japan]. The Japanese asked to make peace, so they sacrificed a white horse to make a pledge [of peace] and buried the horse in the mound.”

³⁸³ Ogyū Sorai 荻生徂徠, *Sorai shū*; *Sorai shū shū* 徂徠集; 徂徠集拾遺, 103.

日本邈在天東四面大海外兵不入但見其年代記其所謂應神之二十二年新羅兵入明石浦浦距大坂纔百里赤間關之東有一丘壟倭人指之曰此卽白馬墳新羅兵深入日本人請和解兵刑白馬以盟埋馬於此云。³⁸⁴

For generations, this conquest narrative continued to circulate among Korean officials sent to Japan. Sin Yuhan 申維翰 (1681–1752), who visited Japan in 1719–1720, reported:

There was a dirt mound on the steep slope to the west called the white horse mound. People say that the Silla king sent a general to attack Japan. The Japanese asked [to make peace] at Akamagaseki, sacrificing a white horse to make a pledge [of peace]. They buried the dead horse in the mound to mark the land. Japanese customs do not include [making burial] mounds. Looking at the shape of the mound now, it must have been made by the Silla people.

其西曲岸帖土爲墳名白馬塚俗傳新羅王遣將攻倭倭人請成至赤間關刑白馬而盟因瘞死馬爲墳以標其地倭俗無墳制今觀墳樣必是羅人所築。³⁸⁵

Nam Ok 南玉 (1722–1770), part of the 1763–1764 mission to Japan, also noted the legend of a supposed mound:

As for the “white horse mound,” Silla attacked Japan and reached Akamagaseki. The Japanese sought [peace] and sacrificed a white horse to make a pledge [of peace]. As a horse was buried there, it is said that it has retained the shape of a mound to this day. 白馬塚新羅攻倭至赤關倭人請成刑白馬以盟因瘞馬至今有塚形云。³⁸⁶

Sōng Taejung 成大中 (1732–1809) of the 1763–1764 mission also noted a similar story:

When Silla conquered Japan, it once reached Akashiura and once reached Akamagaseki. Akashiura is merely two hundred *li* away from Osaka, which shows how deep [the Silla army] went [into Japan]. They fought against the Japanese and defeated them all. There is a horse-shaped mound near the waterside in Akamagaseki.

新羅征倭一至明石一至赤間關明石距大坂才二百餘里可見其深入力戰倭人皆以好罷赤間關有刑馬塚在水濱。³⁸⁷

³⁸⁴ Kim Seryōm 金世濂, “Haesanok” 海槎錄 in *Kugyōk haehaeng ch’ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 4 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe), 27.

³⁸⁵ Sin Yuhan 申維翰, “Haeyurok” 海遊錄, in *Kugyōk haehaeng ch’ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 1 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe), 59.

³⁸⁶ Nam Ok 南玉, *Ilgwan’gi* 日觀記 (National Institute of Korean History Rare Book KO B16HD 6).

³⁸⁷ Sōng Taejung 成大中, *Ilbonrok* 日本錄 (Korea University Library Rare Book 貴 545).

Irrespective of the various claims regarding this mound in Japan, Yi Kyōngjik's story appears to have circulated among Korean officials like an urban legend without any textual evidence to support it. Whatever "chronicle" Yi Kyōngjik supposedly read, if it existed at all, was not passed around, as becomes apparent in later appropriations of Yi's story; some of his successors who propagated the story even got the dynasty wrong. For example, Im Sugan 任守幹 (1665–1721), who visited Japan in 1711–1712, wrote:

While their country [Japan] did not experience worries from abroad during ancient times, there was a time when the Paekche navy attacked it, reaching Akamagaseki. The Japanese sacrificed a white horse for peace. [That is why] the white horse mound is on the roadside to this day. Their national histories consider it taboo and did not record it. 其國自古無外虞百濟時潛師襲之至赤間關倭人刑白馬媾和至今路傍有白馬塚其國史諱而不書矣。³⁸⁸

Similarly, according to Cho Myōngch'ae 曹命采 (1700–1764), who visited the country in 1748, the Koguryō or Koryō dynasty, not Silla or Paekche, attacked Japan:

I have heard that Koryō invaded Japan, riding to a victory up to here. The Japanese then beheaded a white horse to make a pledge [of peace] and stop the war. I now hear that there is no such talk among the Japanese. This is perhaps because they consider it to be taboo. 曾聞高麗伐倭國乘勝至此倭人斬白馬爲盟約和罷兵云而今聞倭人無傳之者似是諱之也。³⁸⁹

While widespread, not all Korean officials believed this myth. Wōn Chunggō 元重舉 (1719–1790) regarded the Silla conquest narrative with much skepticism. In noting that "this could be a case of distorted records" 是或被記事之訛, he suspected that the story began when Korean forces participated in the Mongol invasions of Japan. Wōn speculated that "it could

³⁸⁸ Im Sugan 任守幹, "Tongsa ilgi" 東槎日記, in *Kugyōk haehaeng ch'ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 9 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch'ujinhoe), 94.

³⁸⁹ Cho Myōngch'ae 曹命采, "Pongsa ilbonsi mun'gyōnnok" 奉使日本時間見錄, in *Kugyōk haehaeng ch'ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 10 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch'ujinhoe), 17.

perhaps be the event when [the Koryŏ general] Kim Sangnak 金上洛 entered [Japan] for the second time [in 1281 CE]” 此疑卽金上洛再入時事.³⁹⁰ In addition, and perhaps reflecting their own doubts about the validity of the conquest story, many Korean officials sent to Japan did not mention it in their records, even when they passed by Akamagaseki or Osaka.

Despite this skepticism among the Korean officials sent to Japan, the myth of a successful ancient Silla invasion of Japan soon came to be accepted as fact in Korea, and even those who had never visited Japan began to speak of it. Korean scholar An Chŏngbok 安鼎福 (1712–1791), for instance, included the conquest narrative in his historical work *Tongsa kangmok* 東史綱目 (“Outline and Details of Korean History,” 1778), despite clearly being aware that no primary source had recorded the invasion. In his entry for the year 583 CE, An Chŏngbok wrote that he “has rarely seen [any evidence] that there was an incident of [Korean] conquest of Japan across the sea in the historical records related to diplomatic exchanges and war” 交聘戰伐史籍罕記未聞有渡海征倭之事.³⁹¹ He nevertheless recorded the conquest narrative in which the Japanese sacrificed a white horse and built a mound. On another occasion, An Chŏngbok even wrote a poem commemorating the successful Silla invasion of Japan, with descriptions no less grandiose than the *Nihon shoki*’s portrayal of Empress Jingū’s conquest of Silla. A portion of it reads:

白馬塚在日域 The white horse mound is in Japan.
倭人 世世勤封築 The Japanese diligently built it through the generations.
謂昔羅王憤侵軼 [They] say that when the Silla king angrily invaded [Japan] in the past,
精兵數萬浮海伐 Tens of thousands of elite soldiers floated [across] the sea to attack.
馮夷淪易海若奔 Even the god of sea cleared the path for a fast advance.
大海以東無涯藩 There were no obstacles in the great sea’s east.

³⁹⁰ Wŏn Chunggŏ 元重舉, *Hwagukchi* 和國志, ed. Yi Usŏng 李佑成 (Seoul: Asea Munhwasa, 1990), 182.

³⁹¹ An Chŏngbok 安鼎福, *Tongsa kangmok* 東史綱目, vol. 1 (Seoul: Kyŏngin Munhwasa, 1970), 308.

揚龍旆擊鼉鼓 Waving dragon flags and beating on drums made of crocodile skin,
前茅直擣明石浦 The vanguard forces directly attacked Akashiura.
倭王失色事和親 The Japanese king turned pale and asked for peace,
刑牲載書告明神 Made a sacrifice and informed the god of the pledge.
從此鯨波久不涌 The sea waves have stopped surging since then,
千古勝蹟留遺塚 Leaving the mound as a relic for eternity.³⁹²

Many other Korean scholars followed suit. Yi Tǒngmu 李德懋 (1741–1793) repeated the conquest narrative:

In the twenty-second year of Ōjin, the army of Silla [invaded Japan and] went deep into Akashiura. It was only 100 *li* away from Osaka. The Japanese asked for peace, sacrificed a white horse and made a pledge east of Akamagaseki. The white horse mound is still there.
應神二十二年新羅兵深入明石浦距大坂百里日本人請和刑白馬盟于赤關之東尙有白馬塚。³⁹³

The same narrative is also included in another historical text, the aforementioned work by Han Ch'iyun:

In the twenty-second year of Ōjin, the Silla army attacked Japan, and went deep into Akashiura. It was only 100 *li* away from Osaka. The Japanese asked for peace, sacrificed a white horse and made a pledge east of Akamagaseki. The white horse mound is still there to this day.
應神二十二年新羅兵攻日本深入明石浦距大坂百里日本人請和刑白馬盟于赤關之東至今尙有白馬塚。³⁹⁴

This story was also circulated to inspire officials selected to serve on official missions to Japan. For example, Korean official Sin Kyǒngjun 申景濬 (1712–1781), after repeating the conquest narrative, praised Silla for accomplishing what even the mighty Mongols could not:

³⁹² An Chǒngbok 安鼎福, “Sunam chip” 順菴集, in *Yǒngin p'yojǒm Han'guk munjip ch'onggan* 影印標點韓國文集叢刊, vol. 229 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch'ujinhoe, 1999), 346.

³⁹³ Yi Tǒngmu 李德懋, “Ch'ǒngjanggwān chǒnsǒ” 靑莊館全書, in *Yǒngin p'yojǒm Han'guk munjip ch'onggan* 影印標點韓國文集叢刊, vol. 259 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch'ujinhoe, 2000), 190.

³⁹⁴ Han Ch'iyun 韓致瀾, *Haedong yǒksa* 海東繹史, vol. 1 (Seoul: Kyǒngin Munhwasa, 1974), 668.

The barbarian Yuan raised a great [army], but they could only go as far as Iki Island [in western Japan] before suffering a great defeat. [Throughout] history, only Silla managed to achieve victory after going deep [into the interior of Japan] in history.

胡元大舉塵至日岐島而卒大敗歷代能深入取勝者惟新羅而已。

Therefore, Sin Kyōngjun urged the Korean officials going to Japan that they “must visit the white horse mound when they pass by Akamagaseki” 行過赤間關必訪白馬墳.³⁹⁵

Facing contradictory myths regarding the histories of ancient Japan and Korea, early modern Korean officials and scholars chose to defend their own fantastical myths of divine self-defense against ancient Japanese attacks while also reviling the equally fantastic myths of the ancient Japanese subjugation of Korea. Conscious of the damage caused by the still-recent sixteenth-century Japanese invasions of Korea, Korean officials and scholars felt an ideological urgency to exact revenge, creating and perpetuating an antithetical myth of a Silla invasion of ancient Japan that asserted Korea’s victory in history. This chapter is first of two on Korean-Japanese contentions over ancient history. In the next chapter, I will discuss the early modern Japanese response to the introduction of Korean historical works with a focus on the challenges these texts presented to traditional Japanese narratives and the responses of Japanese intellectuals to these challenges.

³⁹⁵ Sin Kyōngjun 申景濬, “Song sa chi Ilbon sō” 送使之日本序, in *Yōam chōnsō* 旅菴全書, vol. 1 (Seoul: Kyōngin Munhwasa, 1976), 28-29.

Chapter 5: Reaffirmation of the *Nihon shoki*: Motoori Norinaga's Exegesis

As noted in the preceding chapter, the introduction of Japanese historical texts to Korea, which began in the seventeenth century, generated eager reactions from early modern Korean intellectuals. In reaction to Japanese claims of their ancient domination of Korea, Koreans sought to defend their own mythical narratives of ancient Korean independence not only by discrediting the Japanese texts as fictitious, but also by forging and sustaining the new myth of a successful Silla invasion of ancient Japan. The introduction of Korean historical texts in early modern Japan, however, spurred perhaps an even more consequential reaction from Japanese intellectuals. They realized that the Korean records not only contradicted the traditional Japanese historical narratives, but also revealed, among other things, damaging dating errors in the Japanese texts themselves. This revelation of errors principally compromised the *Nihon shoki* due to its greater emphasis on foreign relations and a writing style that organized history according to specific years.

More crucially, this revelation convinced certain early modern Japanese scholars, in particular, Arai Hakuseki 新井白石 (1657–1725), Tō Teikan 藤貞幹 (1732–1797), and Ueda Akinari 上田秋成 (1734–1809), to question the traditional edifice of ancient Japanese history. This ultimately propelled them to write expositions that undercut the traditional Japanese historical narratives at their source by raising doubts regarding the Japanese mythology centered on imperial lineage. In response, the prominent Japanese scholar Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長 (1730–1801) launched an impassioned public defense of Japanese mythology and the worldview of the *Nihon shoki* through public debates and extensive exegesis of ancient Japanese texts that rearranged Japanese mythology and history into a more defensive form.

Norinaga is best known, through his literary expositions, as the great discoverer of the native Japanese identity and culture. He has been unremittingly re-appropriated in accordance with the needs and challenges of Japanese society from the nineteenth to the twenty-first century in shaping the discourse of the Japanese nation.³⁹⁶ As the Japanese literary critic Karatani Kōjin 柄谷行人 once noted, Norinaga to Japan is what Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882) is to the United States—Norinaga was the discoverer of the native Japanese identity.³⁹⁷ Contrary to this backdrop, I aim to recast Norinaga and his scholarship, particularly his scholia on ancient Japanese history and mythology, as a form of defense against the challenges presented by the introduction of Korean texts in early modern Japan. In doing so, I also aim to challenge the conventional understanding that his body of work—particularly his magnum opus the *Kojiki-den* 古事記傳 (“Commentaries on the *Kojiki*”) and its supposed emphasis on ancient Japanese language—constitutes a rejection of the traditional emphasis on the *Nihon shoki* over charges of a corrupting Chinese influence.

As I will show, however, by utilizing the more defensible *Kojiki* as the original text, while extensively relying on the *Nihon shoki* in making interpretative commentaries, Norinaga in effect reaffirmed and even strengthened the traditional *Nihon shoki*-inspired assertion that ancient Japan was a Chinese-style empire that modeled itself as the universal middle kingdom

³⁹⁶ Muraoka Tsunetsugu 村岡典嗣, *Motoori Norinaga* 本居宣長 (Tokyo: Keiseisha, 1911); Maruyama Masao 丸山眞男, *Nihon seiji shisōshi kenkyū* 日本政治思想史研究 (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1952); Matsumoto Shigeru 松本滋, *Motoori Norinaga, 1730-1801* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970); Kobayashi Hideo 小林秀雄, *Motoori Norinaga* 本居宣長 (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1977); Tanaka Kōji 田中康二, *Motoori Norinaga no Dai Tōa Sensō* 本居宣長の大東亜戦争 (Tokyo: Perikansha, 2009); Tanaka Kōji 田中康二, *Motoori Norinaga no kokubungaku* 本居宣長の国文学 (Tokyo: Perikansha, 2015).

³⁹⁷ Karatani Kōjin 柄谷行人, *Kindai Nihon no hihyō: Shōwa hen* 近代日本の批評: 昭和編, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Fukutake Shoten, 1990), 113-114. Also see Katsurajima Nobuhiro 桂島宣弘, *Jita ninshiki no shisōshi: Nihon nashonarizumu no seisei to Higashi Ajia* 自他認識の思想史: 日本ナショナリズムの生成と東アジア (Tokyo: Yūshisha, 2008), chapter 1; Koyasu Nobukuni 子安宣邦, *Nihon nashonarizumu no kaidoku* 日本ナショナリズムの解読 (Tokyo: Hakutakusha, 2007), chapters 1-2.

with its own set of subservient tributary states around it. All such features are part of the ideals rooted in the Chinese classics that sought to represent the idealized Chinese antiquity. In this sense, Motoori Norinaga was the quintessential proto-nationalist seeking to recreate and succeed the ideals of antiquity.

Dissension of Worldview

In addition to the articulation of ancient Japan as a bona fide empire with the kingdoms of the Korean Peninsula as its submissive tributaries, the traditional Japanese historical narratives based on the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki* also argued for the uninterrupted unity of the ancient Japanese polity. More recent archaeological and historical research suggests that the Japanese imperial dynasty emerged in competition with rival polities that emerged throughout the archipelago and did not achieve dominance until the seventh and eighth centuries CE.³⁹⁸ However, the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki* consecrate the imperial lineage by connecting it to the genesis of Japan itself, rewriting much of the known history in accordance with this vision of unity under a single dynasty.

One aspect of this revisionism involved the continuous stream of continental migrants that settled in the Japanese islands. It is a truism that most ancestors of the modern Japanese came from the continent, particularly from the Korean Peninsula. While earlier migrants relocated to the Japanese islands before there was any concept of Korea or Japan, migrants from the later periods left behind their traces or even consciousness of their origins. One notable example is Amenohiboko, a figure who is most likely an aggregated symbol of early Silla

³⁹⁸ For some of the most representative works in English, see Joan R. Piggott, *The Emergence of Japanese Kingship* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997); Herman Ooms, *Imperial Politics and Symbolics in Ancient Japan: The Tenmu Dynasty, 650-800* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009).

migrants. According to the *Kojiki*, Amenohiboko was “a son of the Silla king” 新羅國王之子 who “crossed the sea to migrate [to Japan]” 參渡來 in search of his originally Japanese wife who ran away from him.³⁹⁹ The reason for his coming to Japan is far more flattering in the *Nihon shoki*: he came to Japan because he had “heard that Japan had a divine emperor” 聞日本國有聖皇, “which made him leave behind his country to [his] younger brother Chigo and migrate in submission [to Japan]” 則以己國授弟知古而化歸之.⁴⁰⁰ Just as the *Samguk sagi*, the earliest extant Korean historical record, featured a Japanese man named Hogong 瓠公 who sang praises of the first Silla king’s divine virtues, the *Nihon shoki* made use of migrants from the Korean Peninsula to signify willing recognition and submission by foreigners.

While the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki* suggest the smooth submission and settlement of Amenohiboko, and thereby the Silla migrants, the local records of Japan’s various provinces suggest a more complicated picture. The *Harima no kuni fudoki* 播磨國風土記 (“Gazetteer of Harima Province,” 713 CE), for example, depicted Amenohiboko as an invader who fought against the local forces for control of the Harima Province.⁴⁰¹ In one account, Amenohiboko, described as a god, “came from Korea” 從韓國度來 and expressed to the local god that he “wanted to obtain [his] own place to stay” 欲得吾所宿之處. After entering the region uninvited, Amenohiboko menacingly “stirred his sword in the seawater” 以劍攪海水, which made the local

³⁹⁹ *Kojiki* 古事記, trans. and eds. Yamaguchi Yoshinori 山口佳紀 and Kōnoshi Takamitsu 神野志隆光 (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1997), 274-276.

⁴⁰⁰ *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀, 261.

⁴⁰¹ Edwina Palmer also interprets the arrival of Amenohiboko to Harima as an invasion, noting that an “invasion of Ame no Hiboko’s troops from the region of Silla was resisted by Japanese forces.” See Edwina Palmer, *Harima Fudoki: A Record of Ancient Japan Reinterpreted, Translated, Annotated, and with Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 159.

ruler “immediately afraid” 卽畏.⁴⁰² In another account, a Harima province valley was supposedly named “feud valley” 奪谷 because Amenohiboko and the native god “fought against each other over the valley” 相奪此谷.⁴⁰³ Similarly, a river in the region was called the “crying river” because there was a crying horse in the river when [Amenohiboko and the local god] fought for control of the province” 占國之時有嘶馬遇於此川故曰伊奈加川.⁴⁰⁴ The records also suggest that the battles between Amenohiboko and the locals featured large armies. A hill was called the “chaff hill” 粳丘 because it was made from the enormous quantity of leftover ears that the assembled troops pounded when the two sides “each raised armies and fought each other” 各發軍相戰. The same record also notes that Amenohiboko had an “army of eight thousand” 八千軍 that partook in the invasion.⁴⁰⁵

In sum, the national historical narratives, particularly that of the *Nihon shoki*, rewrote the rather tumultuous history of Korean migrants’ settlement in the Harima Province in accordance with the vision of unbroken unity perpetuated by the ancient Japanese polity. The *Nihon shoki* compilers did this by describing the symbolic figure of Amenohiboko as a submissive character who willingly abandoned his throne in Silla and migrated to Japan because of his supposed admiration for the Japanese emperor’s virtues. However, as can be seen in the contemporaneous record, the *Harima no kuni fudoki*, these migrants, conscious of their foreign identity, not only banded together at times but also fought against the natives for territorial control before ultimately submitting to the imperial court’s rule. Further west, an even more consequential story

⁴⁰² *Fudoki* 風土記, 70.

⁴⁰³ *Ibid.*, 84.

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 86.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 98.

unfolded around an ancient independent polity dominated by recent Silla migrants and their descendants at Izumo Province 出雲國. Like the presentation of Amenohiboko, this story also features a symbolic god whose story has been rewritten to conform to the national narrative.

This god, named Susanoo, is described in the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki* as a son of the creator god, Izanagi, and a brother of Amaterasu, the central god of Japanese mythology, from whom the Japanese imperial lineage stems. While Amaterasu is uniformly described as a paragon of virtue, Susanoo, is described as a rebellious god with provincial or even foreign connections. According to the *Nihon shoki*, Susanoo made a stop in Silla before arriving at Japan through Izumo:

Susanoo descended upon Silla with his son, Itakeru, and stayed at a place called Soshimori. He loudly proclaimed, “This land is not where I want to live.” He then created a ship from the soil. He sailed it and headed east, eventually arriving at Izumo.
素戔鳴尊帥其子五十猛神降到於新羅國居曾尸茂梨之處乃興言曰此地吾不欲居遂以埴土作舟乘之東渡到出雲國。

The same account from the *Nihon shoki* observes that Susanoo and his son intentionally left Korea treeless, choosing to make Japan green instead:

When [Susanoo and his son] Itakeru first descended from the heaven [to Korea], Susanoo brought with him many tree seeds. However, he did not plant them in Korean lands and instead brought them all back [to Japan]. From Kyushu and throughout Japan, there was not a place where trees were not planted and mountains did not become green.
初五十猛神天降之時多將樹種而下然不殖韓地盡以持歸遂始自筑紫凡大八洲國之內莫不播殖而成青山焉。⁴⁰⁶

The *Nihon shoki* does not suggest a motivation for Susanoo’s actions. However, Susanoo’s acts of descending into Korea and leaving it desolated were interpreted by many Japanese scholars as an indication that Susanoo once conquered Korea in ancient times before

⁴⁰⁶ *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀, 127.

abandoning it in favor of Japan. For example, the Japanese scholar Hayashi Gahō 林鶯峰 (1618–1688) noted the following:

To speak using our country's history, the Korean land of Silla was also where Susanoo ruled. His imposing presence was not something that [the Silla founder] Hyōkkōse, [the Koguryō founder] Chumong, or [the Paekche founder] Onjo could aspire to. It also would not be a distortion to consider him one of Korea's forefathers. The only regretful point is that [the people of] that country do not yet know this.

若以我國史言之則韓鄉之島新羅之國亦是素盞烏尊之所經歷也尊之雄偉非朴赫朱蒙溫祚可企及則推爲三韓之一祖亦不爲誣乎唯恨彼國未知焉。⁴⁰⁷

Furthermore, Matsushita Kenrin 松下見林 (1637–1703) noted that traces of Susanoo's arrival in Korea can be found in a Korean musical piece named "Soshimari," which is "close to Soshimori in its reading" 與曾尸茂梨訓近:

In ancient times, our Susanoo descended upon Silla with his son, Itakeru, staying at a place called Soshimori. He loudly proclaimed, "This land is not where I want to live." There is a Korean musical piece called Soshimari. Some say it is court music. It is a musical piece created by Susanoo. The remaining sounds are included in [the Fujiwara no Moronaga's (1138–1192 CE) music compilation] *Jinchi yoroku*. [However,] Koreans do not know this.

昔我素盞烏尊帥其子五十猛神降到於新羅國居曾尸茂梨之處乃興言曰此地吾不欲居高麗曲有蘇志磨利或曰廻庭樂蓋素盞烏尊所作樂也遺音載在仁智要錄三韓人不知之。⁴⁰⁸

In a similar vein, Amenomori Hōshu 雨森芳洲 (1668–1755) wrote:

According to a book [quoted in the *Nihon shoki*], Susanoo descended upon Silla, and he did not plant any [tree seeds] in the Korean land, [choosing instead to bring them to Japan]. Looking at this account, [it appears that] he had ruled that land.

一書に、素戔鳴尊新羅の國に降りまして、とあり、また韓地に殖へつくさず、とあるを見れば、尊その地を經略し。⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰⁷ Hayashi Gahō 林鶯峰, *Gahō Rin gakushi bunshū* 鶯峰林学士文集, ed. Hino Tatsuo 日野龍夫, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Perikansha, 1997), 287.

⁴⁰⁸ Matsushita Kenrin 松下見林, *Ishō Nihon den* 異稱日本傳, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1975), 1268-1269.

⁴⁰⁹ Amenomori Hōshu 雨森芳洲, "Tawaregusa" たはれ草, in *Jinsai nissatsu* 仁齋日札. *Tawaregusa* たはれ草. *Fujingen* 不尽言. *Muka ukyō* 無可有郷, eds. Uetani Hajime 植谷元, Mizuta Norihisa 水田紀久, and Hino Tatsuo 日野龍夫 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten 2000), 42.

Local materials, however, contradict this national narrative surrounding Susanoo. The *Izumo no kuni fudoki* 出雲國風土記 (“Gazetteer of Izumo Province,” 733 CE), a text contemporaneous with the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki* and based on local sources, describes Susanoo as a god specific to Izumo with no ties to Amaterasu or Japan at large. The same text also features an entirely independent foundation myth vis-à-vis that of the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*, in which local gods created Izumo through the mythical process of “land pulling” 國引, transplanting parcels of land from four directions to Izumo. This process, strangely enough, began with taking land from Silla and continued on to take land from three other places in the Japanese islands.⁴¹⁰ Izumo also features a number of local myths, place names, and shrines that suggest a historical connection to Korea through Susanoo.⁴¹¹ In sum, Izumo was an independent polity in ancient times prior to its absorption, and in this context, Susanoo functions as a symbol of Silla migrants who played a key role in creating the ancient state. Susanoo’s absorption into the national Japanese pantheon appears to have happened only after Izumo’s absorption into the national polity.

While this obvious discrepancy between the national and local narratives remained largely unproblematized in Japan prior to the early modern period, the widespread introduction of Korean historical texts into Japan starting with the looted items collected during the Hideyoshi’s invasions of Korea, stimulated unprecedented debates on ancient history. Korean official Im Sungan 任守幹 (1665–1721) has noted the outflow of Korean texts, writing that “around one thousand Japanese residing in the Japan House of Pusan purchase and take out our

⁴¹⁰ *Fudoki* 風土記, 134-138.

⁴¹¹ Mizuno Yū 水野祐, *Nyūmon, Kofudoki* 入門・古風土記, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Yūzankaku Shuppan, 1987), 19-25; James H. Grayson, “Susa-no-o: a culture hero from Korea,” *Japan Forum* 14, no. 3 (2002): 465-487.

country's texts, such as unofficial histories, maps, and collections of individual writings”
倭人常住釜館者大略千餘人我國書籍則野史輿圖文集無不購去。⁴¹² As will be discussed, this introduction of Korean texts into Japan also included the *Samguk sagi* and the *Tongguk t'onggam*. As literary scholar Yi Yuri 李裕利 notes, the *Tongguk t'onggam* was in collection of a number of Japanese domains such as the Mito 水戸 and the Maeda 加賀 as well as the Tokugawa shogunate itself; it was also republished in Japan in 1667 CE.⁴¹³ As for the Japanese reactions to these texts, Peter Kornicki wrote that “[the] only sign of antipathy towards Korea is to be found in Hayashi Gahō's preface to *Tongguk t'onggam*,” in which Hayashi Gahō “objects to [the text's] failure to mention Korea's subservience to Japan and the descriptions of Korea as 東方君子國 (the civilized country of east).”⁴¹⁴ However, as I will show, the Japanese defensive response to the Korean historical works was far more extensive and consequential.

The initial reaction of Japanese scholars largely focused on the obvious discrepancy between the Japanese and Korean historical texts—namely, the Japanese assertion that ancient Korean kingdoms were subservient tributaries of Japan and the Korean assertion that ancient Korean kingdoms constantly fought off foreign intruders and remained independent. The Japanese scholar Matsushita Kenrin commented extensively on how the Korean records intentionally left out traces of Japanese domination of ancient Korea. Commenting on the *Samguk sagi*, for example, Kenrin noted, “The thirteenth through the twenty-second volume in

⁴¹² Im Suga 任守幹, “Tongsa ilgi” 東槎日記, in *Kugyōk haehaeng ch'ongjae* 國譯海行總載, vol. 9 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch'ujinhoe), 95.

⁴¹³ Yi, Yuri 李裕利. “Chōsen hon tōgoku tsugan no Nihon deno ryūden oyobi kankō” 朝鮮本東國通鑑の日本での流伝及び刊行, in *Umi wo wataru shisho: Higashi ajia no tsugan* 海を渡る史書: 東アジアの通鑑, eds. Kim Sidōk 金時徳 and Hamano Seiichirō 濱野靖一郎 (Tokyo: Bensei Shuppan, 2016), 81-100.

⁴¹⁴ Peter Kornicki, “Korean Books in Japan: From the 1590s to the End of the Edo Period,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 133:1 (2013): 90.

the *Samguk sagi* constitute the history of Koguryō. [In discussing the history of Koguryō, however,] not a single word was said about our country, and this is extremely shoddy and negligent” 三國史記自第十三至第二十二高麗本紀也一言無我國事粗略之甚也。⁴¹⁵

Regarding the *Tongguk t'onggam*, he commented:

Fifty-six volumes of the *Tongguk t'onggam* recorded [the history of] Korea from beginning to end. Matters regarding Japan are occasionally mentioned, as in the texts above. The only regretful thing is that while even petty events are recorded for the more recent eras, many important events are left out regarding ancient times.

東國通鑑五十六卷記三韓始終其間往往有日本事表章如上文惟恨志近代小事煩雜於上世大事多闕如也。⁴¹⁶

Kenrin therefore asked, “How could one entirely trust [foreign views of Japan]” 豈可盡信乎?

He warned his countrymen that they “should base themselves on our country’s works of history in verifying [foreign views] and [only then] critically and selectively take their views”

當主我國記徵之而論辯取舍則可也。⁴¹⁷

As another example, Japanese scholar and shogunate official Arai Hakuseki likewise looked at the stated discrepancies and commented on them. After examining both the *Samguk sagi* and the *Tongguk t'onggam*, Hakuseki wrote the following:

Looking at our country’s history again, from the moment when Empress Jingū conquered Korea and established Japanese administration to rule its countries to the reign of Empress Saimei, for twenty-four generations of emperors and 460 years, there was not a monarch or subject of that country who was not a retainer of ours. Such matters are seen not only in our country’s historical works but also in historical works of the Northern and Southern dynasties, such as the *Book of Jin*, the *Book of Song*, the *Book of Qi*, and the *Book of Liang* as well as books like the *Old Book of Tang* and the *Kudara Annals*. Now, reading the Korean historical works, however, it appears they have written about our country as a vassal of theirs. Feeling shameful and envious that they have submitted to

⁴¹⁵ Matsushita Kenrin 松下見林, *Ishō Nihon den* 異稱日本傳, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1975), 1288-1289.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid., 1268.

⁴¹⁷ Matsushita Kenrin 松下見林, *Ishō Nihon den* 異稱日本傳, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1975), 4.

our country, they have things to hide, so they distort and conceal history for the sake of their country.

又本朝國史を按ずるに始め神功皇后三韓を征し給ひ彼國に日本府を置いて其國々を治め給ひしよ齊明天皇の朝に至る迄凡天皇二十四代歴數四西六十餘年が間は彼國の君民我朝の臣妾たらずといふ者なし此事ひとり本朝國史に見えし所のみならず晋宋齊梁等南北諸史舊唐并に百濟本紀等の書に悉く詳也然れ共今朝鮮の史書を考るに等我國をさして彼國外藩のごとくにするしをきぬ是我國の爲に臣屬せしといふ事をはぢにくみて其本國の爲に曲て隠し諱む所あるが故なるべし。⁴¹⁸

Several years later, Japanese scholar Motoori Norinaga also commented on this noticeable distortion in his work on Japanese history. After noting how the Japanese domination of Korea started with the Empress Jingū's supposed conquest, Norinaga took issue with the Korean denial of what he considered a historical fact:

However, texts like the *Samguk sagi* and the *Tongguk t'onggam* of Korea did not record a word about it. They negligently wrote about the events of the imperial realm [Japan], writing as if [Japan] was a country on an equal footing [with Korea]. They made such omissions in regret of the fact that they have submitted and served [Japan] since ancient times. Nevertheless, the sending of missions and presenting of tributes did not end until the medieval times. Furthermore, the *Book of Sui* says, "Silla and Paekche all consider Japan a 'great nation' that has many rare goods. They both revere Japan, and the coming and going were frequent." More recently, parts of the book from Ming China titled *Royal Ming Exemplary Records on State Affairs*, which also contains historical notes about our country, said, "It [Japan] has some fifty vassal states. Silla and Paekche are also its vassal states." Looking at this, one should know that such books [Korean texts] have no truth in their contents.

然るをかの韓の國の。三國史記東國通鑑などいふふみどもに。一言もかかることをばしるさずして。ただ皇國の事をば。よそげに。おのがひとしなみの國の如くいへるは。古にかくみやつこととして。つかへまつりしことをきらひて。はぶける物也。されど中昔までも。まさしく使をさして。みつぎ物奉りしこと絶ず。又もろこしの國の隋書といふふみにも。新羅百濟皆以倭爲大國多珍物。並敬仰之。恆通使往來といひ。近き明の世の法世録といふに。御國の事をしるせるにも。其屬國有五十餘。新羅百濟莫非屬國。といへるなどを見ても。かのふみ共のまことならぬはしるべき也。⁴¹⁹

⁴¹⁸ Arai Hakuseki 新井白石, "Chōsen koku shinsho no shiki no koto" 朝鮮國信書の式の事, in *Arai Hakuseki zenshū* 新井白石全書, vol. 4 (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1906), 671-672.

⁴¹⁹ Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長, "Gyojū gaigen" 馭戎慨言, 26.

Far more problematic, however, was that the Korean historical texts revealed noticeable dating errors in the Japanese texts, particularly in the entries regarding Japan's relationships with the ancient kingdoms of the Korean Peninsula. The revelation of errors disproportionately affected the two texts. While errors did affect the *Kojiki*, they were far more damaging to the *Nihon shoki* due to the latter's greater emphasis on foreign relations and the writing style that organized history by specific years. For example, one of the errors involved the appearance of a lineage of Paekche kings before they actually lived, starting with King Kūnch'ogo 近肖古王 (r. 346–375). The *Kojiki*, however, does not note years of reign, and while it does note the submission of tribute by Kūnch'ogo, the details are brief, and there is no mention of what year it occurred. On the other hand, the extensive and year-by-year descriptions of Kūnch'ogo and his actions in the *Nihon shoki* exposed it to far more scrutiny and criticism.

In the *Nihon shoki*, Paekche's King Kūnch'ogo made his first appearance during the forty-fourth year of the supposed reign of Empress Jingū, which, according to the chronology suggested by the *Nihon shoki*, was 244 CE. Kūnch'ogo supposedly interacted with the Japanese numerous times, often expressing his unwavering loyalty to the Japanese court. In the fifty-first year of Empress Jingū's reign (251 CE), Jingū supposedly sent an official to Paekche to give the following message to King Kūnch'ogo: "I have opened the path for the first time and conquered the sea's west under divine guidance, granting [those lands] to Paekche. Now, to rebuild deep amity and [as a way of expressing] lasting affection, I send these gifts [to Paekche]"

朕從神所驗始開道路平定海西以賜百濟今復厚結好永寵賞之。 After hearing this message, Kūnch'ogo and his son and successor, King Kūngusu 近仇首 (r. 375–384), immediately expressed their gratitude. "The Paekche king and his son both placed their foreheads to the ground" 百濟王父子竝顙致地, supposedly saying:

The overflowing grace of your country is greater than the heaven and earth. How could it be ever be forgotten? The sage king above is brilliant, like the sun and moon, and your subjects below are solid like the mountains [in their loyalty]: they will forever be a western tributary [of Japan] and will never have second thoughts.

貴國鴻恩重於天地何日何時敢有忘哉聖王在上明如日月今臣在下固如山岳永爲西蕃終無貳心。⁴²⁰

Their display of loyalty toward “the sage king” Empress Jingū, of course, was most likely a product of imagination. Even if Empress Jingū existed, Kūnch’ogo and his son were born 120 years later than the Japanese records suggests. According to the *Nihon shoki*, Kūnch’ogo supposedly died in 255 CE, the fifty-fifth year of Empress Jingū. In contrast, the Korean historical records indicate that Kūnch’ogo in fact died 120 years later in 375 CE. The *Nihon shoki* also introduces Kūnch’ogo’s successors, King Kūngusu 近仇首王 (r. 375–384), King Ch’imnyu 枕流王 (r. 384–385), King Chinsa 辰斯王 (r. 385–392), and King Asin 阿莘王 (r. 392–405) 120 years before they appear in the Korean texts.⁴²¹ The revelation of such errors in the *Nihon shoki* caused some Japanese scholars to question the historicity of much of ancient Japanese history.

Perhaps one of the first early modern Japanese scholars to raise doubts regarding the historicity of Japanese antiquity as written in the *Nihon shoki* was Arai Hakuseki. As historian Kōnoshi Takamitsu 神野志隆光 noted, traditional Japanese scholarship on Japanese antiquity up

⁴²⁰ *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀, 359.

⁴²¹ Historian Jonathan Best, for example, does not necessarily put great emphasis on the dating error and still argue for “significant [Japanese] influence in southern Korea from late in the fourth century to the end of the fifth.” His interpretation is based on the Kwanggaet’o stele 廣開土王陵碑 and Paekche inscriptions stored in the Isonokami Shrine 石上神宮 that suggest a Japanese military presence in southern Korea as well as Paekche’s strategic imperative in relying on Japanese power. With that said, however, early modern scholars of Japan and Korea almost exclusively focused on published texts like the *Nihon shoki* and the *Tongguk t’onggam* in making their interpretations. Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, there is also no proof that Empress Jingū existed or had anything to do with projection of Japanese power onto southern Korea at that time. In other words, the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki* still include a number of questionable entries that are not verifiable and in conflict with the historical records from Korea. See Jonathan W. Best, *A History of the Early Korean Kingdom of Paekche, together with an annotated translation of The Paekche Annals of the Samguk sagi* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006), 67-70.

to the early modern period had focused almost exclusively on the *Nihon shoki*, while the *Kojiki* remained largely underutilized.⁴²² Hakuseki broke from this tradition by prioritizing the *Kojiki* over the *Nihon shoki*, and his reasoning was based on his understanding that the *Nihon shoki* is largely faulty in its content. While Hakuseki did occasionally cite the *Nihon shoki* in his work on ancient history, he also proclaimed it as mostly useless. Hakuseki noted that “there is generally not a thing that is correct [in the *Nihon shoki*]” 大かた一事も尤らしき事はなき事に候。On the other hand, Hakuseki praised the *Kojiki* for being relatively accurate in its accounts:

While the *Kojiki* [appears to have been] considerably discrepant in historical facts in its compilation, it nevertheless contains a number of what appears to be authentic records. 古事記は勅撰にて舊事とはよほどゆきちがひがひし候ていかにも實録と見へ候事共多々有之候。⁴²³

One reason Hakuseki perceived the *Kojiki* to be more historically accurate vis-à-vis the *Nihon shoki*, despite the fact that the two texts largely support the same worldview, was that the *Kojiki* was more defensible when checked off from the Korean historical texts. This is not to say that Hakuseki considered the Korean texts to be flawless standards from which the Japanese historical records should be ascertained. In an article titled “Many Flaws of Eastern [Korean] History” 東史多訛, for example, Hakuseki criticized the discrepancies among different Korean historical texts regarding the story of the Silla official, Pak Chesang 朴堤上 (fl. 363–418), in which Pak supposedly rescued a Silla prince from captivity in Japan by tricking the Japanese authorities.⁴²⁴ Nevertheless, the *Kojiki*’s relative “compatibility” with Korean historical texts due

⁴²² Kōnoshi Takamitsu 神野志隆光, *Kojiki to Nihon shoki: “Tennō shinwa” no rekishi* 古事記と日本書紀: 「天皇神話」の歴史 (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1999), 34-187.

⁴²³ Arai Hakuseki 新井白石, “Hakuseki sensei shukan” 白石先生手簡, in *Arai Hakuseki zenshū* 新井白石全書, vol. 5 (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1906), 536.

⁴²⁴ Arai Hakuseki 新井白石, “Hakuseki sensei ibun” 白石先生遺文, in *Arai Hakuseki zenshū* 新井白石全書, vol. 5 (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1906), 14-16.

to its relative de-emphasis on foreign relations and absence of year-by-year organization was one reason Hakuseki favored it over the *Nihon shoki*. Of the *Kojiki*, he wrote:

It matches well with foreign historical texts, like Korea's historical texts.
異國の史三韓の國史に引合せ候にひたと合ひ候。⁴²⁵

Hakuseki's textual criticism may have given him the insight to critically reappraise the framework of ancient Japanese history at large. As is widely known, Hakuseki's historical scholarship is best characterized by his refusal to recognize the notion of the divinity of the Japanese imperial lineage and mythology. In support of this framework, Hakuseki read the Japanese word *kami* as a *jukujikun* 熟字訓 word, a native Japanese word whose meaning was altered by the later application of one or more Chinese characters. After noting the two conventionally used Chinese characters for the word *kami*, “god” 神 and “superior” 上, Hakuseki argues that the usage of character “god” 神 is misleading and that the character “superior” 上 better suits the ancient usage of the word *kami*:

Kami is human. In our country's customs, those who are prestigious are called *kami*. The word is the same in antiquity as in the present; it signifies admiration and reverence.
神とは人也我國の俗凡其尊ぶ所の人を稱して加美といふ古今の語相同しこれ尊尙の義と聞えたり。⁴²⁶

Through this critical insight, Hakuseki reinterpreted a number of stories from the Japanese mythology as a series of hyperbolic analogies. The gods were real people, whose actions had been merely amplified by later generations of writers who exaggerated them for the sake of glorification. The story of the mythical births of the Japanese islands by Izanagi and Izanami, for example, were read by Hakuseki as a series of naval and amphibious invasions by the imperial

⁴²⁵ Arai Hakuseki 新井白石, “Hakuseki sensei shukan” 白石先生手簡, 536.

⁴²⁶ Arai Hakuseki 新井白石, “Koshitsū dokuhō hanrei” 古史通讀法凡例, in *Arai Hakuseki zenshū* 新井白石全書, vol. 3 (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1906), 219.

dynasty's founders, who captured one island at a time. Such myths were thereby analogies for conquest.⁴²⁷

Despite his textual criticism and revisionism, however, Hakuseki kept many of the traditional themes of ancient Japanese history intact—he wrote of Susanoo's foray into Korea as a historical event, believed that Empress Jingū had conquered Silla, and assumed the historical Japanese dominance in the Korean Peninsula. However, Japanese scholars Tō Teikan upped the ante even further by using the new critical insight provided by the introduction of the Korean texts to turn the entire edifice of Japanese antiquity on its head in arguing for the Korean origins of Japanese civilization. This challenge was publicly met by the Japanese scholar Motoori Norinaga, who eagerly defended the integrity of the traditional concept of Japanese antiquity.

Tō Teikan and his work “Spontaneous Saying” 衝口發 (1781) sought to overturn the existing edifice of Japanese history by attributing the origins of almost all aspects of Japanese tradition to ancient Korea, while also noting substantial Chinese influence. As for the Japanese language, for example, Teikan notes:

[As for] the language of our country, the pronunciation and the meaning have all come from foreign countries. While there are many theories for Japanese pronunciations, eight to nine out of ten are Korean sounds [from] the ancient Korean language. Or, they are transmissions of Chinese sounds.

本邦の言語、音訓共に異邦より移り來者也。和訓には種々の説ありども、十に八九は上古の韓音韓語、或は西土の音の轉ずる者也。⁴²⁸

⁴²⁷ Arai Hakuseki 新井白石, “Koshitsū” 古史通, in *Arai Hakuseki zenshū* 新井白石全書, vol. 3 (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1906), 229.

⁴²⁸ Tō Teikan 藤貞幹, “Shōkōhatsu” 衝口發, in *Nihon shisō tōsō shiryō* 日本思想闘争史料, ed. Washio Junkei 鷲尾順敬, vol. 4 (Tokyo: Tōhō Shoin, 1930), 231.

As another example, Teikan also attributed the origins of traditional clothing to Korea. After noting that the simple “Chihaya” 千早 was the only style of clothing that existed in ancient Japan, Teikan claimed that the upper echelon of Japanese society had adopted Korean clothes:

The ruler and the ruled [in Japan] began wearing Korean clothes when [Paekche] presented two seamstresses during the era of Emperor Ōjin. The ordinary people, however, were still practically naked.

應神帝御宇、縫女二人貢ぜしより、始君臣ともに韓衣を着たり。しかれども庶人に至りては、裸形なりしとぞ。⁴²⁹

Teikan referenced the *Tongguk t'onggam* of Korea in his criticism of the *Nihon shoki*. His work begins with criticisms of the dates in the *Nihon shoki*; for example, he dismisses its claim that 1,792,470 years separated Emperor Jimmu and Amaterasu as something “not even worth discussing” 論ずるにたらず. He also problematized the ascension year of Emperor Jimmu, noting that “unless 600 years are subtracted, [the ascension year of Emperor Jimmu] does not conform to the three kingdoms [Koguryō, Paekche, and Silla]” 六百年減ぜされば、三國の年紀符合せず。⁴³⁰ Furthermore, noting that the name “Japan” 日本 does not appear in Chinese records prior to the Tang period, Teikan quoted the *Tongguk t'onggam*, which states that “Wa changed its name to Japan” 倭國更號日本 in the year 670 CE.⁴³¹ Teikan thereby concluded that “all mentions of the name Japan in ancient times, starting with the *Nihon shoki*, were [thereby] retrospectively recorded” 日本紀を始め、上古日本の字を用るは、皆追記なる。⁴³²

Having dismissed the *Nihon shoki* as largely erroneous, Teikan used the Korean record *Tongguk t'onggam* to support his thesis that Susanoo originally came from Korea. After noting

⁴²⁹ Ibid., 242.

⁴³⁰ Ibid., 228-229.

⁴³¹ *Tongguk t'onggam* 東國通鑑, vol. 1 (Seoul: Kyōngin Munhwasa, 1974), 203.

⁴³² Tō Teikan 藤貞幹, “Shōkōhatsu” 衝口發, 234.

that “Susanoo is the ruler of Chinhan [one of the little-known ancient confederates of southern Korea]” 素戔雄尊は辰韓の主也, he added:

To cite the Silla section of the *Tongguk t’onggam*, their ruler was called Kōsōu. Kōsōu refers to the king of Chinhan or noblemen. Ch’ach’aung, also called Chach’ung, is a dialect word for shrine maiden. It mostly refers to someone divine and redoubtable. With this in mind, Cha’ch’aung is Susanoo. The ancient sounds are mutually intelligible. Therefore, he clearly was a Silla king.

東國通鑑。引新羅本史云。其君稱居西于者。一居西于辰。言王。或云。呼貴人之稱也。次々雄者。一次々雄。或云。慈充。方言巫。盖神而敬畏之稱也。按次々雄は、即素戔雄也。古音相通ず。然ば則、新羅の君長たること明白也。⁴³³

He concluded that, Susanoo’s Korean origins are the reason aspects of ancient Japanese tradition come from Korea:

Since the world began, all things started with Susanoo from above and Ōnamuchi from below. [All] things and the language [of Japan] are therefore [derivatives] of Korean customs.

開闢の後、上に素戔雄尊、下は大己貴命より事始りたれば、事物、言語、皆韓俗也。⁴³⁴

Having obtained a copy of Teikan’s work, Norinaga defended the self-reliance of Japanese antiquity by calling Teikan a “madman” 狂人 in the title of his 1785 rebuttal, “Gagging the Madman” 鉗狂人. Norinaga’s defense argued for the validity of ancient Japanese history and mythology as recorded in texts like the *Nihon shoki* and asserted that Susanoo was a Japanese god who conquered ancient Korea, not a Korean king who brought aspects of Korean culture to Japan. As for the validity of the ancient Japanese texts, Norinaga insisted that the aspects about Japanese antiquity were orally transmitted without distortion and are accurately captured by later texts. Furthermore, he claimed that oral transmission in ancient times was even “superior” to written records:

⁴³³ Ibid., 228. The accurate title of early Silla monarchs is Kōsōgan 居西干. The title is seemingly misquoted here.

⁴³⁴ Ibid., 258.

When recording events that happened prior to [the existence of letters and books, there are people who] think that [such events] should not be believed, as letters and books did not exist at that time. But that is just an opinion and is in no way suitable, because according to the preface of the *Kogo Shūi* [“Gleanings from Ancient Stories”], the imperial realm’s [Japan’s] tradition in ancient times, when letters did not yet exist, was to orally transmit stories among the high and the low, the old and the young, and what was said earlier was carried out, preserved, and not forgotten. Oral transmission was extremely accurate, detailed, and complete in the era without the letters; they are even more superior to transmissions via writing and should be trusted.

然ればそれより以前の事を記せは。文字書籍のなき世なれば信じがたしとぞ思ふらむ。然れ共これはただ一わたりの見解にて。今少し至らざるもの也。其故は皇國の古典は。古語拾遺序に。上古之世未有文字貴賤老少口口相傳前言往行存而不忘とある如く。文字なかりし世には。口語をもて傳へし事の。甚正しく詳に全くして。中々に書籍にかきつたへたるよりもまさりて信ずべきよしの有なり。⁴³⁵

Norinaga also reaffirmed that Susanoo was Japanese in origin. He wrote:

The claim that Susanoo is the ruler of Chinhan, however, is completely baseless. With this in mind, such a claim is based on this god’s descent upon Silla during the Age of the Gods. To equate Silla with Chinhan is a grave mistake. From the outset, Susanoo was the younger brother of Amaterasu. He was a god [who existed] millions of years before King Wu of Zhou enfeoffed [the Chinese sage] Jizi in Korea.

然れ共須佐之男命を辰韓の主といふこと。さらに據なし。因て按ずるにこれは神代紀に。此神新良の國に降り給へりしことあるをもて據とするなるべし。そは新良即辰韓と心得ていふめれ共。これ大に誤れること也。抑須佐之男命は天照大御神の御弟命にましませば。かのもろこしにては。周武王が箕子を朝鮮に封ぜし時などよりも。數百萬歳以前の神にてましませば。⁴³⁶

After insisting that Susanoo supposedly existed “millions of years” 數百萬歳 before Korea came into being, Norinaga attributes aspects of cultural similarity between Japan and Korea to Japan’s historical domination of Korea, which facilitated cultural transmission between the two countries.

The direction of this stated cultural transmission went from Japan to Korea, not the other way around:

The ancient Korean countries were mostly subservient to the imperial realm [Japan], and [therefore the Korean and Japanese people] often frequented [each other’s countries]. As

⁴³⁵ Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長, “Kenkyōjin” 鉗狂人, in *Motoori Norinaga zenshū* 本居宣長全集, ed. Ōno Susumu 大野晋, vol. 8 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1972), 287.

⁴³⁶ *Ibid.*, 276-277.

there were those who lived here and there for extended periods of time, not only language but also many [aspects of] clothing, material goods, and customs appear to have spread from here [Japan] to there [Korea]. Suggesting the reverse, that [such aspects of culture] moved from there to here, is not something deeply thought through.

古韓の國々は。多く皇國に服屬して左つれば。つねに往來しげく。たがひに此方にも彼方にも久しくとどまり居たりし人も多かりしかば。言語のみならず。衣服器財風俗なども。此方より彼方へうつりたるも多しと見ゆるに。それらをすら返りて彼より此に移れる物とするは。深く思はざるひがこと也。⁴³⁷

In addition to Tō Teikan, Norinaga also faced challenges from the Japanese scholar Ueda Akinari, who jumped into the ring by writing a public response to the abovementioned “Gagging the Madman” 鉗狂人. While Teikan’s revisionism centered on Susanoo, Akinari’s critical thesis focused on Amaterasu, perhaps the most central god of Japanese mythology. According to the *Nihon shoki*, Amaterasu was the great-grandmother of the first Japanese emperor Jimmu who bequeathed the three imperial regalia to the Japanese emperors through her grandson Ninigi. Amaterasu was and continues to be the most important god of Japanese mythology. Akinari’s main argument centered on his view that Japanese mythology is allegorical and specific only to Japan; thereby it does not constitute a universal worldview. In staking out his position, Akinari incorporated parts of Teikan’s work in his polemic targeted against Norinaga.

Teikan argued against the traditional belief in the divinity of the gods of Japanese mythology by noting that Amaterasu, despite her supposed divinity as the sun god, had physically died. In doing so, Teikan had reinterpreted the mythological narrative of Amaterasu and the Japanese god Ame-no-Uzume 天鈿女. According to the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*, the typically magnanimous Amaterasu eventually became angered by her brother Susanoo’s repeated transgressions, and she thereby shut herself out by hiding inside the “heavenly rock cave” 天岩戸, making the world go dark. To lure her out, Ame-no-Uzume 天鈿女 sang and danced in

⁴³⁷ Ibid., 288.

front of the cave, causing a loud gathering of other gods. When Amaterasu peeped outside to look, another god pulled Amaterasu out of the cave, bringing light back to the world. Teikan interpreted this story as yet another example of cultural transmission from Korea to Japan, interpreting Ame-no-Uzume's dance as an ancient Korean custom: "It is an ancient custom of ancestral rites for a god. This is also [an aspect of] shamanism introduced from Chinhan [ancient Korea]" 此亦辰韓より傳る巫をして、神を祭らしむる古俗なり。⁴³⁸ More importantly, however, Teikan interpreted this story as a metaphor for the funeral of Amaterasu.

Teikan argued that burial practices in ancient times radically differed from that of his own times:

In more recent times, death came to be considered as defiling. The burial also became defiling. This was not so in ancient times. [In ancient times,] the burial mound was considered a shrine and a separate shrine was not built. Every year, when flowers bloomed, [people] sang and danced in ancestral worship.

後世、死を以穢ありと云、埋葬の事も皆穢とす。上古はしからず。墓を以祠として、別に祠を立てることなし。花巖に、年々幡歌舞を以祭り。⁴³⁹

Teikan then quoted the part of the *Nihon shoki* that describes Emperor Ingyō's 允恭天皇 (r. 412–453 CE) death and burial to further illustrate this point. According to the *Nihon shoki*, a Silla mission arrived to express condolences regarding the emperor's passing. Having arrived in Japan, "some of them cried and some of them danced and sang" 或哭泣或舞歌 in condoling the emperor's death.⁴⁴⁰ Teikan links such acts to Ame-no-Uzema's dances: Ame-no-Uzema had danced to mourn Amaterasu's death.

⁴³⁸ Tō Teikan 藤貞幹, "Shōkōhatsu" 衝口發, 248.

⁴³⁹ Ibid., 247.

⁴⁴⁰ *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀, 449.

In addition, Teikan then quoted parts of the *Nihon shoki* to redefine a number of terms in his favor. For example, in one quote, the creator god Takami-musubi orders the building of a “divine fence” 神籬 and a “stone boundary” 磐境 for the worship of the dead, and, in the same scene, Amaterasu gives a “sacred mirror” 寶鏡 to his son Ame-no-Oshihomimi, ordering him to “look at this sacred mirror as you look at me” 視此寶鏡當猶視吾.⁴⁴¹ Teikan wrote the following commentaries, reinterpreting the abovementioned story of the “heavenly rock cave” as the funeral scene of Amaterasu:

The reading of this [“divine fence”] as “himoroki” is the borrowed original Silla word. The “burying” is also the Korean sound “himoroki.”

此を比毛呂岐と訓ずるは、元新羅の辭にして、それを假て用るものなり。殯殮、韓音比毛呂岐也。

“Stone boundary” refers to the tomb. It means that the body cannot come back once it is buried, and the interlocking of stones signifies the obstruction of the boundary through which spirits can come and go. Borrowing the [Chinese] characters “stone” and “boundary,” it is read as “iwasaka.”

磐境は墓を云也。其意は、屍を埋葬したるは、再びかへり來らざること、磐石の相ふさがりて、往來の境を隔てたるが如きより、磐境の字を假り用て、いはさかと訓ず。

The casted a mirror [of Amaterasu] was worshiped and enshrined where the “divine fence” was installed. This is a recording of worship rites at the tomb [of Amaterasu].
鏡を鑄て、神籬を設て同殿に祭り奉り、御陵に其祭を奉ることを記す也。⁴⁴²

In response to Tō Teikan’s daring assertion that Amaterasu had already died, Norinaga in his rebuttal gave the passionate assertion that Amaterasu *is* the sun and absolutely did not die:

This great god exists before [our] eyes in the sky today and is the sun god that shines over the four seas and all nations of the world. [Even] without examining her everlasting existence, [her existence] is clear in ancient classics. Recently, however, there has appeared a cunning scholar who is obsessed with the usual small principles from Chinese texts and does not believe this. He speaks of various conjectures by merely thinking of

⁴⁴¹ Ibid., 153.

⁴⁴² Tō Teikan 藤貞幹, “Shōkōhatsu” 衝口發, 249.

ancient people of this land and even dared to speak nonsensically of the passing away and the tomb [of Amaterasu]. If this great god does pass away, the world will become dark and will be completely destroyed. How terrifying! Furthermore, the claim that the dances of Ame-no-Uzume are ancient customs from Chinhan [ancient Korea] is another example of extreme distortion that is not worth discussing.

そもそも此大御神はすなはち今日まのあたり天にましまして、四海萬國を照し給ふ日の大御神にましまして、常しへにまします事、弁をまたず、古伝昭々たる物也。然るに近世なまさかしき学者、例のからぶみの小理になづみて、これを信ずることあたはず。ただ此國土に在し上古の人ぞと思ふから、くさぐさ臆度の妄説をいひ、ややもすれば崩御と申し、御陵の事を論ずるは、いともかしこくゆゆしき狂言也。もし此大御神崩御ましまさむには、天地は黒闇となりて、たちまち此世はほろびうせぬべき物をや。あなかしこしこ。又天鈿女の俳優を、辰韓より伝ふる古俗也とは、例の牽強の甚しき。弁をまたず。⁴⁴³

Picking up where Tō Teikan left off, Akinari attacked the traditional claims of Japanese mythology by questioning its universality. He first went back to the abovementioned discussion regarding Amaterasu's hiding (or burial) in the cave, when the world supposedly darkened.

Akinari insisted that such darkening could not have been universal, questioning the literal reading of Japanese mythology. In other words, Amaterasu was not an actual sun god—rather just an allegorical myth specific only to Japan. After bringing up the “global maps” 地球之圖 produced by the Dutch, Akinari compared the small size of Japan vis-à-vis the globe to “a tiny leaf floating on top of a large pond” ひろき池の面にささやかなり一葉を散しかけたる如き.

How could something that happened on such “small islands” 小嶋 have global consequences?

After all, almost every country has its own foundation myth, and they are incompatible with other countries' myths:

In India, it is said that the light of Buddha had initially shined upon the country, and later ordered the two Bodhisattvas Guanyin and Mañjuśrī to create the sun and the moon. In China, it is said that Pangu's eyes became the sun and the moon or that Dihuang established the sun, the moon, and the stars and divided the day and the night. The other countries where words are not intelligible also have different mysterious legends and do not recognize other countries' legends.

⁴⁴³ Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長, “Kenkyōjin” 鉗狂人, 295-296.

天竺は其始佛身の光明に國內を照したるか、其後に寶應吉祥の二菩薩に令して、日月を造らしむといへど、漢土は盤古氏の兩眼日月と成れり共、又地皇氏の世定三辰分晝夜ともいへり。猶文字の通はぬ國々にも種々の靈異なる傳説有て、他國の事は不可肯。⁴⁴⁴

Norinaga responded by noting the supposedly and inherently superior qualities of Japan.

Noting that “an inferior country is still inferior no matter how vast it is, and a superior country is superior even if it is small” いかほど廣大なる國にても、下國は下國也、狹小にても上國は上國也, Norinaga insisted that Japan is the ultimate suzerain over the rest of the world: “The imperial realm is the original suzerain of the four seas and all nations of the world” 皇國は四海萬國の元本宗主たる國. Norinaga also added:

While ancient myths exist in all countries, the myths of foreign countries are incorrect. Some have been distorted, and some have been rashly forged to fool the ignorant masses. Even the myths of countries where Chinese characters are not used can generally be inferred. The likes of Christianity that the far away western countries respect are all forged stories. However, the ancient myths of our “imperial realm” are qualitatively different from those of other countries and are truthful transmissions. The world of today and the presence of humans coincide with the atmosphere of antiquity in every aspect, and the exquisiteness is indescribable. But Mr. Ueda spoke ill [of Japanese mythology] by treating it as the same as the trivial legends of foreign countries and does not realize its subtlety. This is because a speck of a dark cloud [of obsession with foreign thoughts] has not been cleared [in Akinari’s mind].

太古の傳説、各國にこれ有といへ共、外國の傳説は正しからず。或はかたはしを訛りて傳へ、或は妄に偽造して愚民を欺くもの也。漢字の通ぜざる國々の傳説も、大氏類推すべし。かの遥の西の國々に尊敬する天主教の如き、皆偽造の説也。然るにわが皇國の古傳説は、諸の外國の如き比類にあらず、眞實の正傳にして、今日世界人間のありさま、一々神代の趣に符合して妙なることいふべからず。然るを上田氏たた外國の雜傳説と一ツにいひおとして、この妙趣をえさとらざるは、かの一点の黒雲いまだ晴ざるが故也。⁴⁴⁵

⁴⁴⁴ Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長, “Kaikaka” 呵刈菟, in *Motoori Norinaga zenshū* 本居宣長全集, ed. Ōno Susumu 大野晋, vol. 8 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1972), 403-404.

⁴⁴⁵ Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長, “Kaikaka” 呵刈菟, 405-406.

Another topic of discussion involved the Japanese mythological figure Sukunahikona, who is described in the *Kojiki* as a god that helped to “create and solidify the country.”⁴⁴⁶ Sukunahikona plays an even bigger role in the *Nihon shoki*, participating in “ruling the world” 經營天下, “establishing treatments to remedy diseases for the sake of the world’s peoples and animals” 爲顯見蒼生及畜産則定其療病之方, and “establishing incantations to stem the devastations caused by birds, animals, and bugs” 爲攘鳥獸昆蟲之災異則定其禁厭之法.⁴⁴⁷ Relying on the descriptions in the *Nihon shoki*, Norinaga brought up Sukunahikona in his “Gagging the Madman” as a counterexample of Teikan’s interpretation of Susanoo as a Korean king who came from abroad to rule Japan. Norinaga wrote:

From the perspective of ancient studies, all foreign countries, including India, China, Korea, and all other countries, all start from Sukunahikona’s event. Even the likes of Fuxi, Shennong, Huangdi, Yao, and Shun, those who are exaggeratedly spoken about in China, all come from this god in this book, as those countries have lost the legends from the divine age.

わが古學の眼を以て見れば。外國はすべて天竺も漢國も三韓も其餘の國々も。みな少名毘古那神の何事をも始め給へる物とこそ思はるれ。されば漢國にてことごとしくいふなる伏羲神農黃帝堯舜なども。その本はみな此神よりぞ出つらむを。かの國などには神代の傳説を失ひて。⁴⁴⁸

Casting the Japanese god Sukunahikona as someone who once “ruled the world,” Norinaga sought to overturn Teikan’s insistence that Japan had been influenced by Korea in ancient times by presenting another “example” of Japanese impact on the rest of the world. This argument, hardly supported by anything but the *Nihon shoki*, became a target of Akinari. Akinari first noted that “this story [of Sukunahikona] is the most ridiculous [even] among the stories of [Japanese] antiquity” 太古の事蹟の中にも、此談は殊に荒蕩にて。In addition, Akinari

⁴⁴⁶ *Kojiki* 古事記, 94.

⁴⁴⁷ *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀, 129.

⁴⁴⁸ Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長, “Kenkyōjin” 鉗狂人, 300.

sarcastically insulted Norinaga, noting that, unlike the Chinese texts, which are well-known overseas, Norinaga's writings about Japanese antiquity are not known outside of Japan: "The great man's works, whether it is the *Gyōjū gaigen* ["Outline of the Suppression of Barbarians"] or anything else, are unheard of in other countries" 大人の著述は、馭戎慨言も何も他國に聞ゆるにはあらで。Akinari thus likened Norinaga's assertions to "a nose-less monkey laughing at a monkey without missing parts" 鼻缺狙か全軀を咲ふの談。In response, Norinaga urged Akinari to "look with the eyes of ancient studies" 古學の眼を以て見れば。He also asked Akinari why he is "so accepting of other countries' accounts of events but calls the story of his own country's world domination by this god so ridiculous" 他國の事をはさやうにいひなから、自國の天下經營ましましたる御神の御事をは、此談は殊に荒蕩也といふは。Norinaga ended the exchange by also referring to Akinari as a "madman" 狂人。⁴⁴⁹

Reaffirmation of the *Nihon shoki*

The public exchanges ended here. Norinaga, however, continued his work on ancient history, eventually publishing the *Kojiki-den* 古事記傳 ("Commentaries on the *Kojiki*), an extensive exposition of ancient Japanese history in the form of commentaries written around the *Kojiki*. Before further discussing his body of work, I would like to first address Norinaga's *modus operandi*, particularly regarding his well-known emphasis on the *Kojiki* as the primary source of ancient Japanese language and therefore true historical facts. Traditional perspectives, such as that of the Japanese academic Kōnoshi Takamitsu 神野志隆光 or the American historian of Japan Susan Burns, generally took Norinaga's assertion at face value in arguing that Norinaga

⁴⁴⁹ Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長, "Kaikaka" 呵刈葭, 410-412.

prioritized and commentated on the *Kojiki* over the *Nihon shoki* because of Norinaga's emphasis on the "original" Japanese language of antiquity and the belief that the *Kojiki* preserves that language while the *Nihon shoki* does not.⁴⁵⁰ Supposedly based on the "original" Japanese language, the *Kojiki* thereby provides a more accurate textual base for the study of Japanese antiquity, while the *Nihon shoki*, considering how much it was influenced by China, did not qualify.

As early as in the 1760s, Norinaga made a sharp distinction between the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*. He wrote:

The *Nihon shoki* is unrelated to the ancient language because it is adorned with and bounded by dignified literary Chinese. There are many instances that are centrically considered with style. The *Kojiki* is unrelated to style and is primarily concerned with the ancient language. However, the later generations [of scholars] were only concerned with elegance of style and did not examine the ancient language. Therefore, they used only the *Nihon shoki* and did not know about the *Kojiki*.

日本紀はすべて漢文をかざりて。うるはしからむとかける故に。古語にかかはらず。ただ文章を主としてかける事多し。古事記は文章にかかはらず。古語を主としてかける物也。然るに末の代には。ただ文章のうるはしき方にのみなづみて。古語を考ることなし。このゆへにもはら日本紀をのみ用ひる。古事記ある事をしらず。

Especially when discussing language, one must prioritize the ancient language in one's thinking, and the *Kojiki* is an unequally magnificent text [in this regard].

殊に言の葉の道にをきては。古語をむねとして考ふべき事なれば。古事記は又たぐひもなくめでたき書にて。⁴⁵¹

Norinaga also makes this point clear in the first several pages of the *Kojiki-den*. He wrote:

⁴⁵⁰ Kōnoshi Takamitsu 神野志隆光, *Kojiki to Nihon shoki: "Tennō shinwa" no rekishi* 古事記と日本書紀: 「天皇神話」の歴史 (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1999), 12-31. Susan L. Burns, *Before the Nation: Kokugaku and the Imagining of Community in Early Modern Japan* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 35-101.

⁴⁵¹ Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長, "Isonokami sasamegoto" 石上私淑言, in *Motoori Norinaga zenshū* 本居宣長全集, ed. Ōno Susumu 大野晋, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1968), 92-93.

It [the *Nihon shoki*] aims solely to imitate the Chinese, adorning its figure of speech [according to Chinese models]. This [the *Kojiki*], however, is not beholden to the Chinese. It merely aims to merely preserve the language of antiquity.

彼はもはら漢に似るを旨として、其文章をかざれるを、此は漢にかかはらず、ただ古の言語を失はぬを主とせり。⁴⁵²

Norinaga then went on to argue that Chinese influence resulted in historical distortions and even fabrications in the *Nihon shoki*. For example, regarding an imperial decree recorded in the volume on Emperor Jimmu in the *Nihon shoki*, Norinaga noted:

It is not in the form of antiquity in either meaning or language. The compilers fabricated the text for the sake of embellishment.

意も語も、さらに上代のさまにあらず、全潤色のために、撰者の作加へられたる文なり。⁴⁵³

Norinaga's preference for the *Kojiki* over the *Nihon shoki* regarding the issue of supposed Chinese influence was a notion that Norinaga's teacher, Kamo no Mabuchi 賀茂真淵 (1697–1769), also advanced:

In investigating ancient history, prioritize the *Kojiki*. The *Nihon shoki* [should come] only after [the *Kojiki*]. The *Nihon shoki* assembles the various works of the ancient period, but the Confucian scholar Ki no Ason Kiyohito [one of the *Nihon shoki* compilers] muddled the [ancient] transmissions with Chinese writing. [Therefore,] there are many discrepancies with the truths of the ancient period. The *Kojiki* is the true account of our country's ancient history. Furthermore, it is concerned mainly with our country's language, and so there is no better resource for observing the customs of the ancient period, learning the ancient language, and understanding the ancient writings.

古史ヲ引ニ古事紀ヲ先トシ、日本紀ヲ次トス、日本紀ハ上古ノ數書ヲ選定セラレタレド、儒士紀朝臣清人專コレニ與テ、漢文ニ泥タレハ、上古ノ事實ニ違ルモ多シ、古事紀ハ上古質直ノ國史也、且國語ヲ專トシタレハ、上古風ヲ見、古語ヲ知、古文ヲ察スルニ及モノ無レハ也。⁴⁵⁴

⁴⁵² Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長, “Kojiki-den” 古事記傳, in *Motoori Norinaga zenshū* 本居宣長全集, ed. Ōno Susumu 大野晋, vol. 9 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1968), 6.

⁴⁵³ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁴⁵⁴ Kamo Mabuchi 賀茂真淵, “Engi-shiki norito kai” 延喜式祝詞解, in *Kamo no Mabuchi zenshū* 賀茂真淵全集, eds. Inoue Minoru 井上豊 et al., vol. 7 (Tokyo: Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai, 1984), 11.

Despite his clear prioritization of the *Kojiki*, however, Mabuchi also found some utility in the *Nihon shoki*:

Where identical things exist in both the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*, I picked the *Kojiki*. While the *Kojiki* is a genuine text, the *Nihon shoki* was written in imitation of Chinese writings, and the things that confuse the reader are mixed into the text. But if a principle [of something] is clear in the *Nihon shoki*, I have prioritized the *Nihon shoki*.

古事記・日本紀に同しく有ことをは、古事記を擧つ、古事記はまことのふみ也、紀はから文に似たらんとつとめ書つれば、訓におきて人のおもひまどふ事もまじれば也、されど紀にてことわり明らけきをば紀を先とせり。⁴⁵⁵

Here, Mabuchi also notes that he sometimes “prioritized the *Nihon shoki*” 紀を先とせり in cases where the *Nihon shoki* was deemed to be useful to his work. Despite his indictments of Chinese influence, the ultimate standard was rather subjective.

Despite the statements regarding the unparalleled value of the *Kojiki* and in the *Nihon shoki*'s supposedly Chinese-influenced distortions, Norinaga adopted this same utilitarian attitude. Regardless of his supposed preference for the *Kojiki* and criticisms against the supposed premise and perspective of the *Nihon shoki*, Norinaga never completely abandoned the *Nihon shoki*. He once remarked, “The *Kojiki* should be [read as] the main text, and the *Nihon shoki* should be read as annotation” 古事記を本文とし。日本紀を註解として見るべき事也。⁴⁵⁶

But, if the *Nihon shoki* has been so flawed, as result of its Chinese influence, then why did he use it? One reason may be the obvious paucity of source materials when studying ancient history, as so few extant books date to that era. Yet a more fundamental reason, as I will show, is that the *Nihon shoki* includes materials that are not included in the *Kojiki* that were deemed indispensable

⁴⁵⁵ Kamo Mabuchi 賀茂真淵, “Kanji kō” 冠辭考, in *Kamo no Mabuchi zenshū* 賀茂真淵全集, eds. Inoue Minoru 井上豊 et al., vol. 8 (Tokyo: Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai, 1978), 9.

⁴⁵⁶ Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長, “Isonokami sasamegoto” 石上私淑言, 92.

to Norinaga's vision of Japanese antiquity. In many places, the *Nihon shoki* formed a more important source of his work than the *Kojiki* itself.

Norinaga was also well aware of the challenges Korean texts presented, as well as how the Korean texts revealed the flaw of the *Nihon shoki*. I mentioned earlier that the Korean texts revealed, for example, dating errors in the *Nihon shoki* in which a number of Paekche kings starting with King Kūnch'ogo (r. 346–375) appear 120 years before they actually lived in an attempt to underscore the Empress Jingū's conquest and her reign at large in Japan's historical interactions with Korea. Having cross-checked the Japanese texts with the Korean texts, even Norinaga noted this factual problem with the *Nihon shoki*, recognizing that Korean records, such as the *Tongguk t'onggam*, were correct on this issue:

The *Nihon shoki* is wrong by 120 years. While the likes of the *Tongguk t'onggam* have many implausible points from the outset, [as for] this issue of periodization, that text is correct while the *Nihon shoki* is mistaken.

書紀と百廿年ばかり違へり、そもそも東國通鑑などは、信がたきこと多しといへども、此年代は、彼書の方よろしかるべし、書紀は傳の亂にて。⁴⁵⁷

However, in his response to Teikan, Norinaga had lashed out against the use of Korean texts while presenting the fundamental *modus operandi* of his work of ancient history: that one can and should reach the “truth” of ancient Japanese history by comparing and contrasting *only* Japanese texts. After disparaging the value of the Korean historical texts by asking why one would use “the foreign country's unsuited and extremely erroneous texts that were written later in time [than the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*]” 迂遠なる他國の謬誤おほき後世の書, Norinaga argued:

If one wants to rectify [historical records] by comparing and contrasting this with that, one should do so by coordinating our country's ancient text with another ancient text [of Japan].

⁴⁵⁷ Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長, “Kojiki-den” 古事記傳, vol. 11, 506.

もし此と彼とを照して正さむとならば。吾國の古書と古書とをよく考へ合せてこそ正すべきに。⁴⁵⁸

This is exactly how Norinaga approached his work on ancient history. His supposedly rigorous textualism and philology was tendentiously selective from the start: he outright rejected any and all texts that did not support his vision. His preference for and emphasis on the *Kojiki* as a supposed primary source of the “original” Japanese language did not stop him from extensively quoting from the Chinese-influenced *Nihon shoki* or any other Japanese texts in creating narratives that supported his vision of ancient history. This is why Norinaga emphasized the indispensability of both the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki* in the introductory text he wrote for beginning students in 1798 (published in 1799), *Uiyamabumi* 初山踏 (“First Steps into the Mountain”), in which he argued that “the Way is recorded in the two classics the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*” 此道は、古事記書紀の二典に記されたる。⁴⁵⁹ In that same text, he also wrote about the utter indispensability of the *Nihon shoki* in the study of ancient history, clearly displaying his intention to utilize the *Nihon shoki* regardless of the revealed errors:

The *Nihon shoki* has been recognized as an official history of the court. Generations of scholars have chiefly studied it [as the main text] for all events throughout [ancient] history. While the *Kojiki* is truly splendid and respected, the records of the generations dating back to the Jimmu Emperor are extremely shoddy, few in quantity, narrow in scope, and undetailed. On the contrary, the *Nihon shoki* is unparalleled in its scope and detail. It is an extremely important text. It is not possible to widely understand about the events of antiquity without this text.

書紀は、朝廷の正史と立られて、御世々々萬の事これによらせ給ひ、世々の學者も、これをむねと學ぶこと也、まことに古事記は、しるしざまは、いとめでたく尊けれども、神武天皇よりこなたの、御代々々の事をしるされたる、甚あらくすくなくして、廣からず、審かならざるを、此紀は、廣く詳かにしるされたるほど

⁴⁵⁸ Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長, “Kenkyōjin” 鉗狂人, 281.

⁴⁵⁹ Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長, “Uiyamabumi” うひ山ぶみ, in *Motoori Norinaga zenshū* 本居宣長全集, ed. Ōno Susumu 大野晋, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1968), 5; *ibid.*, 9.

、たぐひなく、いともたふとき御典也、此御典なくては、上古の事どもを、ひろく知るべきよしなし。⁴⁶⁰

Norinaga's treatment of Empress Jingū's conquest of Korea is an excellent example of this textual strategy. While the conquest narratives are largely similar in both the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*, as mentioned earlier, the *Kojiki* only notes the surrender of Silla, whereas the *Nihon shoki* notes that the kings of Paekche and Koguryō also “voluntarily came to the [Jingū's] camp, kowtowing and saying that they will forever be western tributaries [of Japan] and will not stop sending tribute” 自來于營外叩頭而款曰從今以後永稱西蕃不絕朝貢。⁴⁶¹ Here, Norinaga sees the record of the *Kojiki* as more accurate vis-à-vis the *Nihon shoki*. According to Norinaga, there would not have been enough time for Koguryō and Paekche to also surrender during the expedition in question:

At a minimum, it would taken sixty to seventy days for the kings to hear about this great empress's conquest of Korea, send someone to take a look, and then go to the [Jingū's] camp at Silla after that person had returned. But the great empress embarked [on the conquest] from Tsushima on the third day of the tenth month and returned back to Kyushu on the fourteenth day of the twelfth month, before giving birth to her son. How could the two kings have come to the camp while she was at Silla? Looking at this, the part [from the *Nihon shoki*] that speaks of the two kings of Koguryō and Paekche should be understood as ornaments added by the compilers.

此大后の新羅を征賜ふ事を傳聞て、さて人を遣て伺はせて、其人の還て後、其王新羅の御營まで参らむには、速くとも六七十日を経べし、然るに大后は十月三日に津嶋より御船開し給ひて、十二月十四日には、既に筑紫に還坐て、御子生坐りとあれば、新羅國に止坐し間は、いくばくもあらじを、其間に彼王はいかでかは御營に得参らむ、此らを以ても、かの此段の高麗百濟二國王云々は、撰者の加語なるほどをさとるべし。⁴⁶²

While Norinaga considered this part of the *Nihon shoki* to be fictitious, he had no problem using other parts of the *Nihon shoki* to support his view that Japan eventually began

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid., 13.

⁴⁶¹ *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀, 339.

⁴⁶² Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長, “Kojiki-den” 古事記傳, vol.11, 385.

receiving tribute from the ancient kingdoms of Korea. Norinaga points to the part of the *Nihon shoki* covering the reign of Empress Jingū's son Emperor Ōjin 應神天皇, as the beginning point of the submission of tribute:

According to the *Nihon shoki*'s volume on Emperor Ōjin, in the ninth month of the seventh year [of Ōjin's reign], the peoples of Koguryō, Paekche, Mimana, and Silla paid tribute at the same time. This likely is the beginning of [pan-Korean submission to Japan]. Even if this was not the beginning, it would have been sometime during the reign of Emperor Ōjin.

書紀應神卷に、七年秋九月、高麗人百濟人任那人新羅人並來朝とある、是や初ならむ、假令此初には非ずとも、應神天皇の御世に至ての事なりけむ。⁴⁶³

Norinaga also quoted the *Nihon shoki* in his finding of physical evidence related to the Empress Jingū's supposed conquest of Korea. According to the *Nihon shoki*, the Silla king supposedly told Jingū at the moment of surrender that he would continue to obey and pay tribute to Japan unless “the sun that rises from the east rises from the west, the Arinare [K. Arinarye] River flows backward and the stones of the river ascend to the sky and become stars” 非東日更出西且除阿利那禮河返以之逆流及河石昇爲星辰。⁴⁶⁴ This line is only in the *Nihon shoki* and not in the *Kojiki*, but Norinaga still uses it as a piece of evidence that the conquest took place. He wrote:

There is a large river called the Abrok River at the border of Korea and China. Along with the Yellow River and the Yangtze River, the Abrok River is one of the three greatest rivers of the world. This is detailed in the [Chinese compendium] *Xingli daquan*. In the *Nihon shoki*, there is [mention of] the Arinare River. The [Japanese] “A” is the [Korean] “Ab.” The [Japanese] “Ri” is the [Korean] “Rok.”

朝鮮ト唐土トノ堺ニ、鴨綠江ト云大江アリ、黄河、長江、鴨綠江、コレ天下ニ三ツノ大河タル事、性理大全ニ詳ニシテ、其一也、日本書紀ニ、阿利那禮河トアリ、阿ハ鴨也、利ハ綠也。

In Korea, the river is informally called “Nari” [K. “Narye].

⁴⁶³ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁴ *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀, 339.

三韓ニハ、俗語ニ河ヲ那禮ト云リ。⁴⁶⁵

After using the *Nihon shoki* to infer physical evidence for Empress Jingū's conquest of Korea, Norinaga also drew from the *Nihon shoki* by noting the place where the empress supposedly fished so she could be certain that the gods of Japan wanted her to invade Korea. According to the *Nihon shoki*, the empress fished on top of a rock at Matsuura 松浦 (which today is part of Nagasaki Prefecture). Praying to the gods, she supposedly said, "I want to obtain the wealthy country to the west [Silla]. If this should be done, make the fish bite the fish hook" 朕西欲求財國若有成事者河魚飲鉤。⁴⁶⁶ She caught a fish, and perceiving the catch to be an answer in the affirmative, Jingū supposedly launched an expedition into Korea. Again, the *Kojiki* does not note this story. Norinaga references Kiuchi Sekitei's 木内石亭 (1724–1808) "Treatise on Stones" 雲根志, a taxonomical text on stones that describes the location of the rock the empress fished upon, as another example of physical evidence that the expedition to Korea actually took place.⁴⁶⁷ Whenever something from the *Nihon shoki* suited his vision of ancient Japan and its relations with the outside world, particularly with Korea, Norinaga had no problem accepting and incorporating it into his work. Ultimately, the prime issue was neither the preservation of the "original" Japanese language in the *Kojiki* nor the corrupting Chinese influence upon Japanese texts such as the *Nihon shoki*. What came first and foremost was his ideological vision that sought to reaffirm the traditional Japanese perspective that Japan had repeatedly dominated Korea throughout ancient times.

⁴⁶⁵ Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長, "Motoori Norinaga zuihitsu" 本居宣長隨筆, in *Motoori Norinaga zenshū* 本居宣長全集, ed. Ōno Susumu 大野晋, vol. 13 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1971), 78.

⁴⁶⁶ *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀, 333.

⁴⁶⁷ Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長, "Motoori Norinaga zuihitsu" 本居宣長隨筆, 396.

Another aspect of Norinaga's textual strategy focused on erasing the evidence of the independence of Izumo in ancient history. As mentioned earlier, ancient Izumo was once an independent kingdom likely founded by more recent immigrants from the Korean Peninsula who were conscious of their connection across the strait, as evidenced in historical relics and ancient texts such as the *Izumo no kuni fudoki*, which displays an entirely unique foundation myth specific to Izumo without any concern for Japan at large. Such a display of regional independence and evidence of continental influence, of course, not only exposed the pretensions of the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki* that Japan has always been united and ruled by a single lineage of divine emperors but also allowed scholars like Tō Teikan to subvert the existing structure of Japanese antiquity by emphasizing foreign influence through figures such as Susanoo. As far as Norinaga was concerned, this loophole had to be closed.

As Japanese scholar Kaneoka Rie 兼岡理恵 highlighted, Norinaga recognized the *Izumo no kuni fudoki* as one of the earliest Japanese texts, contemporaneous with the *Kojiki* and thereby an authentic source of Japanese antiquity, and so he extensively studied it.⁴⁶⁸ Given the text's irrefutable value, Norinaga sought to change the traditional interpretation of the text by providing new commentaries. First, Norinaga sought to reinterpret the Izumo's distinctive foundation myth as an extension of the national myths perpetuated by the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*. Perhaps subconsciously (or consciously) aware of the straightforwardness of the Izumo foundation myth, Norinaga is uncharacteristically timid at the beginning of his commentaries. After noting the supposed difficulty of the text itself, "The above text [part of the *Izumo no kuni fudoki*] has very ancient words here and there, and there are also a number of places [where the meaning is]

⁴⁶⁸ Kaneoka Rie 兼岡理恵, "Norinaga to Izumo fudoki" 宣長と『出雲国風土記』, in *Ekkkyōsuru Kojiki-den* 越境する古事記伝, eds. Yamashita Hisao 山下久夫 and Saitō Hideki 斎藤英喜 (Tokyo: Shinwasha, 2012), 205-236.

difficult to understand” 上件の文、いみしくふるきところどころ有て、聞えがたきふしふし多かるを, Norinaga noted that he therefore would have to “force an interpretation” しひて解る.⁴⁶⁹

After noting the mythical process of “land pulling,” a uniquely Izumo process that involved transplanting parcels of land from Silla and other places in Japan to create Izumo, Norinaga forcibly conflates this myth with the national myths of the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*. Relying solely on the common usage of the expression “young country” 稚國, which describes something of a “work in progress” in the Izumo and national myths, Norinaga makes a farfetched argument that the two myths are one and the same:

Both the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki* have [the expression] of “young country,” which reminds one where it comes from. [The expression] “I have created a small country in the beginning” [in the *Izumo no kuni fudoki*] refers to the two great gods of Izanagi and Inazami [of the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*], who created small [pieces of land] when they first created [the world]. These gods created the northern region of Izumo to be insufficient like a slender cloth, making the country narrow and thin. It was called “young country” because the creation was not yet completed.

古事記にも書紀にも、國稚とあれば、よし有ておぼゆ、初國小所作とは、伊邪那岐伊邪那美二柱大神の、初めて生成し給へる時に、小くつくり給へりと也、そのかみ此出雲國は、北方足はずして、狭布のごとく、狭く細き國なりけむ、かくいまだ成りとののはざるをもて、國稚とはのたまへるなるべし。⁴⁷⁰

Norinaga’s assertion here is almost entirely without merit. Regarding the instances in the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki* where the expression of “young country” 稚國 is mentioned as “country that is young” 國稚, the processes of creation mentioned in the two texts and the *Izumo no kuni fudoki* are incongruous. The relevant parts of the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*, respectively, read as follows:

⁴⁶⁹ Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長, “Tamakatsuma” 玉勝間, in *Motoori Norinaga zenshū* 本居宣長全集, ed. Ōno Susumu 大野晋, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1968), 308-309.

⁴⁷⁰ Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長, “Tamakatsuma” 玉勝間, 309.

The country was young, and it floated like oil on top of water and roved like jellyfish.
國稚如浮脂而久羅下那州多陀用幣流。⁴⁷¹

Back in antiquity when the country was young and the land was young, it floated like oil on top of water.

古國稚地稚之時譬猶浮膏而漂蕩。⁴⁷²

The descriptions are completely different; there is no mention of land pulling in either the *Kojiki* or the *Nihon shoki*. The two sets of myths are in no way congruous. Norinaga's argument here appears to be forced and motivated by his ideological agenda in refuting the evidence of Izumo's independent founding for the sake of preserving his ideological vision of Japanese antiquity as fully united under the one and only dynasty from the start.

This glaring mythological incongruence continued to present a thorny interpretative problem into the modern era. Of course, combined with advances in archaeological research that revealed more diversified patterns of state formation in ancient Japan, the more recent trend in historical research suggests the existence of multiple kingdoms in ancient Japan that not only competed with each other but even left their marks on the united state that emerged by the seventh century CE. In this sense, integration of the native Izumo god Susanoo into the imperial mythology as Amaterasu's brother in the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki* is suggestive of ancient Izumo's influence upon the unified state.⁴⁷³ Textual pluralism eventually gained popularity in the

⁴⁷¹ *Kojiki* 古事記, 28.

⁴⁷² *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀, 77.

⁴⁷³ Mizuno Yū 水野祐, *Kodai no Izumo* 古代の出雲 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1972), 291-357; Furuta Takehiko 古田武彦, *Ushinawareta Kyūshū ōchō: Tennōke izen no kodaishi* 失われた九州王朝: 天皇家以前の古代史 (Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha, 1973); Mizuno Yū 水野祐, *Kodai no Izumo to Yamato* 古代の出雲と大和 (Tokyo: Daiwa Shobō, 1975), 249-285; Higo Kazuo 肥後和男, *Shinwa to rekishi no aida* 神話と歴史の間 (Tokyo: Taimeidō, 1976); Kadowaki Teiji 門脇禎二, *Izumo no kodaishi* 出雲の古代史 (Tokyo: Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, 1976); Furuta Takehiko 古田武彦, *Tagenteki kodaishi no seiritsu* 多元的古代史の成立 (Tokyo: Shinshindō, 1983); Edward J. Kidder, *Himiko and Japan's Elusive Chiefdom of Yamatai: Archaeology, History, and Mythology* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 114-126; Murai Yasuhiko 村井康彦, *Izumo to Yamato:*

study of ancient Japanese history by the late twentieth century to the point that at least one major scholar now even speaks of “multiple antiquities” in Japan based on contradictions rooted in the ancient records.⁴⁷⁴

With that said, however, the challenge the Izumo mythology presented to the myth of united ancient Japanese state had troubled researchers at least into the 1950s. Higo Kazuo 肥後和男 (1899–1981), for example, sought to bypass this incongruity by arguing that the existence of entirely separate myth in Izumo vis-à-vis the rest of Japan had to do with Izumo’s territorial size and location. According to Higo Kazuo, it was difficult for a “secluded place like Izumo” 出雲の如き僻鄒の地 to contemplate accepting “myth with a complicated plot and a great scale” 筋が複雑で規模の大きい神話.⁴⁷⁵ In 1950 and 1951, Yabuta Kaichirō 藪田嘉一郎 (1905–1976) even suggested that the *Izumo no kuni fudoki* itself was a forgery, and Yabuta brought up this mythological incongruence as one of the reasons why the Izumo myth appears to be forged.⁴⁷⁶ Kurano Kenji 倉野憲司 (1902–1991) even sought to somehow mend this “problem” of mythological incongruence by carefully examining overlapping names in the Izumo and national

Kodai kokka no genzō o tazunete 出雲と大和: 古代国家の原像をたずねて (Tokyo: Kabushiki Kaisha Iwanami Shoten, 2013).

⁴⁷⁴ Mizuno Yū 水野祐, *Izumo no kuni fudoki ronkō* 出雲國風土記論攷 (Tokyo: Waseda Daigaku Kodaishi Kenkyūkai, 1965), 684-709; Kōnoshi Takamitsu 神野志隆光, *Fukusū no “kodai”* 複数の「古代」 (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2007).

⁴⁷⁵ Higo Kazuo 肥後和男, *Fudoki shō* 風土記抄 (Tokyo: Kōbundō, 1943), 186.

⁴⁷⁶ This prompted the Izumo Grand Shrine 出雲大社 of Shimane Prefecture to sponsor an edited volume to not only study the text but refute Yabuta’s claims. In this book, the following article is most relevant in discussing and refuting the charges of forgery. See Tanaka Takashi 田中卓, “Izumo no kuni fudoki no seiritsu” 出雲國風土記の成立, in *Izumo no kuni fudoki no kenkyū* 出雲國風土記の研究, ed. Hiraizumi Kiyoshi 平泉澄 (Shimane-ken Taishamachi: Izumo Taisha Gosengū Hōsankai, 1953), 605-688.

mythologies as “the first step in solving this problem” この問題解決の第一歩.⁴⁷⁷ As for the scholars who were unwilling to abandon the notion of politically unified ancient Japan, they followed Norinaga’s footsteps in diminishing the Izumo myth’s unique qualities.

Norinaga also attempted to peripheralize ancient Izumo in other ways. One method involved reinterpreting the earliest extant song in Japan, which is recorded in both the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki* with only a slight variation. According to the narratives of the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*, Susanoo supposedly sang it when he was building himself a palace at Izumo. The song goes:

<i>yakumo tatsu</i>	In eight-cloud rising
<i>Izumo yaegaki</i>	Izumo an eightfold fence
<i>tsumagomi ni</i>	to enclose my wife
<i>yaegaki tsukuru</i>	an eightfold fence I build,
<i>sono yaegaki o</i>	and, oh, that eightfold fence! ⁴⁷⁸

Through its association to Susanoo, this song came to signify the divine origins of the Japanese song, *waka* 和歌.⁴⁷⁹ It continued to be esteemed by many scholars who studied Japanese classics in the early modern period; as was the case of Keichū 契沖 (1640–1701), who believed its connection to Susanoo gave it extramundane values.⁴⁸⁰ This was also the case for Motoori Norinaga, who believed that ancient Japanese songs “intactly retain and transmit the heart of the

⁴⁷⁷ Kurano Kenji 倉野憲司, “Kiki to aitsūsuru Izumo no kuni fudoki no kamigami ni tsuite” 記紀と相通する出雲國風土記の神々について, in *Izumo no kuni fudoki no kenkyū* 出雲國風土記の研究, ed. Hiraizumi Kiyoshi 平泉澄 (Shimane-ken Taisha-machi: Izumo Taisha Gosengū Hōsankai, 1953), 309.

⁴⁷⁸ “Kojiki (Record of Ancient Matters, 712),” in *Traditional Japanese Literature: An Anthology, Beginnings to 1600*, ed. Haruo Shirane (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 31.

⁴⁷⁹ A. E. Commons, “Japanese poetic thought, from earliest times to the thirteenth century,” in *The Cambridge History of Japanese Literature*, eds. Haruo Shirane, Tomi Suzuki, and David Lurie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 221.

⁴⁸⁰ Peter Nosco, *Remembering Paradise: Nativism and Nostalgia in Eighteenth-Century Japan* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Council on East Asian Studies, 1990), 56.

Age of the Gods” 神代の心ばへのままにては傳はれりける。⁴⁸¹ As the first of such songs, this song’s prime symbolic importance was self-evident.

Norinaga’s commentary on the song focuses on dispelling the conventional understanding of this song, whereby the place name, Izumo (“rising cloud”), had already existed by the time of Susanoo sang it. Norinaga writes:

I think that [the expression] *yakumo tatsu* 八雲立つ [“eight clouds rising”] comes from seeing the rise of clouds and reciting *i yakumo tatsu* [“multiple clouds rising”]. As for “Izumo,” even the gazetteer [the *Izumo no kuni fudoki*] notes that the place name originates from this song. The song therefore has not recited the place name—it is merely [describing] the rising cloud. It is wrong to consider Izumo as the place name and *yakumo tatsu* as an epithet.

宣長按ずるに。夜久毛多都は。かの雲のたちのぼるを見給ひて。彌雲立とよみ給へる也。伊豆毛は。風土記にも。此御歌によりて。國の名となれるよしあり。されば爰は國の名をよみよみ給へるにはあらず。ただ出る雲也。伊豆毛を國名とし。八雲立を枕詞とするはひが事也。⁴⁸²

At a glance, it is unclear why this even matters. Norinaga, however, is quite adamant that the place’s name, Izumo, did not exist prior to the Susanoo’s song. He entreats his readers:

In interpreting the meaning of this song, there have been many farfetched theories in the past. There is no need to discuss these, as they all stem from past ignorance. One must not be fooled by such misleading theories.

さて此御歌の意を解くに。古來さまざまの附會の説おほし。みな古にくらき事にて。さらに取にたらず。必邪説にまよふへからず。⁴⁸³

Norinaga’s emphatic insistence that Izumo as a place name did not exist prior to the song is related to his refusal to acknowledge the independent founding of Izumo vis-à-vis the national narratives of Japan. What Norinaga left out in his brief mention of the *Izumo no kuni fudoki* was that in the *Izumo no kuni fudoki*, the local god Yatsukamizuomitsuno 八東水臣津野 is posited as

⁴⁸¹ Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長, “Isonokami sasamegoto” 石上私淑言, 154.

⁴⁸² Ibid., 93.

⁴⁸³ Ibid.

the founder of Izumo. Yatsukamizuomitsuno not only did the “land pulling” to create the place but also named the place. According to the *Izumo no kuni fudoki*, “The reason why it is called Izumo comes from Yatsukamizuomitsuno’s statement of ‘eight clouds rising.’ This is why it is called *yakumo tatsu Izumo*” 所以號出雲者八束水臣津野命詔八雲立詔之故云八雲立出雲。⁴⁸⁴

While Susanoo appears to be imagined as a local Izumo god, the Susanoo mentioned in the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki* is at least partially integrated into the national narratives as Amaterasu’s brother. Yatsukamizuomitsuno also appears in the *Kojiki* as Omizunu 淤美豆奴, but Omizunu in the *Kojiki* is described as a descendant of Susanoo. In other words, the narratives of the *Izumo no kuni fudoki* and the *Kojiki* regarding the founding and naming of Izumo are irreconcilable. Given his ideological agenda, Norinaga’s interpretation obviously favors the national narrative over the local narrative. Since Susanoo chronologically preceded Omizunu (Yatsukamizuomitsuno) in the *Kojiki*, Norinaga is forced to insist that Izumo, as the place’s name, did not yet exist prior to Susanoo’s song. Susanoo had to have named the place in order to not only peripheralize Izumo a part of the Japanese nation but also to defend the *Kojiki* against possible charges of incongruence with a contemporaneous ancient text. Norinaga states this in the *Kojiki-den*:

Yatsukamizuomitsuno later ordered [the place to be named Izumo] due to this song [of Susanoo]. This means that the country came to be called [Izumo] through Susanoo’s reciting of *yakumo tatsu Izumo*.

臣津野命は、此の御歌詞に因て、後に詔へるなり、須佐之男命の、八雲立出雲とよみ賜へる此國はと云意なり。⁴⁸⁵

Japanese literary scholar Michael F. Marra also discussed Norinaga’s reinterpretation of this poem, noting it as an “excellent example of Norinaga’s hermeneutics.” As for the Norinaga’s

⁴⁸⁴ *Fudoki* 風土記, 130.

⁴⁸⁵ Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長, “*Kojiki-den*” 古事記傳, vol. 9, 411.

rendering of *yakumo tatsu Izumo* 八雲立出雲 as “multiple clouds rising, clouds rising,” Marra takes Norinaga’s assertion at face value in quoting Norinaga that “the name Izumo was given to the province [by Susanoo] after the time of its composition.” Marra praises Norinaga’s interpretation as a “tour of hermeneutical force” and notes the following:

The clouds have been veiling the truth of this poem for centuries—a truth that Norinaga felt it was his responsibility to uncover. This meant peeling off centuries of interpretations and the encroachments of a history of details.

Norinaga belongs to the history of philology and aesthetics, disciplines that have translated theology into the secular idiom of science. The gods may have changed their names, but they have never left the stage: they have come to be called literature, history, the work of art, and so on. Behind the clouds is Norinaga’s truth—the beautiful cherry trees blooming in Yoshino that only poetry can capture “the way they are.”⁴⁸⁶

Marra fails to understand Norinaga’s motive here. This interpretation of Susanoo’s song is not about recovering “truth” or things “the way they are.” Norinaga’s goal was to peripheralize Izumo and its history by seeking to erase subversive traces of regional independence in ancient times for the sake of advancing his ideological vision of reaffirming the *Kojiki*’s and the *Nihon shoki*’s emperor-centered worldview.

Norinaga sought to further minimize Susanoo’s connection to Izumo and recast Susanoo as exclusive to the Japanese national mythology by rewriting Susanoo’s origin story. In this effort, the key issue involved defining the “country of roots” in Susanoo’s story, written as *Neno-katasu-kuni* 根之堅州國 in the *Kojiki* and *Neno-kuni* 根國 in the *Nihon shoki*. Soon after Susanoo’s creation, according to the *Kojiki*, Susanoo claimed that he wanted to go back to his “country of roots” before getting expelled by his father Izanagi:

[After appointing Amaterasu to the heaven, Izanagi] ordered Tsukuyomi to rule the country of night. Next, he ordered Susanoo to rule the seas. While the others [Amaterasu

⁴⁸⁶ Michael F. Marra, introduction to *The Poetics of Motoori Norinaga: A Hermeneutical Journey*, trans. and ed. Michael F. Marra (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2007), 25-28.

and Tsukuyomi] ruled the places designated to them, Susanoo did not rule the country designated to him. Instead, he wept until his beard grew down to the pit of his stomach. His weeping withered green mountains and dried up rivers and seas. The sounds of evil gods pervaded like summer flies and caused all sorts of calamities. Izanagi asked Susanoo, “Why are you crying and not ruling the country designated to you?” He answered, “I am crying because I want to go back to my deceased mother’s country of roots.” Izanagi became furious and said, “If so, you must not live in this country!” [Izanagi] immediately expelled him.

詔月讀命汝命者所知夜之食國矣事依也次詔建速須佐之男命汝命者所知海原矣事依也故各隨依賜之命所知看之中速須佐之男命不知所命之國而八拳須至于心前啼伊佐知伎也其泣狀者青山如枯山泣枯河海者悉泣乾是以惡神之音如狹蠅皆滿萬物之妖悉發故伊邪那岐大御神詔速須佐之男命何由以汝不治所事依之國而哭伊佐知流爾答白僕者欲罷妣國根之堅州國故哭爾伊邪那岐大御神大忿怒詔然者汝不可住此國乃神夜良比爾夜良比賜也。⁴⁸⁷

In accordance to his father’s orders, Susanoo eventually gets expelled after rounds of conflict with Amaterasu and other gods. After the expulsion, Susanoo settles at Izumo. This storyline involving Susanoo’s expulsion and resettlement at Izumo is largely identical to the variant narratives in the *Nihon shoki*.

According to the storyline, the “country of roots” to which Susanoo returns appears to be Izumo, signifying that Susanoo was originally from Izumo before he was “born.” Arai Hakuseki also notices this point, stating that “*Neno-katasu-kuni* seems to refer to the Izumo Province” 根の堅州國とは出雲國をさしいふに似たり。⁴⁸⁸ Recognizing Susanoo’s extraneous origins, of course, opens the door for scholars such as Tō Teikan to reinterpret Susanoo as a symbol of foreign influence upon ancient Japan. Teikan noted, “Because Susanoo came [to Japan] from Chinhan [ancient Korea], he calls Silla the “country of roots” of his parents” 素戔雄尊は、辰韓より渡り玉ふ故に、新羅を父母の根の國と云。⁴⁸⁹ This interpretation no doubt imperils the

⁴⁸⁷ *Kojiki* 古事記, 54.

⁴⁸⁸ Arai Hakuseki 新井白石, “Koshitsū” 古史通, 240.

⁴⁸⁹ Tō Teikan 藤貞幹, “Shōkōhatsu” 衝口發, 253.

worldview perpetuated by the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*, which holds that the whole of Japan was ruled by a single lineage of divine emperors since ancient times.

Disinclined to admit this, Norinaga adopts an interpretation made by Urabe Kanetaka 卜部兼方 (fl. 13th century CE), who produced extensive annotations on the *Nihon shoki* between 1274 and 1301. Urabe Kanetaka has noted that “one name of the “country of roots” is the “netherworld”” 根國一名泉國 and that the two places are “actually identical” 其實同耳.⁴⁹⁰ Norinaga also adamantly argues that the “country of roots” is the “netherworld” 黄泉國. Insisting that “claims that the ‘country for roots’ is Izumo” 根國とは出雲を云と云 are “examples of biased Chinese thought” 例の私の漢意なり, Norinaga stated that, “like the roots of plants and trees” 草木の根もおなじ, “the [Chinese character] root of the “country of roots” is named as such because it is located underground” 根之堅洲國、根とは、下つ底に有故に云.⁴⁹¹

In support of this argument, Norinaga even insisted that one ought to use a different Chinese character to write the “country of roots.” As noted, the “country of roots” in the *Kojiki* is written as *Neno-katasu-kuni* 根之堅州國. Because the original Chinese character for “su” 州 signifies administrative division and thereby does not express a place of another realm, Norinaga insists that one ought to use the homophone “su” 洲, which denotes an entirely separate landform. Norinaga writes, “[As for the Chinese] character ‘su’ 洲, the usage of [the character] ‘su’ 州 in all copies [of the *Kojiki*] is definitely erroneous. [They must be] amended as described above”

⁴⁹⁰ Urabe Kanetaka 卜部兼方, *Shaku Nihongi* 釋日本紀, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Yagi Shoten, 2003), 193.

⁴⁹¹ Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長, “*Kojiki-den*” 古事記傳, vol. 9, 303.

洲字、諸本皆州と作るは、決して誤なれば、前文なるに依て改つ。⁴⁹² In order to sever the Susanoo's Korea connection and render him Japanese, Norinaga even sought to rewrite the *Kojiki* itself.

Most modern scholars of Japanese classics have noted their skepticism regarding this interpretation of the “country of roots” as the “netherworld.” Matsumura Takeo 松村武雄 (1883–1969) noted that the “country of roots” may not refer to the “netherworld” but rather to the dimly remembered original homeland of the Japanese people.⁴⁹³ Donald Philippi (1930–1993) also noted in his English translation of the *Kojiki* the following possible interpretations of the “country of roots”:

Usually regarded as an alternate term for Yōmī; at any rate, a mythical country. NE, id., ‘root’, has connotations of subterranean regions, ancestral descent, etc.; KATA, id., ‘hard,’ ‘firm,’ perhaps ‘remote’; SU, id., ‘islet,’ ‘island,’ perhaps connected with words meaning ‘dwelling’ (*sumu, sumi, su*, etc.); KUNI, id., ‘land.’ Various translations are possible, e.g.: “Land of the Hard Roots” (treating KATA-SU as one word=*katasi*, ‘hard’); “Remote Subterranean Corner Land” (KATA-SU as *kata-sumi*, ‘remote corner’); “Firm, Ancestral Land” (KATA-SU as *kata-sumi*, ‘remote corner’); “Firm, Ancestral Land” (treating NE-NÖ-KUNI as ‘original [i.e., root] land’).⁴⁹⁴

Furthermore, Philippi notes that it is “rather odd” that Susanoo refuses to rule his designated territory and instead wants to return to the land of his mother. Philippi also noted that Susanoo, who was “regarded with suspicion and mistrust by the heavenly deities,” assumes “an entirely different role, as a national culture-hero” once Susanoo enters Izumo, suggesting the possibility that Izumo might be Susanoo's original home.⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁹² Ibid., 445.

⁴⁹³ Matsumura Takeo 松村武雄, *Nihon shinwa no kenkyū* 日本神話の研究, vol. 4 (Tokyo: Baifūkan, 1958), 361-396.

⁴⁹⁴ *Kojiki*, trans. and ed. Donald L. Philippi (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 530.

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid., 402-403.

Kurano Kenji 倉野憲司 (1902–1991) also voiced his suspicion by noting that the two places “have been separate worlds from the start” もともと別な世界であつた。⁴⁹⁶ Tsugita Masaki 次田真幸 (1909–1983) suggested in his commentaries on the *Kojiki* that the “country of roots” is most likely an overseas land considered to be the native place of the gods.⁴⁹⁷ Kanda Norishiro 神田典城 also suggests that the two places are separate.⁴⁹⁸ Yamaguchi Yoshinori 山口佳紀 and Kōnoshi Takamitsu 神野志隆光 also shared their skepticism regarding the reading of the “country of roots” as the “netherworld” in their 1994 annotation of the *Kojiki*.⁴⁹⁹ Despite the doubts raised by earlier scholars, however, some of more recent publications appear to be following the Motoori Norinaga’s suggestion. Yamada Hisashi 山田永, for example, largely agrees with Norinaga that the “country of roots” is the “netherworld.”⁵⁰⁰ Another exception is the American Japanologist Gustav Heldt. In his 2014 English translation of the *Kojiki*, Heldt uncritically accepted Norinaga’s interpretation and translated the “country of roots” into “the land that lies beneath the hard earth’s roots.”⁵⁰¹

Norinaga sought to strengthen his rather inconclusive claim that Susanoo’s place of origin is the “netherworld” by conflating Susanoo with Tsukuyomi into one god. According to both the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*, the Japanese creator god Izanagi gave birth to the “three

⁴⁹⁶ Kurano Kenji 倉野憲司, *Kojiki zenchūshaku* 古事記全註釈, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Sanseidō, 1974), 341.

⁴⁹⁷ *Kojiki* 古事記, trans. and ed. Tsugita Masaki 次田真幸, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1977), 73-74.

⁴⁹⁸ Kanda Norishiro 神田典城, *Nihon shinwa ronkō: Izumo shinwa hen* 日本神話論考: 出雲神話篇 (Tokyo: Kasama Shoin, 1992), 15-24.

⁴⁹⁹ *Kojiki* 古事記, 55.

⁵⁰⁰ Yamada Hisashi 山田永, *Kojiki Susanoo no kenkyū* 古事記スサノヲの研究 (Tokyo: Shintensha, 2001), 134-180.

⁵⁰¹ *The Kojiki: An Account of Ancient Matters*, trans. and ed. Gustav Heldt (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 19.

noble children” 三貴子 following the creation of the physical world: the sun god Amaterasu, the moon god Tsukuyomi, and Susanoo.⁵⁰² Irrespective of the apparent clarity regarding the number of children in the original texts in question, Norinaga nevertheless insists that there were only *two* noble children: “There are many things that suggest Tsukuyomi and Susanoo were originally a single god” もと月夜見命と須佐之男命とは、一神かと思はるること多し. Regardless of this claim’s interpretative feasibility, identifying Susanoo as the moon god Tsukuyomi, along with Norinaga’s insistence that the moon *is* the netherworld, strengthened Norinaga’s aforementioned avowal that “the country of roots” is *not* Izumo:

First, [the part of] Tsukuyomi’s [name] yomi refers to the netherworld, and it is the name of the country to which Susanoo returned to. “The country of roots” is therefore the netherworld.

まづ月夜見の夜見は黄泉にて、須佐之男命の就歸たまへる國名なり、根國は即黄泉のことなる。⁵⁰³

This interpretation appears to have been endorsed and even strengthened by his students and successors. For example, Hattori Nakatsune 服部中庸 (1757–1824), a student of Norinaga, also insists on this point in his 1791 treatise the *Sandaikō* 三代考 (“Reflections on the Cosmic Triad”), an explication of Japanese antiquity. Norinaga held this work in high esteem and even incorporated the *Sandaikō* in its entirety in the *Kojiki-den*. After diagramming Norinaga’s interpretations by presenting a cosmological vision of the tri-parted universe made of earth, heaven (sun), and netherworld (moon), which supports the above mentioned argument that Susanoo is Tsukuyomi and moon is the netherworld. Nakatsune noted that “when Tsukuyomi and Susanoo are looked at as one god, confusion regarding its origin disappears and all things

⁵⁰² *Kojiki* 古事記, 52.

⁵⁰³ Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長, “*Kojiki-den*” 古事記傳, vol. 9, 388.

become clear” 月讀命須佐之男命を、一神として見るときは、その本の紛いちじるく、何事も明らかにして。⁵⁰⁴

Regarding this amalgamation of Susanoo and Tsukuyomi, the Japanese scholar Kōnoshi Takamitsu 神野志隆光 shields Norinaga by noting that Norinaga in fact was “hesitant in forming a conclusion” 結論をくだすのは躊躇しています regarding the conflation of the two gods. Kōnoshi Takamitsu then argues that it was only Hattori Nakatsune’s the *Sandaikō* that “insisted [on the conflation] with certainty” 明確に主張します。⁵⁰⁵ Regardless of the fact that it was Norinaga who endorsed the *Sandaikō* and permitted it to be included in the *Kojiki-den*, Nakatsune also cites Norinaga in making his argument:

As for the reason why the “country of roots” is the netherworld, the ninth volume of my teacher’s [Motoori Norinaga’s] the *Kojiki-den* first suggested the many things that suggest Tsukuyomi and Susanoo is a single god as the reason.

かくてその根國即夜食國なる由は、まつ師の古事記傳九の卷に、月讀命と須佐之男命とは、一神かと思はるること多しとて、其由を擧られたる。⁵⁰⁶

More importantly, Takamitsu’s interpretation is problematic in that he does not correctly understand Norinaga’s motive regarding his suggestion that Susanoo and Tsukuyomi are the one and the same god. Yes, Norinaga did state that “it cannot be easily concluded at the moment” 今たやすく云べきにあらず that the two gods are one.⁵⁰⁷ Behind Norinaga’s gilded caution, however, as I have already noted above, Norinaga already made the claim that Tsukuyomi is of

⁵⁰⁴ Hattori Nakatsune 服部中庸, “Sandaikō” 三代考, in *Motoori Norinaga zenshū* 本居宣長全集, ed. Ōno Susumu 大野晋, vol. 10 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1968), 309.

⁵⁰⁵ Kōnoshi Takamitsu 神野志隆光, *Motoori Norinaga “Kojiki den” o yomu* 本居宣長「古事記伝」を読む, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2010), 165-166.

⁵⁰⁶ Hattori Nakatsune 服部中庸, 308.

⁵⁰⁷ Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長, “Kojiki-den” 古事記傳, vol. 9, 388.

the netherworld, the netherworld is where Susanoo returned back to, and the netherworld is the “country of roots.”

Regardless of his cautious tone, Norinaga’s hypothesis is clear and integral to his exegesis on ancient history. Kōnoshi Takamitsu’s supposed contrast between Norinaga and his student Hattori Nakatsune is merely based on the differences of rhetoric, and it shows that Kōnoshi does not fully understand why Norinaga raised the idea in the first place. In his overview of the *Kojiki-den*, Kōnoshi noted that Norinaga conflated the two gods but did not offer an explanation regards to why Norinaga argued this point.⁵⁰⁸ Norinaga raised this hypothesis in order to preemptively remove the interpretative possibility that Susanoo could be of provincial or even foreign (Korean) in his origin. In order to fully “Japanize” him, Susanoo had to be placed somewhere other than Izumo. In order to suggest an alternative place of origin, Norinaga and his successors chose the moon, which they interpreted as the netherworld.

Reflecting the orthodox position this hypothesis on the conflation of the two gods has reached, the Japanese scholar and self-claimed Norinaga successor Hirata Atsutane 平田篤胤 (1776–1843) also repeats this thesis in his “Reconstituted Ancient History” 古史成文 (published in 1818), through which Atsutane sought to create “a newly edited ancient historical text by integrating [materials] conveyed by different classics [of ancient Japan]” 諸古典に見えたる傳ともを通考へて、新に撰びたる古史の文なり.⁵⁰⁹ In this work, Atsutane alters the following line by Izanagi in the *Kojiki*, transforming “[I have] finally obtained three noble children,”

⁵⁰⁸ Kōnoshi Takamitsu 神野志隆光, *Motoori Norinaga “Kojiki den” o yomu* 本居宣長「古事記伝」を読む, vol. 1, 162-166; idem, *Motoori Norinaga “Kojiki den” o yomu* 本居宣長「古事記伝」を読む, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2011), 172-173.

⁵⁰⁹ Hirata Atsutane 平田篤胤, “Tama no mihashira” 靈能眞柱, in *Shinshū Hirata Atsutane zenshū* 新修平田篤胤全集, ed. Hirata Atsutane Zenshū Kankōkai 平田篤胤全集刊行会, vol. 7 (Tokyo: Meicho Shuppan, 1977), 96.

終得三貴子 into “[I have] finally obtained two noble children” 終得二柱之貴御子 in his own work, thereby synthesizing Tsukuyomi and Susanoo into one.⁵¹⁰ He added:

[The claim] that Susanoo and Tsukuyomi are the same god is argued in the *Kojiki-den* and also in the *Sandaikō*. It is an eternally indisputable assertion.
速須佐之男命月夜見命と同神に坐ますこと、記傳、また考の説、萬づ世にわたりて動まじき考なり。⁵¹¹

Norinaga and his successors even altered the basic structure of Japanese mythology of the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki* in order to preemptively remove even the feasibility of Korean influence upon ancient Japan.

Historian Yijiang Zhong has underscored the contingent nature of the modern Shinto history in showing how the new Meiji state sought to reinforce the Japanese imperial authority’s prestige and mana by “vanquishing” the once prestigious gods of Izumo, which it did by diminishing their status and excluding them from the newly constituted imperial pantheon after 1868.⁵¹² Without taking away from his work’s findings, I would like to add to this insight that Norinaga had already begun the process of “vanquishing” the Izumo gods in the late eighteenth century, and this work was continued by many of his followers. This point is clear from their efforts to strengthen the national narrative of the unity in ancient Japan in favor of the provincial narrative of Izumo that suggested ancient Korean influence.

With this subversive loophole surrounding Izumo “closed,” Norinaga went back to the supposed beginning of the universe in accentuating the fundamentally hierarchical relationship

⁵¹⁰ Hirata Atsutane 平田篤胤, “Koshi seibun” 古史成文, in *Shinshū Hirata Atsutane zenshū* 新修平田篤胤全集, ed. Hirata Atsutane Zenshū Kankōkai 平田篤胤全集刊行会, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Meicho Shuppan, 1977), 29.

⁵¹¹ Hirata Atsutane 平田篤胤, “Tama no mihashira” 靈能眞柱, 132.

⁵¹² Yijiang Zhong, *The Origins of Modern Shinto in Japan: The Vanquished Gods of Izumo* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016).

between Japan and every other country. In defining this process of world creation, Norinaga picked out a particular variant narrative from the *Nihon shoki*:

In the *Nihon shoki*, there is no other island created except the great eight islands. The little islands here and there are all created either by the coagulation of seawater froth or freshwater drops.

さて書紀には、大八洲の外に、別に生賜へる嶋は無くて、處々小嶋、皆是潮沫凝成者矣、亦曰水沫凝而成也とあり。

According to this view, all islands other than the great eight islands [Japan] are not created by the two gods. The little islands here and there are not part of the great eight islands and can be said as such. They are not necessarily limited to small islands; there are many that are big. Aside from the islands that belong to the imperial realm [Japan], all foreign countries belong to this group regardless of how big or small they are.

此傳に依るときは、大八嶋の外の嶋々は、二柱神の生たまへるには非るなり、さて處々小嶋どあるは、必しも小き嶋のみには限るべからず、大八洲の外なるを、皆凡て如此は云るなれば、中には大なるも多くあるぞかし、されば皇國に屬る嶋々のみならず、諸の外國をも、大きなる小きを云ず、皆此内とすべきなり。⁵¹³

Norinaga makes this fundamental distinction between the Japanese islands and the outside world even clearer in the following segments:

After the two gods gave birth to the great eight islands [Japan] and gradually separated land and seawater, the beginning of foreign countries [that could be traced back to] when seawater froth here and there naturally coagulated into big or small [pieces of land].

While they were likewise made by the creator's spirit, the two gods did not give birth to the foreign countries. The imperial realm is therefore distinctive from the beginning in its separation of the high and the low as well as the beauty and the ugliness.

外國どもの初は、二柱神大八洲を生賜ひて、國土と海水と、漸に分るるに隨ひて、此處彼處と、潮沫のおのづからに凝堅まり合たるどもの、大きにも小くも成れるもの也、これはた産巢日神の産靈によりて成れることは、ひとしけれども、外國は、二柱神の産給へる國に非ず、是皇國と、初より尊卑美惡きけぢめの、分るところ也。⁵¹⁴

To speak of about an example of the state of our imperial realm [Japan] and foreign countries, the imperial realm in ancient times was like a beautiful person without ornaments regarding body and clothes, living naturally as he or she is. Foreign countries are like an ugly woman who applies excessive makeup to her hair and face and adorns herself with beautiful clothes. When viewed from afar, true forms of good and bad are

⁵¹³ Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長, "Kojiki-den" 古事記傳, vol. 9, 202.

⁵¹⁴ Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長, "Kojiki-den" 古事記傳, vol. 10, 304.

difficult to distinguish, and those who are adorned appear to be more beautiful. When today's people approach them, they do not know how to distinguish genuine beauty and [veiled] ugliness. Viewed from afar, [people] think that the adornments of foreign countries are beautiful. Because all things from China and all other countries are actually bad, they are covered with different ornaments.

皇國と外國とのやうを、物にたとへていはば、皇國の古は、かほよき人の、かたち衣服をもかざらず、ただありにてあるが如く、外國は、醜き女の、いみしく髪かほをつくり、びひしき衣服を着かざりたるがごとくなるを、遠くて見る時は、まことのかたちのよきあしきは、わかれずして、ただそのかざりつくろへるかたぞ、まさりて見ゆめるを、世の人、ちかくよりて、まことの美醜きを見ることをしらず、ただ遠目にのみ見て、外國のかざりをしも、うるはしと思ふは、いかにぞや、すべて漢國などは、よろづの事、實はあしきが故に、それをおほひかくさむとてこそ、さまざまにかざりつくるには有けれ。⁵¹⁵

Based on such a distinction, Norinaga then shifted to the historical relationship between Japan and the outside world, which initially was largely confined to relationships between Japan and the kingdoms of the Korean Peninsula. As for this relationship, Norinaga started with the traditional mythical narratives taken from the *Nihon shoki*:

According to the Age of the Gods volume of the *Nihon shoki*, Susanoo descended upon Silla with his son, Itakeru.

書紀神代卷に、素戔鳴尊、帥其子五十孟神、降到於新羅國云々、とあり。

After that, Sukunahikona descended from the heaven, dominating Korea, China, and all remaining countries [of the world]. While Chinese texts claim the likes of King Wu of Zhou's [r. 1046–1043 BCE] enfeoffment of Jizi to Korea, such events occurred long after [Susanoo's and Sukunahikona's conquests of Korea].

其後に、少名毘古那命の、天降坐て、三韓をも、漢國をも、其餘の諸國をも、皆經營賜へるなるべし、かくて漢籍どもに云る三韓の事ども、かの周武王が朝鮮を箕子に封せしなど云も、皆其より遙に後の事ぞかし。⁵¹⁶

In addition, Norinaga wanted to further elucidate the nature of the relationship between ancient Korea and Japan by clarifying the terms used. In discussing the narrative of Jingū's conquest of Korea in the *Nihon shoki*, for example, where the Silla king self-claimed that his

⁵¹⁵ Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長, "Tamakatsuma" 玉勝間, 119.

⁵¹⁶ Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長, "Kojiki-den" 古事記傳, vol. 11, 377.

country was a “western tributary” 西蕃 of Japan, Norinaga problematized a conventional Japanese reading of these Chinese characters, where “the western tributary was read as *nishi no tonari* [‘western neighbor’]” 西蕃を、ニシノトナリと訓。Such a reading, of course, undermines the supposedly hierarchical nature of the historical relationship between Korea and Japan. Norinaga therefore suggested an entirely different term, paying no regard to the Chinese character used:

It is difficult to know how the character “tributary” 蕃 was pronounced in the ancient times, as its designation has not been transmitted. Thinking of its meaning now, one should not be bounded by the [Chinese] character and should read it as *miyatsuko kuni*. This means a vassal country [of Japan].

蕃を古はいかに云けむ、其稱傳はらざれば、知がたし、今事の意を以思ふに、字には拘らずして、美夜都古久爾と訓べし、御臣國の義なり。⁵¹⁷

This interpretation is not supported by any ancient text, again showing how Norinaga often prioritized ideology over philology.

With the hierarchy so clearly predetermined, according to Norinaga, the rest of the known world had to submit to Japan. China, however, had refused to serve Japan for the entirety of its history up to Norinaga’s lifetime:

These Chinese barbarians should have dutifully submitted tribute and obeyed the great country [Japan] as liege subjects, like the Korean barbarians [who have done so] from the era of Empress Jingū. Perhaps because of the arrogant and conceited monarchs [of China] through the generations, what should have happened did not [happen].

さて此もろこしのからも。かの息長帶姫尊の御時より。韓のからどもと同じさまに。大御國へはみつぎ物奉りて。まつろひまゐるべかりしことわりなるを。よよにさばかりおごりたかぶりをる王なりしかばにや。さることもなくて。⁵¹⁸

⁵¹⁷ Ibid., 382.

⁵¹⁸ Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長, “Gyojū gaigen” 馭戎慨言, 28.

Because of this, Japan's overseas empire consisted only of Korea, and despite the supposedly global ramifications of Norinaga's reading of the world's beginning, he had to narrate the history of Japan only as such.

According to Norinaga, voluntary submission of at least part of Korea had already occurred by the reign of the legendary Sujin Emperor 崇神天皇. Norinaga points to southern Korea as the first foreign country to submit to Japan:

In the autumn of [Emperor Sujin's] sixty-fifth year [33 BCE], an envoy came from a country called Mimana and submitted tribute. It can be seen [in the *Nihon shoki*] that [Mimana] is separate from Kyushu and is located 2,000 *li* to its north. This country is recorded in Chinese texts; and it had been [called] *kara* ["barbarian"] until the later generations. Therefore, it was indeed the first time a foreign country submitted [to Japan]. 御代六十五年の秋、任那の國といふより。使まゐりて。みつぎ物を奉りき。そは筑紫をはなれて。二千餘里北の方にある國也と見えたり。此國は。もろこしの書どもにも物せて。後の世までからなれば。これをぞまさしく外國のまゐりし始とはいふべき。⁵¹⁹

After the first supposed appearance of Mimana, Norinaga moved onto the Jingū's conquest, which spurred the kingdoms of Korea "to constantly and undoubtedly send officials and submit tribute into the middle period" 中昔までも。まさしく使をさして。みつぎ物奉りしこと絶ず。 While the supposedly open submission of Korean kingdoms ended after that, such interruption was not in the natural order of things:

Before long, a man named Wang Kōn of Koryō united all the countries of Korea into one, claiming it be Koryō [or Koguryō] once again. [Koryō] collapsed during the era of Emperor Go-Komatsu, and a man called Yi Sōnggye, a [Koryō's] official, replaced it. The country's name was changed to Chosōn. To think of the past, this Korea, equivalent to the likes of today's Ryukyus, is a country that should have served Japan as its subject. その後程なく。高麗の王建といひしもの。三韓のあたりの國共を。みなひとつにあはせよりて。又高麗となんなのりみたりしを。後小松天皇の御時にほろびて。其臣に李成桂といひしをのこ。かはり立て。國の名をも。朝鮮となんあらためけ

⁵¹⁹ Ibid., 25.

る。昔を思へば。此朝鮮は。今も琉球などとひとしなみに。大御國には。みやつこと申て。つかへまつるべき國なるぞかし。⁵²⁰

Norinaga's perspective that Korea ought to, as it supposedly did in the past, serve Japan again as its subject is one reason why Norinaga places great emphasis on Hideyoshi's invasions of Korea. After writing about the exploits of Hideyoshi's invasions in glowing terms, Norinaga grieved that Hideyoshi prematurely died before finishing off Korea:

The passing of the retired imperial regent on the eighth month and eighth day [of 1598 CE] was unavoidable and unfortunate. Had he lived two or three more years, the efforts in Korea would not have been needlessly wasted.

その八月十八日に。大閤かくれさせ給ひぬるは。いとあへなく。くちをしきわざなりけり。いま二とせ三とせおはしまさましかば。此朝鮮のいたつきも。いたづらに成てはやまざらましを。

Furthermore, according to Norinaga, Hideyoshi would have conquered Korea within his lifetime had he followed the good precedence of Empress Jingū and relied on the gods of Japan:

[Hideyoshi should have] first pondered and quarried Empress Jingū's tale, and he should have respectfully carried out rites to the relevant gods and prayed deeply in asking for their marvelous aid. [Only then] could he have achieved the exceptional accomplishment [of conquering Korea]. Why did he not show interest in such work of the gods from the start and rely only on himself?

まづかの息長帶姫尊の御ふることをおぼし尋ねて。かならずさるべき神たちを。ねんごろにいつき祭り給ひて。くすしき御たすけを。深くいのり申給ひてこそは。殊なる御いさをもたちぬべかりけるを。はしめより此神わざをば。おぼしもかけずて。ただみみづからの御いきほひをのみ頼み給ひしは。いかにぞや。⁵²¹

Based on his historical narrative of what supposedly happened in the past, Norinaga's ultimate conclusion was that Japan was destined to do just as Empress Jingū had done; make its former tributary Korea subservient once again. Norinaga then moved onto the Tokugawa. After praising the "era of prosperity" さかゆく御代 under the Tokugawa rule, which included the "submission of tribute from distant countries from all directions" はるけき四方の國々よりも。

⁵²⁰ Ibid., 26-27.

⁵²¹ Ibid., 116-117.

みつぎ物たてまつり, Norinaga insinuated that there could be yet another foreign military expedition in the future that might bring even more countries under Japanese dominance, and this is how Norinaga ended his reading of history:

When the great shogun's spirit becomes the light flashing across the entire universe, their king will also, in the end, become a subject [of Japan], as he dutifully should, and submit tribute. Ah! Splendid! Invaluable!

大將軍の御いきほひ。天地のあひだにかがやき給へば。その國王はた。つひにはことわりの如く。みやつことまうして。まつろひまゐりなん物ぞ。あなめでた。あなたふと。⁵²²

There is no evidence that Tō Teikan and Ueda Akinari further responded to Norinaga by writing public rebuttals. They did, however, continue their work in contrast to Norinaga and his followers. Teikan, for example, continued to explore remnants of continental influence upon Japan in support of his view that the civilization in Japan has been greatly influenced by the continent from ancient times. Teikan once analyzed, for example, inscriptions on a bell located at a temple in Tsushima and argued that it came from Silla based on the usage of the Silla official title “taegakgan” 大角干. In his analysis of another bell inscription from the Echizen Province 越前國, Teikan noted the usage of the Silla era name “T’ae-hwa” 太和 (647–650 CE). Teikan also found the usage of another Silla era name “Inp’yōng” 仁平 (634–747 CE) in a handcopied Buddhist text in Japan.⁵²³ In another instance, Teikan also found evidence of Korean language in a stele discovered after a landslide in Kōzuke Province 上野國.⁵²⁴ Through such efforts, Teikan continued his thesis of continental origins of ancient Japanese culture.

⁵²² Ibid., 117-118.

⁵²³ Tō Teikan 藤貞幹, “Kōko nichiroku” 好古日録, in *Nihon zuihitsu taisei* 日本隨筆大成, vol. 22 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1994): 144-146.

⁵²⁴ Tō Teikan 藤貞幹, “Kōko shōroku” 好古小録, in *Nihon zuihitsu taisei* 日本隨筆大成, vol. 22 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1994): 173-174.

Ueda Akinari also remained unconvinced of Norinaga's work and continued to defend his perspective. Given Akinari's view that the mythology of Amaterasu cannot be read literally, for example, Akinari used the Dutch technology of the telescope to advance his position. Norinaga had argued that the Japanese god Amaterasu *is* the sun itself and that her death would "make the world go dark" 天地は黒闇となりて and that "this world swiftly would be destroyed" たちまち此世はほろびうせぬべき物をや.⁵²⁵ Akinari, however, noted that "when looked at through the [Dutch] telescope, "Zongasrasu," the sun is [physically] flaring" ゾンガラスと云千里鏡で見たれば、日は炎々タリ.⁵²⁶ Using advanced European technology, it was clear that the sun was on fire and thereby could not be an anthropogenic god. In another instance, Akinari wrote disparaging comments about Norinaga and his school at large:

There is also a person who puts too much emphasis on ancient language. He has gathered students from far and wide, referring to them as inheritors of [his] doctrine. Of course, this person is also extremely biased. He is an Ise person. Putting the *Kojiki* in the center [of his scholarship], he claims to have explained antiquity.

又此古言をしいてとく人あり。門人を教への子と云て、ひろく來たるをあつめられし人あり。やはり此人も私の意多かりし也。伊勢の國の人也。古事記を宗として、太古をとくとせられしとそ。⁵²⁷

Furthermore, Akinari also brought up Sukunahikona again in a separate text, reasserting his view that the myth of Sukunahikona as well as the Japanese mythology at large cannot be read literally:

While the [textual] basis for Sukunahikona's event is not known, [someone] believes and claims that it was somehow possible. This is because [he argues that] the imperial realm [Japan] was the country where the sun and the moon were first created, and all other countries were created after [Japan]. This assertion comes from the recording in the

⁵²⁵ Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長, "Kenkyōjin" 鉗狂人, 296.

⁵²⁶ Ueda Akinari 上田秋成, "Tandai shōshin roku" 胆大小心録, in *Ueda Akinari zenshū* 上田秋成全集, ed. Ueda Akinari Zenshū Henshū Iinkai 上田秋成全集編集委員会, vol. 9 (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1990), 190.

⁵²⁷ *Ibid.*, 134.

Jimmu chapter [of the *Nihon shoki*], which records 1,792,470 years between the Amaterasu's descent and the present. This is a response to the assertions made by Chinese texts that some 6,000 years or 3,600 years have passed since [the mythical Chinese monarch] Huangdi. It is stupefying and feels like an intoxicating dream. Even so, what god would quietly count on one's fingers for that many years? This is an extremely childish story.

少名彦ノ事ハ所尋ヲ知ラス、爾ルヲ如何ニシテ爾可云ソト思フニ、皇邦ハ日月ノ始テ所成出國ニテ、何レノ國モ未開以往ニ作出シト云、其所由ト爲ルハ。蓋ク神武紀ニ自天祖降迹。以逮于今。一百七十九萬二千四百七十餘歳ト書サレシヲ、例ノ擊出テ云ナラン、彼漢書ニ黃帝以來六千歳。或云。三千六百餘歳ナト云ニ對スレハ。忙然トシテ酔夢ノ心地セラス、然ニテモ何某の神ノ慇懃ニ指ヲ屈シテ。此算數己ヲカメタマヒケン。最モ稚説話ナリケリ。⁵²⁸

Despite his skepticism regarding the literalist interpretations of Japanese mythology and ancient history as well as his willingness to adopt foreign views, Akinari was not a simple stooge of foreign thoughts as Norinaga characterized him to be. In fact, Akinari also appears to be a bona fide nativist in a number of his writings. In one instance, Akinari displayed his generally low regard for Japanese Confucian scholars of his day:

Confucians have become unimpressive through the course of my lifetime. In the past, one could at least see a small part of the sage even among those lacking in scholarship or literary works.

儒者のこわくないやうに成つた事は、翁か生涯の中也。學問や詩文は下手ても、きつと聖人のけつり屑は見へた事しやあつた。

In another instance, Akinari insinuated that the arguments of nativists in Japan, such as Norinaga, are more effective than those of their Confucian counterparts:

When nativists consider China and Confucians speak of Japan, [both] to the fullest of their abilities, the Confucian side is more likely to be erroneous.

國學者か唐の事を考へると、儒者か日本の事をいふと、力かありたけて、儒者の方かすかたんか多い。⁵²⁹

⁵²⁸ Ueda Akinari 上田秋成, "Yasumigoto" 安々言, in *Ueda Akinari zenshū* 上田秋成全集, ed. Ueda Akinari Zenshū Henshū linkai 上田秋成全集編集委員会, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1990), 43.

⁵²⁹ Ueda Akinari 上田秋成, "Tandai shōshin roku" 胆大小心録, 165-166.

Furthermore, Akinari also displayed his low regard for Korea and China, reflected in his evaluation of the abilities of the Korean scholars he encountered and his view on Japan's historical interactions with China. As for the Korean scholars who accompanied the 1763–1764 mission to Japan, for example, Akinari noted, “Aside from Nam Ok 南玉 (1722–1770) and Sōng Taejung 成大中 (1732–1809), they were imbeciles” 秋月、龍淵といふ二人の外は、下郎しやあつた。⁵³⁰ As for Japan's interactions with China in history, Akinari argued that hardly anything good came out of it except trade:

The only benefit of [embassies] going to China was trade. The acquisition of Buddhism and Confucianism's deviancy resulted in usurpations and regicides through a century of civil war that went on without respite. Two hundred years of peace ensued only with the advent of the current rule [and the severing of official communications with China under the Tokugawa].

入唐の益は交易のみなり。佛教、儒教のさかしきを習ては、篡位弑逆の事やまず、百年干戈の休む時なし。此御治世になりてそ、二百年來實に大平なり。⁵³¹

Such perplexities in his thinking were perhaps well illustrated in “Tales of Moonlight and Rain” 雨月物語 (1776), which includes a chapter called “Shiramine” 白峰. This chapter, named after the mountain where the tomb and shrine of Emperor Sutoku 崇徳天皇 (r. 1123–1142 CE) is located, centered on an imagined conversation between the spirit of Emperor Sutoku and the Buddhist monk Saigyō 西行 (1118–1190 CE). Having been ousted in a struggle for succession, Sutoku's spirit sought to justify the armed conflicts he sponsored using the notion of righteous revolution by the ancient Chinese philosopher Mencius. Saigyō, however, rebukes Sutoku by emphasizing the inapplicability of Mencian thought in Japan. But Saigyō is not necessarily

⁵³⁰ Ibid., 168.

⁵³¹ Ibid., 235.

against Confucianism per se. For example, he links the seemingly selfless attitudes of some of the imperial family members to the core values of Confucian thought:

There is no [need] to speak of faraway China. In the past, Emperor Ōjin of the imperial dynasty [Japan] made the youngest prince, Uji, the crown prince, sidelining the eldest prince, Ōsazaki. Upon the emperor's passing, the brothers all mutually conceded and did not ascend [to the throne]. When [the mutual conceding] continued for three years, Prince Uji was deeply bothered and said, "How can I live long and disturb the world?" He therefore killed himself, and the eldest prince was compelled to ascend to the throne. Such actions show great dedication to the heavenly dynasty as well as filial piety and brotherly affection. Loyalty was exhaustive, and there was no greed. They should be considered as Yao and Shun. Our dynasty has respected Confucianism in supporting the kingship, and it dates to Prince Uji's invitation of Wani from [the ancient kingdom of] Paekche and learning from him. It can be said that the hearts of the conceding brother princes are those of the sages of China.

遠く辰旦をいふまでもあらず。皇朝の昔誉田の天皇。兄の皇子大鷦鷯の王をおきて。季の皇子菟道の王を日嗣の太子となし給ふ。天皇崩御給ひては。兄弟相譲りて位に昇り給はず。三とせをわたりても猶果べくもあらぬを。菟道の王深く憂給ひて。豈久しく生て天が下を煩しめんやとてみづから寶算を斷せ給ふものから。罷事なく兄の皇子御位に即せ給ふ。是天業を重んじ孝悌をまもり。忠をつくして人慾なし。堯舜の道といふなるべし。本朝に儒教を尊みて專王道の輔とするは。菟道の王。百濟の王仁を召して學ばせ給ふをはじめなれば。此兄弟の王の御心ぞ。即漢土の聖の御心ともいふべし。⁵³²

Despite the seeming endorsement and even praise of Confucian values, however, Akinari suggests through Saigyō that Mencius and the Mencian notion of revolution is wholly unsuitable for Japan:

While there is not a Chinese book, including the classics, histories, and even poetry, that has not arrived [in Japan], this book of Mencius has still not been transmitted to Japan. [This is because] the ships coming to Japan while hauling this book always run into storms and sink. The reason is that our country's imperial lineage has not been broken since Amaterasu created and ruled the world, and a malicious person may emerge in the future claiming that it would be crimeless to depose the divine descendants if such impertinent teaching gets transmitted. The countless gods [of Japan] detest that and thereby created divine winds in order to sink the ship. Even if they are the divine teachings of foreign countries, many aspects of [such teachings] are at odds with our country.

⁵³² Ueda Akinari 上田秋成, "Ugetsu monogatari" 雨月物語, in *Ueda Akinari zenshū* 上田秋成全集, ed. Ueda Akinari Zenshū Henshū Iinkai 上田秋成全集編集委員会, vol. 7 (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1990), 229-230.

されば漢土の書は經典史策詩文にいたるまで渡さざるはなきに。かの孟子の書ばかりいまだ日本に來らず。此書を積て來たる船は。必しも暴風にあひて沈没よしをいへり。それをいかなる故ぞととふに。我國は天照すおほん神の開闢しろしめししより。日嗣の大王絶る事なきを。かく口賢しきをしへを傳へなば。末の世に神孫を奪ふて罪なしといふ敵も出べしと。八百よろづの神惡ませ給ふて。神風を起して船を覆し給ふと聞。されば他國の聖の教も。ここの國土にふさはしからぬことすくなからず。⁵³³

While accepting of foreign thinking, Akinari nevertheless recognized and espoused what he found to be unique qualities of Japan. This rather quaint aspect of Akinari's nativism—being proud of one's country without being a chauvinist—is further rationalized by how he thought of foreign expansion and the domination of other countries. Unlike Norinaga, who wholly emphasized the traditional perspective of Japanese domination of Korea as well as Japan's predestined future domination of other parts of the world, Akinari apparently believed that foreign expeditions were costly and ultimately futile:

The world is like a living body, distinguished and separated as such. Even if a foreign country is seized, it ultimately does not become one's own. It [eventually] breaks off, going back to the natural state of separation. After [Empress] Jingū conquered Korea, it [eventually] broke off [from Japan] by the time of Emperor Tenji [r. 626–672 CE]. While it appeared that the tribute [from Korea] continued unabated in the meantime, sometimes rebelling and sometimes submitting, it actually did not respect the imperial authority. Such [happenings] are observable in detail in the historical texts. If one thinks of the military expenditures during that time with one's eyes closed, would several ships worth of tribute be enough? When looked at in hindsight, after some five hundred years, both the divine intervention [in urging the Empress Jingū to invade Korea] and the empress's exploits have been in vain. It was merely a case of the strong suppressing the weak. At the present, the Qing has destroyed the Ming, annexing it in domination. [But] I do not think that [such domination] will be sustained over thousands of years.

一大世界九臟ノ如ク。區別分置シタル物ナレハ。一旦佗國ヲ掠略得タリトモ。終ニ吾有ニ非レハ。亦離レテ自然ノ分置ニ復ルヘシ。神功ノ三韓ヲ襲取タマヒテヨリ。天智之御世ニ至テ遂ニ離レタリ。其間ノ朝貢連綿タルニ似タレトモ。或ハ叛キ。或ハ服シ。寔ニ皇化ヲ崇尚セシトモ無キハ。國史ニ見エテ枚擧スルニ不耐。其間ノ軍役ノ損價。眼ヲ閉テ思ヘハ。數艘ノ貢課ヲ以テ償フニ足レリヤ否ヤ。殆五百餘年ノ後ヨリ見レハ。神ノ告モ君ノ勳功モ無益トナリヌ。夫強ヲ以テ弱ヲ

⁵³³ Ibid., 230-231.

壓スル。一旦ノ事ノミ。今ノ清國ノ明宗ヲ滅シテ。本國ヲ合セ跋扈スルトモ。必
モ幾千歳ヲ保持スヘキコトトモ思エス。⁵³⁴

Despite the existence of scholars like Akinari, who continued to be unconvinced by Norinaga's revamped vision of Japan's historical domination of Korea and supremacy over the rest of the world, Norinaga's vision appears to have ultimately won out. Historian Mark McNally noted that "[Norinaga's] research and methodology became so popular that, by the early decades of the nineteenth century, earnest students (*monjin*) and disciples had established academies devoted to his scholarship in most of the major urban centers in Japan."⁵³⁵ As Norinaga's scholarship and his school came to dominate the country, Tō Teikan and Ueda Akinari became largely forgotten.

Over the course of the first four decades of the nineteenth century, Hirata Atsutane began to rise above the disparate remnants of the Norinaga school, as well as other Japanese nativists, while publicly positioning himself as Norinaga's one and only legitimate successor.⁵³⁶ He also had thousands of students of his own. While certain aspects of Atsutane's scholarship diverged from those of Norinaga due Atsutane's interests in eschatology and the lives of Japanese peasantry as vestigial traces that could function as windows into the ancient past,⁵³⁷ Atsutane displayed little dissimilarity with Norinaga when it came to Japan's relationship with the outside world.

⁵³⁴ Ueda Akinari 上田秋成, "Yasumigoto" 安々言, 47.

⁵³⁵ Mark McNally, *Proving the Way: Conflict and Practice in the History of Japanese Nativism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2005), 96.

⁵³⁶ Mark McNally, "Who Speaks for Norinaga? Kokugawa Leadership in Nineteenth Century Japan," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 38:1 (2011): 129-159.

⁵³⁷ Mark McNally, *Proving the Way*, 179-208.

Like Norinaga, Atsutane argued that all foreign countries have been inferior to Japan from the start, and, like ancient Korea, ought to be dominated by Japan in the future. In fact, in the context of growing intrusions of European powers in the nineteenth century, Atsutane expounded Norinaga's worldview with even greater urgency. Atsutane, for example, clearly stated that there is no option but that of violent expulsion for all cases of foreign encroachment, and that such a response will ultimately bring their submission to Japan. In this quest, Atsutane even noted that he was ready to fight against foreigners himself, writing that he wanted to “join the divine army [of Japan] and participate on the frontlines” 神軍の中に加はり。その御先鋒を仕へ奉りて。⁵³⁸ He also wrote:

Incidents of cowardice within the Japanese armies inside Japan may not matter as the victory and defeat are shared [among the Japanese]. In battles against foreigners, however, unconscionable female-like acts will receive ridicule for eternity and damage our country's great authority. Such misdeeds cannot be taken lightly and should not be sketchily thought about. When such an errant event occurs, in accordance with the past example [of defeating the Mongols], filthy barbarians [ought to be] annihilated without a moment of hesitation. By irradiating Japan's authority [abroad] and making them afraid, the tributaries will respectfully and eternally submit tribute.

抑皇國內にて。皇國人どちらの軍には。假令怯き事有らむも。互の勝負なれば。其は事にも非ねど。蕃人との戦ひに。道ならぬ女々しき所爲の有なむにハ。万代までの嘲りを受け。畏くも大御國の。大御光を傷ふ理にし有れば。其罪輕からず。麤略に思ふべきに非ず。若したまたまも。さる逆事せむ時は。古き例の如く。穢き奴ばら暫時も留めず塵にして。皇大御國の大御稜を輝して、怖畏れしめ。御蕃と白して。常しへに貢物奉り。⁵³⁹

Such view of foreign countries vis-à-vis Japan, of course, was based on Norinaga's understanding of history that framed Japan as a legitimate Chinese-style empire that deserved to dominate over other countries. Furthermore, Atsutane points to the *Gyojū gaigen* (“Outline of the Suppression of Barbarians”), a diplomatic history that reinforces the notion of Japanese

⁵³⁸ Hirata Atsutane 平田篤胤, “Tama no mihashira” 靈能眞柱, 181.

⁵³⁹ Hirata Atsutane 平田篤胤, “Chishima no shiranami” 千島の白波, in *Shinshū Hirata Atsutane zenshū* 新修平田篤胤全集, ed. Hirata Atsutane Zenshū Kankōkai 平田篤胤全集刊行会, vol. 20 (Tokyo: Meicho Shuppan 1980), 2.

independence over China as well as its dominance over its neighbors throughout history, as the reference guide book that all Japanese people should to read:

The [proper] mindset in dealing with barbarian countries is clearly discussed and taught in my teacher elder Motoori [Norinaga]'s the *Gyojū gaigen*. [Everyone] should repeatedly try to read it and understand it. Since the first existence of books, there has never been a book as delightful as this book.

かくて其蕃國どもに對ひての心掟は。我師本居翁の馭戎慨言にいと明亮に論ひ諭されたれば。數度よみ見て知べし。凡書ちふ書有しより以來。この書ばかり愉快きふみハ有こと無し。⁵⁴⁰

Contrary to the conventional understanding of Motoori Norinaga's scholarship, as well as Japanese "national learning" at large, I have shown that much of Norinaga's wide-ranging and complex exegesis on ancient history was primarily formed as an ardent defense of and counterattack against the challenges made based on the Korean materials to reaffirm the traditional *Nihon shoki*-based framework that constructed the concept of ancient Japan as a Chinese-style empire, complete with Korea as its subservient tributary state. Many scholars have traditionally interpreted Norinaga's scholia as sincere efforts to discover and learn about Japan's past. As I have shown, however, a significant aspect of his exegesis, which lies underneath the garb of nativism, was driven by proto-nationalist efforts to recreate the visions of the universal empire of the antiquity. In this sense, Norinaga was a quintessential proto-nationalist, someone who might be better understood in the context of regional, or even world history.

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid., 2-3.

Concluding Remarks

Thus far, this dissertation attempted to revisit the history of interactions between early modern Korean and Japanese officials and scholars through the conceptual lens of proto-nationalism, defined here largely as the self-avowed notion of successorship to the classical civilization which stimulated passionate discourses of competition between contenders to the mantle of the idealized antiquity. As I have demonstrated, the contentious debates over civilization, mountains, military power, and ancient history, reinforced such notions of competition on both sides. In what follows, I explore the legacy of such history in shaping the modern histories of Japan and Korea, particularly regarding the role of early modern history in providing a historical context to the rise of Japanese interventionism in Korea.

The conventional scholarly perspective on the Japanese interventionism in Korea following the Meiji Restoration in 1868, represented by scholars such as Hilary Conroy and Peter Duus, emphasized that much of the Japanese policy toward Korea was extemporaneous and contingent on the changing circumstances in the Korean Peninsula.⁵⁴¹ Challenging the older perspective that the Japanese somehow always intended to subjugate Korea, Conroy and Duus show that one has to consider all the contingencies that led Japan to colonialism. In particular, Peter Duus suggests that if the Japanese leaders had been able to find and work with a more cooperative Korean leadership which understood the challenges the two countries faced in the era of high imperialism, perhaps there would have been no intervention or annexation.

Without necessarily disagreeing with their emphasis on the contingencies and recognizing that there is not a clear causal relationship between the early modern developments

⁵⁴¹ Hilary Conroy, *The Japanese Seizure of Korea, 1868-1910: A Study of Realism and Idealism in International Relations* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1960); Peter Duus, *The Abacus and the Sword: The Japanese Penetration of Korea, 1895-1910* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

and what happened after 1868, the view that Korea ought to be dominated by Japan appears to have been deeply entrenched amongst the Japanese intellectual circles long before the Japanese annexation of Korea. While state policymakers' decisions regarding the ultimate aim of Meiji Japan's Korea policy may not have been settled before the twentieth century, the scholars' opinions had been settled long before that. For instance, almost all Japanese historical works on Korea or Korea-Japan relations dating from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century repeated many of the same themes that were touched upon in the early modern Korean-Japanese debates. They perpetuated the concept of Korea as a backward and weak country with no history of independence. This stands in stark contrast to the vision of Japan as a historically powerful country that had repeatedly dominated Korea.

This is not to say, however, that there were no detractors. For example, Naka Michiyo 那珂通世 (1851–1908) noted the dating errors in the *Nihon shoki* and the need for cross-validation using Korean and Chinese materials in an 1878 article.⁵⁴² Miyake Yonekichi 三宅米吉 (1860–1929) also raised doubts about the traditional understanding of ancient Japanese history and Japan's historical relations with Korea in his 1886 book. He questioned the traditional emphasis on textualism in approaching ancient history:

It is extremely difficult to inquire into the people of antiquity. Remains and relics are few, and ancient records are insufficient.

太古人民ニ就テノ穿鑿ハ甚ダ難シ。遺蹟遺物少シ。古記録不充分ナリ。⁵⁴³

Furthermore, Miyake even quoted Arai Hakuseki's theory of the demythicization of ancient Japanese history, suspected that the aforementioned Susano'o's "country of roots" referred to

⁵⁴² Naka Michiyo 那珂通世, "Jōko nendai kō" 上古年代考, *Yōyōsha dan* 洋々社談 38 (January 1878): 1-5.

⁵⁴³ Miyake Yonekichi 三宅米吉, *Nihon shigaku teiyō: Kikō, jinshu, kobutsu* 日本史學提要: 氣候・人種・古物 (Tokyo: Fukyūsha, 1886), 2.

Korea, and cited Tō Teikan in his arguing for the mixed and continental origins of Japanese people and civilization.⁵⁴⁴ Historian Kume Kunitake 久米邦武 (1839–1931) questioned in 1891 the uniqueness of ancient Japanese culture and history by arguing that Japanese Shintoism can be interpreted as a form of “heaven worship” which can be found in many other cultures.⁵⁴⁵ Such dissenting voices, however, were stamped out by even louder voices of scholars who argued against them.

Japanese scholar Ochiai Naozumi 落合直澄 (1840–1891), for example, repeated many of the themes of Norinaga’s historical scholarship in his 1888 historical work, which focused on Japan’s traditional relationship with Korea. First, like Norinaga, he found the Korean historical records to be “deeply insolent” 甚不遜 toward Japan and brushed aside the value of the Korean historical records by discrediting them. Not only were “compared to the histories of great Japan, the two historical works of the *Samguk sagi* and the *Tongguk t’onggam* created in later generations” 三國史記東國通鑑ハ大日本史ニ比スベシ彼二史後世ニ成ル, and they were “the products of their country’s retrospective and biased editing of ancient history” 彼國後世ニ至テ古史ヲ私削スルモノ. From this perspective, Ochiai Naozumi also saw the Japanese domination of Korea dating from the beginning of history. He noted:

Not only is Korea close to our land in proximity, but the relationship has been deep since that country’s beginning with Tan’gun. The likes of Silla and Paekche were subjects of ours into the later generations.

韓ハ我地ニ接近スルノミナラス其國初檀君ヨリシテ緣故甚深シ後世ニ至リ新羅百濟ノ如キハ實ニ我屬國ナリ.⁵⁴⁶

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid., 82-89.

⁵⁴⁵ Kume Kunitake 久米邦武, “Shinto wa saiten no kozoku” 神道は祭天の古俗, *Shigaku zasshi* 史學雜誌 23 (October 1891): 1-15.

⁵⁴⁶ Ochiai Naozumi 落合直澄, *Teikoku kinen shian* 帝國紀年私按 (Tokyo: Iijima Makoto, 1888), 20-22.

In his “History of Korea” 朝鮮史 (1892), Japanese historian Hayashi Taisuke 林泰輔 (1854–1922) also noted the historical pattern of Japanese domination of Korea, in accordance with the traditional historical narrative based on the *Nihon shoki*. He wrote:

[Korea] upheld the orders in submitting tribute [through Empress] Jingū’s conquest. Henceforth, the southern part [of Korea] belonged to our rule. [Japan] established government office [in southern Korea] and placed an administrator there to even more diligently administer [the land].
神功征討奉命納貢爾後南方一帶屬我經略立府置帥統治尤勤。

To closely observe the recorded materials in the *Nihon shoki* regarding the interactions between the two countries, six to seven out of ten [entries from the *Nihon shoki*] allow examination of the circumstances at the time.
今詳書紀所載兩國交涉之事十居六七亦可以察當時情狀矣。⁵⁴⁷

The Japanese scholar Yoshida Tōgo 吉田東吾 (1864–1918) also sought to include Korea in ancient Japanese history in his “Ancient History of Japan and Korea” 日韓古史斷 (1893). For instance, in this work, he revised the traditional definition of “Japan” rooted in the foundation myths of the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki* to support his argument that ancient Korea was part of Japan. According to the *Kojiki*, the two gods Izanagi and Izanami gave birth to eight main islands that came together to form Japan. While the *Kojiki* notes the birth of six more islands, “Because [the two gods] gave birth to these eight islands first, [Japan] is called the country of eight great islands” 故因此八島先所生謂大八島國.⁵⁴⁸ While variant narratives of the *Nihon shoki* sometimes mention different islands, the semantic link between the number of islands and the term “the country of eight great islands” 大八洲國 is maintained.⁵⁴⁹ However, Yoshida insisted that the term “the country of eight great islands” somehow included the Korean Peninsula, too:

⁵⁴⁷ Hayashi Taisuke 林泰輔, *Chōsen shi* 朝鮮史, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Hanshichi, 1892), 1.

⁵⁴⁸ *Kojiki* 古事記, 36.

⁵⁴⁹ *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀, 81-87.

[The term] “eight islands” merely notes a large number of islands. The meaning of pervasiveness should not be limited to the number eight. There are many heterodoxical views based on distortions of the two classics, the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*, and they all omit the Korean Peninsula [from “the country of eight great islands”]. This omission likely has to do with the fact that the writing of the two histories took place after Korea’s betrayal and Tsushima formed the border. However, the fortunate existence of the age-old story of Susanoo [and his descent upon Korea] is enough to see the basic structure of territory in the ancient period.

八洲は島々の多きを云ふのみ。彌の義、八數に限るべからず。故に「記」「紀」二典に載する所牽合附會、異説頗多し、而てみな韓郷之島を脱略せり。是盖二史の成文は三韓離叛の後にして對馬を以て國の内外を限れるより脱略せるが如し。然れとも尙幸にして素戔鳴尊の古傳ありて上世版圖の概略を見るに足れり。

To sum up, it can be said that “the country of eight great islands” includes the Korean lands until the era of Emperor Tenji [r. 626–672].

要するに、天智の朝以前の大八洲國は韓地をも包含せりと云ふなり。⁵⁵⁰

This history of subservience supposedly shaped Korea’s history in later periods, including Yoshida’s own lifetime. For example, Yoshida saw the entirety of Korea’s early modern history as a history of subservience to both Japan and China through Hideyoshi’s invasion as well as the Manchu invasion of Korea. It should be noted that Yoshida confused the Emperor Taizong 太宗 (r. 1636–1643) and the Emperor Kangxi 康熙 (r. 1661–1722) in noting the Manchu invasion of Korea in 1637:

[Korea] had their country destroyed through attacks by the armies of our retired imperial regent Toyotomi Hideyoshi’s invasion [of Korea] in 1592 and Qing Taizong and Kangxi’s invasion [of Korea]. Because of this, [Korea] was not negligent in serving and submitting tribute to the both dynasties [of Japan and China] through the generations. 我か豊太閤文祿の役及ひ清太宗康熙の役并ひに兵を被り國破らる、此を以て世々兩朝に奉事し貢聘怠るなし。

More recently, our government officially declared at home and abroad that Korea was unfettered and independent in the ninth year of Meiji [1876 CE], and had that country working towards establishing the appearance and capacity of a country [befitting of independence]. But such work was not done. To think about it, since ancient times, the [Korean] peninsula has been called a place of favorable geographic conditions. However, it has not greatly thrived to this day. If the heaven did not abandon it, is it fate that it ultimately did not flourish?

⁵⁵⁰ Yoshida Tōgo 吉田東吾, *Nikkan koshidan* 日韓古史斷 (Tokyo: Fuzanbō, 1893), 25-26.

近時明治九年我か政府使命を傳へ朝鮮の不覇獨立を中外に宣言せしより彼をして一國の體面實力を保持せしむるを務めざるはなし。顧ふに半島は古來形勝の處と稱す、而て今に至るも未大に興るもの者あらず、天の之を虚ふするなくんば、豈終に振はさるの宿命あらんや。⁵⁵¹

The Japanese geographer Yazu Shōei 矢津昌永 (1863–1922) also remarked on the conquest narrative. Prior to his travel to Korea in 1893, for example, he visited the Kashii shrine 香椎宮 at Fukuoka, a shrine dedicated to Empress Jingū and her husband, Emperor Chūai 仲哀天皇. Upon paying his respects to the shrine, he noted the “divine cedar tree” 神杉 located in the shrine, which supposedly grew out of the “transplanted cedar that was stuck in the sleeve of Empress Jingū’s armor when she conquered Korea” 皇后征韓の時、鎧袖に挿まれし杉を植へられ. He also noted that immediately prior to Hideyoshi’s invasions of Korea, “After adding on the talismans on the leaves [of the divine cedar tree], they were distributed to the generals who were departing for the foreign conquest” 葉に、守札を添獻せしかば、異國征伐の首途にとて、發向の諸將に頒與せり. Given the good precedence, Shōei himself “inserted a twig [from the divine cedar tree] into his hat” 其一枝を帽間に挿めり prior to embarking to Korea.⁵⁵² His first-hand impression of Korea was that it was a horribly weak and backward country almost waiting for inevitable foreign intervention, and he later attributed Korea’s pathetic decline to the fact that the Japanese have neglected their god-given responsibility of ruling Korea. Shōei later noted that Korea became “devastated and helpless,” 荒廢無力 precisely because “our countrymen have failed to live up to the calling placed upon by

⁵⁵¹ Ibid., 583-584.

⁵⁵² Yazu Shōei 矢津昌永, *Chōsen Shiberia kikō* 朝鮮西伯利紀行 (Tokyo: Maruzen, 1894), 6.

heaven” 我邦人の負へる天職に孤負せる of actively “ruling Korea” 韓地經營 following the Empress Jingū’s initial conquest.⁵⁵³

Historian Shiratori Kurakichi 白鳥庫吉 (1865–1942), one of the founding fathers of modern academic discipline of history in Japan, also subscribed to the framework of ancient Japanese domination of Korea. Influenced by traditional philology in Japan as well as German historicist thought, Shiratori sought to apply the philosophy of modern textual criticism to his academic work. The problem, however, was that his application of textual criticism was clearly selective. As did Norinaga, Shiratori largely dismissed the validity of Korean texts and mythology in his work on ancient history, calling the legend of Kija 箕子 a “completely fictional legend” 全く架空の傳説 and referring to the Tan’gun myth as a “fictional story” 假作譚なり.⁵⁵⁴ However, Shiratori nevertheless historicized Japanese mythology. Not only did Shiratori see the Empress Jingū’s conquest of Silla as something historical, viewing it as a part of the larger struggle between the kingdom of Koguryō and Japan over southern Korea,⁵⁵⁵ Shiratori also deemed the *Nihon shoki* narrative of Susanoo’s descent upon Silla as an actual event as well. Shiratori equates the Korean word *so mōri* (“ox head”) with *Soshimori* 曾尸茂梨, a place in Silla to where, according to the *Nihon shoki*, Susanoo supposedly descended. Shiratori argued that a number of places with the name exist in Korea. Shiratori concluded:

I think that it is glaringly obvious without [further] saying that Susanoo actually ruled Silla.

⁵⁵³ Yazu Shōei 矢津昌永, *Kankoku chiri* 韓國地理 (Tokyo: Maruzen, 1904), 200.

⁵⁵⁴ Shiratori Kurakichi 白鳥庫吉, “Kishi wa Chōsen no shiso ni arazu” 箕子は朝鮮の始祖に非ず, in *Shiratori Kurakichi zenshū* 白鳥庫吉全集, vol. 3 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1969-1971), 502; “Dankun kō” 檀君考, in *Shiratori Kurakichi zenshū* 白鳥庫吉全集, vol. 3 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1969-1971), 4.

⁵⁵⁵ Shiratori Kurakichi 白鳥庫吉, “Sankan seifuku” 三韓征服, in *Shiratori Kurakichi zenshū* 白鳥庫吉全集, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1969-1971), 3-28.

素戔鳴尊が實際新羅の國を支配なすつたのであるかどうかといふことは、言はずして明かであらうと思ひます。⁵⁵⁶

This framework of Japanese domination, particularly with the ongoing colonization of Korea, was even further sustained by the next generation of scholars. Imanishi Ryū 今西龍 (1875–1932), a Japanese historian who specialized in Silla history, also emphasized seemingly predetermined Japanese domination over Silla. For example, Imanishi viewed the Japanese domination of Silla as something “hereditary” 遺傳的. He wrote:

It has already been long since Silla feared Japan. The fear of Japan has been hereditarily ingrained upon their people.

新羅は日本を恐怖することは既に久しく、日本を恐るることは其國民に遺傳的に印象せられたり。⁵⁵⁷

Imanishi notes that such a relationship of dominance and subordination continued even after Silla ousted traditional Japanese interests in the Korean Peninsula over the wars during the sixth and seventh centuries CE. Imanishi wrote of Japan’s later relations with Silla:

The two countries were absolutely not equals. Japan did not forget the mindset from the time it subordinated ancient Korea and perceived Silla as an inferior country, calling its envoys tribute-bearing missions. In reality, Silla’s fear of Japan was extreme. King Munmu Kim Pōmmin [r. 661–681] was buried on top of a great rock of the eastern seashore according to his will. The Silla people, however, transmitted this story as if he, in order to stop the Japanese people’s attacks, became a dragon at a strategic point in defense of the country.

兩國は決して對等のものにあらず、日本の新羅に對するや、三韓服屬時代の心持ちを忘れず、新羅を見るに一段卑き國を以てし、彼の使節を貢調使を名づけられたり。實際に於て、新羅の日本を恐怖すること甚しく、文武王金法敏の如きも、遺言して東海口大石上に葬らしめしが、新羅人は之を日本人の來寇を拒ぐ爲めに、其要害の路に護國の龍となられしと傳へ居れり。⁵⁵⁸

⁵⁵⁶ Shiratori Kurakichi 白鳥庫吉, “Nikkan kōshō kaishi ni kansuru kodensetsu” 日韓交渉開始に關する古傳説, in *Shiratori Kurakichi zenshū* 白鳥庫吉全集, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1969-1971), 36.

⁵⁵⁷ Imanishi Ryū 今西龍, *Shiragi shi kenkyū* 新羅史研究 (Keijō: Chikazawa Shoten, 1933), 67.

⁵⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 68.

Furthermore, Imanishi's perspective regarding ancient Silla and its relationship vis-à-vis Japan appears to have been in place even before much research. He first visited Korea to conduct fieldwork research as a Tokyo Imperial University graduate student in 1906, a few years before the official Japanese colonization of Korea. On his way to Kyōngju 慶州, the ancient Silla capital, Imanishi displayed a Kiplingesque attitude, a sort of "Japanese Man's Burden," as well as demeanor of a conqueror looking to re-conquer lost territory. According to his own records, after "eating a smelly dinner at an extremely filthy Korean inn" 汚穢極まる例の韓人宿に臭き夕飯を食ふ, Imanishi gave some money for drinks to the horseman and some canned beef to several Koreans who were staying at the same inn" 馬夫に酒代とらせ、同宿の韓人数人に牛肉の罐詰與ふれば. According to Imanishi, the Koreans brimmed with gratitude, referring to him with both the Korean and Japanese honorific titles as "a good Japanese *yangban sama*" 良き日本の兩班様. Reflecting upon these ingenuous yet backward people, Imanishi noted, "I like the Koreans. [I] love the Koreans. These people should be taught [by the Japanese], and these people should be led [by the Japanese]" 我は韓人を好み、韓人を愛す。教ゆべき民なり導くべき民なり. As Imanishi approached Kyōngju, he displayed the poise of a conqueror, likening himself to a European Crusader and Hannibal Barca of ancient Carthage. He wrote:

Kyōngju! Kyōngju! The feelings of a Crusader gazing upon Jerusalem must be how I feel right now. My Rome is in front of my eyes. My heart started to gallop. I have wanted to see and visit the secret country of treasures hidden beyond the sea in the clouds of northwest since I first read history at a mountain village's school. I am getting closer [to it] and it is getting closer [to me]. My heart is galloping. I feel like I have seen the old times. I have returned to *our Silla*.

慶州よ慶州よ。十字軍士がイエルサレムを望見せし心は今のわが心ならむ。我がローマは目前にあり。我が心臓は鼓動し初めぬ。十歳に幼児、山村の校舎に史略読みしより、海をへだてて西北の雲に入る祕密の國、寶の國みてしがな逢ひてし

がなと思ひわづらひしが、我や近づく彼や近づく、我が心臓は鼓動せり。前の世を見たらん心地しつ。我はわが新羅に再び歸りぬ。⁵⁵⁹

In addition to the continuation of the framework of predetermined Japanese domination of Korea, a tributary discourse of common ancestry between the Japanese and Korean peoples also developed in ways that complemented it. Ironically, this idea was embedded in Tō Teikan's argument. If a Korean king, Susanoo, had founded Japan, does this not mean that Korea and Japan have the same founder? Teikan had raised his thesis at the time to rebuke the traditional Japanese perspective in ancient history that Japan had historically dominated Korea as well as the idea that Japan has always been culturally independent. He supported his thesis by using the Korean historical texts that revealed errors in the Japanese historical texts. But with Norinaga's victory in the "history war," however, this idea too was subverted to support the notion of Japanese domination of Korea. This process of subversion started rather innocuously, with scholars linking Susanoo with the mythical founder of Korea, Tan'gun 檀君.

Ban Kōkei 伴蒿蹊 (1733–1806), for example, links Susanoo's mythical conquest of Silla with Tan'gun. According to Kōkei, Susanoo *was* Tan'gun:

The first monarch of Korea is called Tan'gun. This is the Tsushima word for Susanoo. The place Susanoo went to in Korea is located northwest of Tsushima and is called *tobisaki*. Furthermore, the place Empress Jingū returned her ship to from Tsushima to Kyushu after endenizing Korea is also called *tobisaki*.

朝鮮國初の主を檀君といふ、これ素盞烏尊にておはしますと、對馬にての話なりとなん。其素尊の朝鮮へ渡り給ひしといへる所、對馬の西北にて飛前と名號く。又神功皇后朝鮮を歸化せしめて、對馬より九州へ歸船まします所も飛前といふ。⁵⁶⁰

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid., 5.

⁵⁶⁰ Ban Kōkei 伴蒿蹊, "Kanden Kōhitsu" 閑田耕筆, in *Kanden kōhitsu. Nennen zuihitsu. Yūkyō manroku. Kagetsu sōshi* 閑田耕筆. 年々隨筆. 遊京漫錄. 花月草紙, ed. Tsukamoto Tetsuzō 塚本哲三 (Tokyo: Yūhōdō, 1927), 32.

With a tinge of irony, Ueda Akinari also contributed to this discourse of common ancestry. In the context of Akinari's criticism against Norinaga's literal acceptance of the legend of Sukunahikona, Akinari sought to make a point that the legend of Sukunahikona appears nowhere else but the *Nihon shoki*. Susanoo and Tan'gun, however, appear in several texts, making them more believable. In doing so, Akinari makes the assumption that Tan'gun must be Susanoo's son, Itakeru:

In the *Tongguk t'onggam* of Korea, the god of the east [Korea] landed beneath the "Tan" tree. This is called Tan'gun, who ruled for three thousand years before his rule declined. Kija of the [Chinese] Yin dynasty replaced him as the king of Korea. Tan'gun is Itakeru, Susanoo's son. He is also called "the luminous god of Silla" and "the Korean god." The records of Susanoo and Tan'gun therefore can be seen in both the imperial realm [Japan] and Korea.

新羅ハ東國通鑑ニ。東方神。降檀樹下。是謂檀君。治世三千年。政衰。殷箕子代王於朝鮮。檀君ハ韋檀君尊。雄尊ノ御子也、新羅明神トモ。韓神トモ稱ス。然ハ雄尊檀君ノ事迹ハ皇國韓土ニ見ユレト。⁵⁶¹

Japanese scholar Ochiai Naozumi 落合直澄 (1840–1891) also framed Tan'gun as "Susanoo's son Itakeru" 素盞鳴神ノ御子五十孟神ナリ. Noting that "Susanoo led his son Tan'gun and ruled all nations of the world" 素盞鳴神ノ其御子檀君ヲ率テ萬國ヲ經歷シ, Naozumi insisted that Susanoo must have "made Tan'gun the king of Korea" 檀君ノ朝鮮ニ王タル and that "Susanoo left Tan'gun in Korea" 素盞鳴神ハ檀君ヲ朝鮮ニ殘シ to rule Korea in his stead.⁵⁶²

In an article published in 1890, Japanese historian and Tokyo Imperial University professor Hoshino Hisashi 星野恒 (1839–1917) also promoted this view of common ancestry, in accordance with the historical view that Japan had dominated Korea in ancient times. He started with a discussion of the debate between Tō Teikan and Motoori Norinaga, calling it "a great

⁵⁶¹ Ueda Akinari 上田秋成, "Yasumigoto" 安々言, 43.

⁵⁶² Ochiai Naozumi 落合直澄, 24-25.

advancement of early modern scholarship” 近世學術大ニ進ミ . Hoshino then reconciled the perspectives of the two men by appropriating Teikan’s notion of Susanoo’s supposed Korean origin and turning it around to support Norinaga’s notion that Japan had historically dominated Korea. Noting that “there is no objection in the different books that Susanoo was the ruler of Silla” 素戔鳴尊ノ新羅ノ主トナラセラルルハ諸書異説ナシ, Hoshino pointed to the existence of Shinto shrines such as “the Silla Shrine located within the Mii-dera Temple [of today’s Shiga Prefecture]” 三井寺域内ノ新羅神社, which worship Susanoo, and “the Korea Itake Shrine” 韓國伊太氏神社 of Izumo, associated with Susanoo’s son, Itakeru.⁵⁶³

Hoshino then presented an even more daring thesis, arguing that the whole of the Japanese imperial family originated from Korea. He wrote:

The imperial ancestors originally were the rulers of Silla. They discovered the mainland [Japan] by the time of the two gods of Inazagi and Izanami. They descended upon [Japan] for the first time, ruling the country’s land.
皇祖ハモト新羅ノ主ニマシマシシガ、諾冉二神ニ至リ、本州ヲ發見シ、始メテ天降りマシテ、國土ヲ經營シ給ヒ。

While most of the imperial ancestors headed to Japan, Susanoo was left behind in Korea:

“Susanoo ruled at Silla” 素戔鳴尊ハ新羅へ赴キ給フ . While the Japanese imperial family supposedly ruled both Japan and Korea for some time, the gradual passage of time and the intrusion of foreigners slowly eroded the connection between the empire’s two branches:

Many generations after, [the Korean branch’s] military power was no longer what it used to be after being attacked by foreign peoples. Sometimes standing in opposition vis-à-vis the mainland [Japan] after drifting apart, and sometimes having their land occupied by foreign peoples, [Korea] suddenly displayed antagonism [toward Japan] to the degree that it aided the Kumaso [in their rebellion against the Japanese].

⁵⁶³ Hoshino Hisashi 星野恒, “Honpō no jinshu gengo ni tsuki hikō wo nobete yo no shinshin aikokusha ni tadasu” 本邦ノ人種言語ニ付鄙考ヲ述テ世ノ眞心愛國者ニ質ス, *Shigakkai zasshi* 史學會雜誌 11 (1890): 17-22.

數世ノ後、他族ニ偪ラレテ、威力昔日ノ如クナラサリシニヤ、或ハ本州ト懸隔シテ兩立ノ姿トナリシニヤ、或ハ他族遂ニ其地ヲ占領セシニヤ、一時ハ敵色ヲ現ハシ、熊襲援助ノ嫌アルニ至レリ。⁵⁶⁴

Hoshino then points to Empress Jingū and her conquest of Korea as a point of “reunification” between the two branches of empire. He wrote:

Empress Jingū had exterminated the Kumaso and conquered Silla. She had that country’s king surrender [to Japan] and left Ōyadanosukune [in Korea] as the general to guard it. [She also] institutionalized the [annual] tribute of eighty ships [from Silla to Japan].
神功皇后ニ至リ、熊襲ヲ殄滅シ、遂ニ新羅ヲ征シ給ヒ、其國王ヲ降シ、大矢田宿禰ヲ留メテ鎮守將軍ト爲シ、調貢八十船ヲ以テ常制ト爲ス。

Japan and Korea returned back to being one country from this point.
是ヨリ日韓復タ一域ト爲リ。

This restoration of the empire’s unity between the two branches, however, would again be challenged in the seventh century CE:

By the reign of Empress Saimei, Silla called in the Tang army and destroyed Koguryō and Paekche. During the time of Emperor Tenji, [after Empress Saimei’s death in 661 CE], Emperor Tenji [took charge] as the crown prince and upheld [the will of] the empress by going to Kyushu and dispatching an army to resuscitate Paekche. After [the expedition] became disadvantageous after battling against the Tang army, the royal army returned back [to Japan]. It was the second year of Tenji’s rule [663 CE, during his rule prior to officially ascending to the throne]. [Though Japan had possessed Korea] from the first year of Empress Jingū to this point, after 464 years, [Japan] ended up losing Korea.
齊明天皇ノ朝ニ至リ、新羅唐兵ヲ假リ、高麗百濟ヲ滅ス、天智天皇時ニ皇太子タリ、天皇ヲ奉シテ筑紫ニ幸シ、兵ヲ遣シ百濟ヲ救ハセ給ヒ、唐兵ト交戦シテ利アラズ、王師遂ニ引還ル、時ニ天智稱制二年ナリ、神功皇后ノ初年ヨリ、此ニ至リテ四百六十四年、遂ニ韓地ヲ失フ。⁵⁶⁵

Hoshino lamented this “loss,” calling it a moment of “extreme outrage and grief” 重ク憤慨歎惜. His perspective is further evident in the way he treats Hideyoshi’s invasions of Korea.

According to Hoshino Hisashi, the invasions “should be described as the succeeding act of the

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid., 36-37.

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid., 37-39.

Empress Jingū's great achievement and retribution for the old grudge from the Kōan era [when Koreans aided the invading Mongols] 神后ノ偉蹟ヲ續テ弘安ノ宿怨ヲ報スト謂フヘシ.

“Unfortunately, the sudden passing of Hideyoshi, in the end, prevented its fulfillment” 不幸ニシテ秀吉溘逝、功終ル能ハス. Furthermore, “the [Korea's] sending of missions at the ascension of each shogun” 將軍繼代コトニ彼必聘使ヲ遣ハス made “everyone see Korea as a dependent country of Japan, and that is why the loud discussions about conquering Korea occurred inside and outside of the government after the royalist [Meiji] restoration” 人皆屬國ヲ以テ朝鮮ヲ視ル、是故ニ王政革新、征韓ノ議、朝野ニ譟シク. In conclusion, “Japan and Korea were one country in ancient times” 上世ハ日韓一域ナリ, and “the imperial ancestors have ruled Silla” 皇祖ノ嘗テ新羅ヲ統治シ給フ. Hoshino urged his countrymen to remember this fact. Noting how the Japanese people of his time had “forgotten that the imperial ancestors [of Japan] had ruled that land” 皇祖ノ嘗テ其地ヲ治メ給ヒシヲ忘ル, Hoshino exhorted his readers to “know that Korea was our old territory” 韓土ハ我カ舊領ナリシヲ認知セハ. Furthermore, he argued that “by exciting and invigorating patriotism and enmity, one must place their sights westward to Korea more so than ever before” 愛國ノ心敵愾ノ氣興奮旺盛必前日ニ倍蓰シテ眼常ニ鷄林ノ西ニ在ラン.⁵⁶⁶

Hayashi Taisuke also presented a theory regarding the common origin of the Japanese and Korean peoples in his “History of Korea.” While he does note that “this theory [sounds] close to being farfetched” 此說亦牽強ニ近シ, Hayashi nevertheless included it “for the sake of reference” 姑ク附シテ參考ニ供ス. After noting the three generations of Korea's founders,

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid., 39-42.

Hwan'in 桓因, Hwan'in's son Hwan'ung 桓雄, and Hwanung's son Tan'gun 壇君, Hayashi

noted:

Hwan'in is an abbreviation for [the Japanese creator god] Izanagi, and Hwan'ung is an abbreviation for Susanoo.

桓因ハ神伊弉諾ノ畧。桓雄ハ神須佐之男ノ畧。

Tan'gun is taki, who is Susanoo's son Itakeru. The event of Susanoo leading his son, Itakeru, to Silla and staying at Soshimori can be seen in our country's history [the *Nihon shoki*]. Furthermore, Itakeru's alias is "Korean god," which corresponds to the actual event.

壇君ハ太祈ニテ。素戔鳴尊ノ子五十猛神ナリ。蓋素戔鳴尊。其子五十猛神ヲ帥井テ。新羅國ニ到リ曾尸茂梨ニ居リシコト。我國史ニ見エ。又五十猛神。一名ヲ韓神ト云ヒタレバ。事實大畧符合セリト。⁵⁶⁷

The aforementioned Japanese geographer Yazu Shōei also subscribed to the said notion of common ancestry by arguing that the royal family of Silla is originally from Izumo. After noting that "we the Japanese people also colonized southern part of the [Korean] peninsula and had substantial power" 我が日本人が半島南部に植民して相當の勢力を有したる, Shōei also argued that "the first Silla king Hyōkkōse is [from] a major Japanese clan" 新羅國第一代の王赫居世の如きは日本の名族なり and much of the Silla royal family "must be the descendants of tributes from Japan's Izumo" 日本の出雲派種族の後裔なりべし. Shōei even insisted that, because of this history, the Koreans and the Japanese are practically the same people: "As I have mentioned before, the appearance and physique of Koreans are indistinguishable from the Japanese" 韓人の容貌骨骼は前にも述べたるが如く、日本人と殆ど差別を見ず。⁵⁶⁸

⁵⁶⁷ Hayashi Taisuke 林泰輔, *Chōsen shi* 朝鮮史, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Hanshichi, 1892), 20.

⁵⁶⁸ Yazu Shōei 矢津昌永, *Kankoku chiri* 韓國地理, 41-43.

The Japanese linguist Kanazawa Shōzaburō 金澤庄三郎 (1872–1967) pointed to the supposed linguistic similarities between Japan and Korea in observing the two countries’ common history. For example, he presented his thesis based on an examination of basic words in Korean and Japanese in an English-language article publication dating back to 1910, published just before the Japanese annexation of Korea became formalized. After noting that “nations rise and fall, but language, which is beyond the control of man, retains the traces of its oldest aspects,” Kanazawa wrote:

The Korean language belongs to the same family of tongues as the language of Japan; it is in fact a branch of Japanese, like the native language of the Loo-choo Isles. The relation may be compared to that existing between the German and Dutch languages, both being branches of the same Teutonic tree, or between the French and another Romance language, Spanish. This is by no means a new discovery; scholars, both foreign and Japanese have frequently manifested the same opinion and no one who has studied Old Japanese can fail to arrive at the same conclusion.

Undergirding his thesis is an understanding of ancient history dating back to the *Nihon shoki*, which Norinaga reaffirmed, despite the errors revealed by foreign texts. Kanazawa Shōzaburō wrote:

That intercourse was held between the people of Japan and Korea in the earliest times is evident from the account of Prince Susa-no-wo’s advent at Sosimori in the Korean province of Silla, the allusion to a number of Korean temples in our Engishiki and Fudoki, and the presence of the surname of Shiragi in the Shinsen-shōjiroki. Professor Hoshino goes further: he ventures to affirm that in ancient times, Japan and Korea were not separate lands and that our Imperial ancestors ruled over Silla. Nor is this all. We see in Korean records themselves that Tharhāi-nisākeum, the king of Silla was a native of Tabana, perhaps a province of Japan, and in the year of his accession (57 A. D.) he appointed a Japanese named Hokong to the office of *Taipo*, the Prime Minister. The naturalization of Prince Ama-no-Hihoko and many other Koreans as Japanese subjects, too, throws further light on the relation of the two countries in early days.⁵⁶⁹

⁵⁶⁹ Kanazawa Shōzaburō 金澤庄三郎, *The Common Origin of the Japanese and Korean Languages* (Tokyo: Sanseido, 1910), 1-2.

After expounding the idea of linguistic similarities between Japanese and Korean to the western audiences, Kanazawa Shōzaburō further expressed his hope that the relationship between the two countries could go back to what it was in the ancient times:

I wish to conclude with expressing my hopes. The Japanese nation has hitherto been extremely indifferent to the study of Oriental languages, especially to Korean, and it is to be greatly regretted not only from the scientific point of view but also for more practical considerations. If there had been better linguistic understanding between the two nations, the numerous political and diplomatic troubles in the past might never have taken place.

This little article is, as I said in the introduction, addressed to the general public rather than to specialists, and my object in writing it has been to show that the language spoke by the people of our protectorate is a branch of our own, and they are, therefore people related to us at least linguistically.

Fortunately the languages of the two countries are, as I have tried to prove, the same in origin. When the relation between them is made clear, each nation will doubtless find much of the difficulty lying in the way of mastering the other's language has been removed. Will the time come when perfect understanding is attained between the two peoples and when mutual assimilation is possible as it was in olden times? I cannot but hope that the Japanese people, high and low, will pay more attention to the matter of languages.⁵⁷⁰

After expounding the idea of linguistic similarities between Japan and Korea to the western audience, Kanazawa Shōzaburō further refined his thesis through a number of writings on the Korea-Japan linguistic similarities. Much of his work was collected in his book *Nissen dōso ron* 日鮮同祖論 (“The Common Origin of Japan and Korea”), a full-length book published in 1929. Before examining the various aspects of the countries' linguistic similarities, he examined the ancient histories of Korea and Japan that ultimately generated such similarities in language. As one could have guessed, Kanazawa's take on ancient history displays an almost textbook application of Norinaga's framework and themes in Japanese history.

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid., 40-41.

After noting “Susanoo’s eastward movement from Silla to Izumo” 素戔嗚尊の新羅より出雲への東渡 as “a fact of interaction between Korea and Japan in the Age of the Gods” 神代に於ける日鮮間の交通事實, Kanazawa moved onto Empress Jingū’s conquest, noting that “the three countries of Silla, Paekche, and Koguryō all became dependencies of our country as a consequence of Empress Jingū’s conquest of Korea” さて神功皇后征韓の結果新羅・百濟・高麗の三國は全く我屬領となた.⁵⁷¹ Based on such observations, Kanazawa even suggested that Korea and Japan were in fact a single country in ancient times. This, of course, was the reason behind the linguistic similarities between the two countries:

The relationship between Korea and our Japan was truly that close during the Age of the Gods. Taking this a step further, historians’ theory that [ancient] Korea was included [as a part of] Japan cannot be readily denied.

まことに神代に於ては、韓郷之島と我大八洲國とはかくも密接の間柄であつたので、更に一步を進めていふと、大八洲といふ中に韓郷之島も含まれてゐたのであるといふ歴史家の説も、決して否定は出来ぬのである。⁵⁷²

As for our country, I believe that the migration of our nation’s people was from the west to the east. I also think that the heavenly god [Susanoo] descended upon Japan through Korea.

我國に於ける民族の移動は西より東に進んだものと信じ、且天神は韓郷之島を経て大八洲國に天降りたまうたものと考へる。⁵⁷³

Repeating many of the themes already debated during the centuries before 1868, the Meiji scholarly discourse on Korea rationalized the Japanese role in the future of the Korean Peninsula as a historical inevitability long before the formal Japanese annexation of Korea. This perspective also existed in Japanese popular culture. For example, Kitazawa Yasuji 北澤保次 (1876–1955), better known by his pen name of Kitazawa Rakuten 北澤樂天, drew a cartoon to

⁵⁷¹ Kanazawa Shōzaburō 金澤庄三郎, *Nissen dōso ron* 日鮮同祖論 (Tokyo: Tōkō Shoin, 1929), 12; *ibid.*, 64.

⁵⁷² *Ibid.*, 76.

⁵⁷³ *Ibid.*, 104.

celebrate the significance of the Japan-Korea Treaty of 1907 第三次日韓協約, through which Japanese authorities abolished the Korean armed forces and seized much of Korea's remaining domestic sovereignty. This cartoon was published in his full-color magazine *Tōkyō Pakku* 東京パック (“Tokyo Puck”) soon after the treaty's signing. The painting, drawn over four pages, portrays the treaty signing between the Japanese Residents-General Itō Hirobumi 伊藤博文 (1841–1909), the Korean Garrison Army commander Hasegawa Yoshimichi 長谷川好道 (1850–1924), and the Korean Prime Minister Yi Wanyong 李完用 (1858–1926). These individuals are overseen by mythical and historical figures from Japan, including Empress Jingū, Susanoo, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, Katō Kiyomasa, Saigo Takamori, and Mount Fuji, who supposedly played a historical role in bring Korea into the Japanese fold.

Yasuji Kitazawa also added texts to the painting to further illustrate his assertion that this treaty was a part of a long historical process that dated back at least to the Empress Jingū's conquest of Korea. By noting that “Spirits [are finally able to] rest in peace as Korea looks up to the heavens” 魍魎潛影鷄林仰天日, Kitazawa brought up the aforementioned story of the Silla king's surrender to Empress Jingū from the *Nihon shoki*. In this story, the Silla king promised to continue to obey and pay tribute to Japan “unless the Arinare [K. Arinarye] River flows backward” 除阿利那禮河返以之逆流.⁵⁷⁴ Kitazawa also ascribed to Motoori Norinaga's interpretation that the Arinare River was actually the Yalu [K. Abrok] River 鴨綠江.⁵⁷⁵ Regardless of the mythical qualities of the Empress Jingū's conquest narrative and the historical fact that Silla's territorial control never reached today's Sino-Korean border marked by the Yalu

⁵⁷⁴ *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀, 339.

⁵⁷⁵ Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長, “Motoori Norinaga zuihitsu” 本居宣長隨筆, 78.

River, Kitazawa interpreted the 1907 treaty's signing as a marquee moment in which the direction of history set forth by Empress Jingū was finally realized. He wrote in English:

“Even the Yalu should flow against its course we shall not neglect the payment of tribute,” was the sanctified promise of ancient Korean King to Japan. But the tribute was not paid since more than thousand years. Millions of lives of Japan' boys were lavished in behalf of it and thousands of Japan's heroes and statemen passed away in despair and reluctance on account of it. Now that however by Providence, Korea was brought under our control, the spirits of the departed heroes of Japan would do well in resting satisfied in their heavenly abode.”⁵⁷⁶

Many of the same themes that were discussed in the early modern Korean-Japanese debates reemerged in Japan during the Meiji period. They shaped both scholarly and popular opinion about Japan's historical role in Korea, and they rendered the growing Japanese intervention in Korea as part of a long historical process dating back to antiquity. Under such circumstances, is Duus's rhetorical assertion that Japan and Korea could have peacefully coexisted in the Meiji period (1868–1912) and beyond had the Japanese leaders encountered more cooperative Korean leaders even tenable? Even if such a hypothetical perfect collaborator existed on the Korean side to alleviate whatever concerns the Meiji leadership had, would the Japanese policymakers and the public have consider them to be their equal partners?

⁵⁷⁶ Kitazawa Rakuten 北澤樂天, *Tōkyō pakku* 東京パック, vol. 3, part 2. Tokyo: Ryūkei Shosha, 1985-2000, 39-42.

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