Turning toward Edification

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Published by University of Hawai'i Press

Bohnet, Adam.
Turning toward Edification: Foreigners in Chosŏn Korea.
University of Hawai'i Press, 2020.
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Introduction

In the early seventeenth century, shortly after invading Japanese soldiers had been expelled from Chosŏn Korea, Chŏng Inhong (1535–1623), a leader of a righteous militia, was called to account for his relationship with several Ming Chinese soldiers, deserters from the armies sent by the Ming to help fight the Japanese. Perhaps the most controversial relationship was one he had with Shi Wenyong, a geomancer to whom, it was said, Chŏng had forced into marrying the daughter of a woman who had been raped by the Japanese. Those who were hostile to Chŏng Inhong pointed to the shamefulness of marrying “someone from a foreign state,” while those who supported Chŏng alluded to Chŏng’s own ancestry. Chŏng, as it happens, claimed descent from a Song merchant from Zhejiang who had settled in Korea during the Koryŏ dynasty (918–1392). Chŏng Inhong’s actions, they declared, were thus in accord with a fully understandable desire on his part to support “hometown friends,” for the Chinese soldiers who he helped were without exception from Zhejiang.

Such support gave Shi Wenyong influence during the reign of Kwanghae-gun (r. 1608–1623), when Chŏng Inhong’s faction was dominant, but after Injo’s (r. 1623–1649) coup d’état of 1623, Shi Wenyong was executed along with his former protector Chŏng Inhong. However, Shi Wenyong’s execution was not the last word for him, for during the eighteenth century his memory was revived and his descendants raised in status, from the disreputable ranks of descendants of deserting Ming troops to ritual representatives of the glorious Ming and of Chosŏn’s undying loyalty to the Ming and to the Sinitic/Confucian tradition. Thus, the late Chosŏn monarchs, all heirs of Injo, had the descendants of one of Injo’s victims appear as ritual representatives of Chosŏn’s loyalty to the Ming, in rites practiced in the presence of the monarch himself.

In this book I seek to understand the process underlying the transformation of foreigners and people of foreign ancestry in Chosŏn Korea in order to explore the changing nature of the collective identity and worldview of Chosŏn’s sajok aristocracy. I analyze these changes in relation to the greater bureaucratization and centralization of late Chosŏn Korea, and indeed of Eurasia as a whole, during the eighteenth century. Shi Wenyong was one of many foreigners who made their home in Chosŏn. From the very foundation of the Chosŏn
dynasty, people whose origins lay outside of the Korean peninsula played a variety of roles within it, as technical specialists, soldiers, and diplomats. Indeed, the early Chosŏn (which for convenience I date from 1392 to 1592) had been the center of an extensive network of Jurchens and Japanese, with varying degrees of affiliation with the Chosŏn state, both inside and outside Chosŏn’s borders. These networks were disrupted and transformed with the large-scale entrance of foreigners during the Imjin War (1592–1598), which brought both Ming Chinese and Japanese soldiers onto Chosŏn soil and the Ming-Manchu wars of early seventeenth century Liaodong, which drove both Jurchen and Sinophone Liaodongese refugees south into Chosŏn. After the wars, armies retreated and refugees were expelled and repatriated, but some soldiers deserted and some refugees evaded detection to become part of the population of the Chosŏn state.

How were these foreigners treated? A common assumption, reflected in much scholarship, is that the Chosŏn state would have treated Chinese migrants much better than Jurchens and Japanese. This view fits in well with our understanding of Chosŏn as a Sinocentric state, loyal to the Ming Chinese hegemon. It is true that the Chosŏn monarchy was assiduous in sending envoys to offer submission to the Ming court, indeed dispatching at least three diplomatic missions a year. In return the Chosŏn monarch received from the Ming monarch the Ming calendar and the investiture of the Chosŏn monarch with the title of “king” or “prince of state” (K. kugwang, Ch. guowang) to which the Chosŏn monarch responded by referring to himself as “subject” (K. sin, Ch. chen) in official communications to the Ming emperor and accepting the Chosŏn state’s status as fan (vassal) of the Ming empire. Having accepted Chosŏn’s subordination, the Ming monarch respected the autonomy of the Chosŏn monarch in domestic matters and indeed interfered only rarely in Chosŏn’s relationships with other neighboring states. This was no mere pro forma submission, however, for as Pae Usŏng has discussed, Chosŏn elites also internalized the centrality of Chinese/Confucian traditions—which I will term, following South Korean scholarship, Chunghwa, the Korean pronunciation of the Chinese Zhonghua. With this I do not refer to the modern concept of a Chinese nation-state, although that is the current meaning of Zhonghua, but rather to Zhonghua as “central efflorescence,” a term with a range of overlapping “civilizational” meanings encompassing the broad corpus of rituals, writings, and “Confucian” philosophical ideas that originated in China; a universal standard of civilization; Chinese political formations; and the geographic space of the north Chinese plain.

Although they were frequently less enthusiastic about individual emperors and Ming officials, Chosŏn sajok aristocrats fully accepted the vital civilizational
role of idealized emperors centered in China, acting peacefully, in the manner of Mencian sage kings, across the divide between the civilized and barbarians (Ch. hwa-yi zhi bian, K. hwa-yi chi pyŏn) and bringing barbarians to pay tribute and receive the transforming edification of civilization. By the early Chosŏn, Korea had also obtained for itself the sobriquet Lesser Chunghwa (Sojunghwa), which might be translated, following Sixiang Wang, as “small central efflorescence.”

Most of the government documents produced by the Koryŏ and Chosŏn courts were composed in Literary Sinitic, and most literary and historiographic texts were not only written in Literary Sinitic but followed Chinese literary and historiographic genres. The dominant philosophical tradition during much of the Chosŏn period was Zhu Xi’s (1130–1200) interpretation of the Chinese Confucian tradition, which Chosŏn sajok aristocrats made their own, with most rejecting as heretical the Ming enthusiasm for Wang Shouren’s (1472–1529) philosophy. Moreover, such was the devotion of Chosŏn’s sajok elites to the Ming that after the fall of the Ming to the Manchu Qing, the Chosŏn court continued to fulfil its status as Lesser Chunghwa by engaging in ritual commemoration of the Ming emperors. Despite outwardly submitting to the Qing, the Chosŏn court maintained a continued connection to the Ming in the form of an altar within the palace complex at which Chosŏn monarchs offered sacrifice in person. Additionally, Chosŏn sajok aristocrats expressed their rejection of Qing hegemony by dating documents according to the reign of the last Ming emperor, the Chongzhen emperor, who committed suicide in 1644. By the eighteenth century, Chosŏn sajok aristocrats considered themselves to be the last remnant of Chunghwa culture and political order, continuing a tradition that the Qing empire, as a barbarian Manchu dynasty, could not possibly represent.

Yet, as I show in this book, despite the enthusiastic participation of Chosŏn’s sajok aristocracy in Chunghwa cultural and political norms, they did not extend this enthusiasm to individual Chinese people or Chinese migrants in Chosŏn—the hostile reception of Shi Wenyong by some sajok was not an exceptional case. During the large-scale entrance of foreigners during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the Chosŏn state did not welcome Chinese over Jurchens and Japanese, but, if anything, showed a notable preference for its established subjects, the Jurchens. Even after Chosŏn submitted to the Manchu Qing empire in 1637, the Chosŏn court continued to administer all three groups according to the same tax category of submitting-foreigners (hyanghwain), which granted them protection from most personal taxes but which otherwise provided them with very little prestige. It was only following the mid-eighteenth century that the Chosŏn court actively sponsored those who, like Shi Wenyong’s descendants,
could claim Ming origins. This gave the descendants of Ming migrants higher status, better access to low-ranked positions in the bureaucracy, and the privilege of participation in court-sponsored Ming loyalist rituals.

What caused this change in attitudes toward Chinese migrants? The purpose of this book is to explain this transition—to explore why Jurchens, Japanese, and Chinese were categorized together as submitting-foreigners until the mid-eighteenth century, after which Chinese descendants were clearly distinguished from other people with foreign ancestors. This shift cannot be understood as driven by “Sinocentrism” or “Confucianization,” for the mid-eighteenth century is two centuries after the rise of activist Neo-Confucianism during the sixteenth century, and well after the growth of Neo-Confucian ritualism during the seventeenth. The reason for these changes, and how they relate to cultural, political, and ideological shifts in Chosŏn, must thus be explained in some other manner.

Nationalism and Sinocentrism in Korean History

The presence of foreigners in Chosŏn, and the response of Chosŏn to those foreigners, has interesting implications for understanding the nature of the imagined community of late Chosŏn Korea. A major (although by no means universal) thread in twentieth-century Korean historiography has been to read the sense of a unified, homogenous Korean nation backward into the distant past, to the supposed reign of the mythical king Tan’gun. Such nationalist historiography is dominant in North Korea, although it is increasingly marginalized among academic historians in South Korea. Even in South Korea, until recently grade-school students were taught that they were part of a homogeneous race, the descendants of Tan’gun, who had preserved their homogeneity through the supposed 5,000 years of Korean history. The presence of foreigners as a constituent part of the late Chosŏn state cannot but be a challenge to what was once the orthodoxy of South Korean public education and forces a reconsideration of the imagined community of Chosŏn Korea.

South Korea itself has become, since the early 1990s, an increasingly multicultural society, with people of diverse origins, especially from other regions in East and Southeast Asia, making their homes in South Korea, intermarrying with South Korean citizens, and indeed becoming South Korean citizens themselves. This has spurred academic interest in uncovering a multicultural past for Korea. The foreign presence in late Chosŏn has certainly been part of this trend. Quite a number of scholars, writing in Korean and English, have noted the acceptance
of foreigners in Koryŏ and early Chosŏn as clear evidence that claims of “pure blood” are an anachronistic obsession of twentieth-century historians, and that in pre-modern Korea, people had no such concern.\textsuperscript{10} This interest in multicultural pasts, indeed, has extended beyond purely academic publications to works directed toward the broader reading public.\textsuperscript{11} The emergence of imperial subjects such as Shi Wenyong’s descendants—court-honored representatives of the Ming dynasty—has generally been explained as an example of Chosŏn’s Sinocentrism, with anthropologist Kyung-koo Han arguing that Jurchens and Japanese were still discriminated against by a Sinocentric Chosŏn state that was positively inclined toward Koreans and Chinese. Consequently, the Chosŏn state, Han argues, may not have been nationalist or racist in the modern sense, and it may even have been multicultural, but it was nevertheless characterized by ethnic discrimination.\textsuperscript{12} John B. Duncan, by contrast, argues that the shift toward imperial subject status reveals the development of a “proto-national consciousness” in late Chosŏn Korea. As he imagines that submitting-foreigner (hyanghwain) status had been primarily concerned with assimilation, he sees what he believes to be the disappearance of this status, and its replacement with an ethnicized imperial subject status, to signal the end of assimilationism in Chosŏn Korea, and perhaps the emergence of an idea of “pure blood-lines.”\textsuperscript{13}

Such scholarship, emerging in the 1990s, was reacting against a considerable accumulation of scholarship that, since 1894, had sought to naturalize the concepts of race and nation within Korean history. Beginning with the intellectual ferment that followed the Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895), and continuing through much of the twentieth century, many historians viewed Korean history as characterized by the struggle of the Korean ethnic nation under pressure from outside powers and evaluated figures according to how well they protected the autonomy, the native culture, and the territorial integrity of Korea. Above all else, Chosŏn’s cultural engagement with Chinese civilization, and political subordination to various Chinese dynasties, has often been considered shameful, with many (following the trend of Japanese historians of Korea) seeing it as a sign of a flaw in the Korean character and a tendency toward toadyism (sadae-juŭi) or “serving the great.”\textsuperscript{14} For the pioneering modern historian Sin Ch’aeho (1880–1936), who believed that the subject of history was the ethnic-nation (minjok), this shameful toadyism and betrayal of its national identity had been imposed upon Chosŏn by Sinophilic elites at key points in Korean history. For Sin Ch’aeho, as well as for other nationalist historians influenced by Social Darwinism, it was self-evidently the case that an ethnic nation, understood in almost biological or racial terms, was in constant competition with other ethnic
nations. Chosŏn’s acceptance of Chinese culture was thus an abandonment of natural law and the extinction of the self (understood to mean the ethnic nation as a whole) in favor of the other or non-self (pi’a).\textsuperscript{15}

Such attempts to downplay the significance of foreign influence, and especially Chinese influence, has been a frequent aspect of much later South Korean scholarship and has attracted considerable attention from scholars working in the English language, who often treat the matter unproductively as an either-or between admiration for China and a sense of national identity. Studies of diplomatic relations with later Chinese states have often been at pains to assert the pro-forma nature of the submission of Korean states, to treat it as simply a diplomatic strategy, for the weak to manipulate the strong.\textsuperscript{16} Han Yŏngu, for instance, in his study of the early Chosŏn official Yang Sŏngji (1415–1482), argues that when Yang used the term “serve the great” (sadae) in the context of Chosŏn’s relationship to the Ming emperor, he was thinking exclusively in terms of practical diplomacy, with no implication of cultural or political subservience to the Ming, and in the context of the full assertion of Chosŏn’s “self-determination and independence” (chaju tongnip).\textsuperscript{17} Such scholarship, of course, has not been without its critics, and in English, a substantial body of work has specifically attempted to take Korean scholarship to task for its nationalism, and to argue, with reference to Benedict Anderson, for a strong rupture in identities between “pre-modern Korea,” on the one hand, and twentieth-century nationalism, on the other. Such scholars have frequently opposed the “Sinocentrism” of pre-modern Korean elites to twentieth-century nationalism, arguing that sajok aristocrats of the Chosŏn period had no Korean identity but rather an attachment to “a cosmopolitan civilization centered in China.”\textsuperscript{18}

This unhelpful binary between the Sinocentric past and the nationalist present distorts the reality of Sino-Korean relations during the Chosŏn period. To be sure, officials in the Ming and Qing both referred often to the Chosŏn model when constructing their relationships with other fan (vassal states).\textsuperscript{19} As Hyewon Chae, however, has argued, such was the diversity of relations with smaller countries pursued by the Ming and Qing that it is nearly impossible to identify any standard or model “tribute practices,” including those pursued by Chosŏn—especially as key aspects of Chosŏn’s tribute practices, such as its three diplomatic missions a year, were in fact asserted despite the initial opposition of the Ming empire. In general, Chosŏn’s relationship with China was often tumultuous and characterized by controversy and ill-faith.\textsuperscript{20} As discussed in chapter 1, Chosŏn pursued relations with Japanese and Jurchens not only in violation of Ming demands but sometimes in open rivalry with the Ming. As is discussed in chapter 5,
during the late Chosŏn, the Chosŏn court developed ritual practices that denied
the Qing empire’s right to rule even as they also sent diplomatic missions to the
Qing capital formally accepting Qing hegemony.

Recent South Korean scholarship, especially, has transformed our under-
standing of Chunghwa ideology. Ch’oe Chongsŏk has pointed out that the pe-
riod of Mongol hegemony saw the beginning of a general acceptance by Koryŏ’s
sajok aristocrats of the right to rule an empire based in China, even while they
in no way abandoned their own prerogatives and rights as members of the ruling
class of Korea. This ideological shift continued into the period of Ming hege-
mony, during which, as Kim Sunja has argued, civil bureaucrats had begun to
speak of China as having an exclusive right to empire that was not available to
peoples such as the Mongols who originated from outside of Chinese territory.

Ultimately, the concept of China as civilization, or Chunghwa, was in part geog-
raphy, but also included rites, manners, clothing, hierarchical political organiza-
tion, and association with a body of literature that might be called Confucian.

Moreover, subject kingdoms, including Chosŏn, could and did claim mastery
over cultural symbols of Chunghwa. As Don Baker points out, the fifteenth cen-
tury in Chosŏn was ideologically complex, and monarchs could appeal to a mix
of Confucian, Buddhist, and Daoist justifications for their rule and could even
allow for language that implied that the Chosŏn royal house had received a sepa-
rate mandate of heaven. As Pae Usŏng argues, Chosŏn sajok aristocrats and
intellectuals envisioned Chosŏn as both an autonomous state and part of the
broad realm of Chunghwa culture and politics. Even as Chosŏn’s ruling elites
saw themselves as participants within a broader Chunghwa sphere, they by no
means lacked particularist identities or loyalties, nor were their identities entirely
subsumed into the Sinocentric cosmopolis. Rather, Chosŏn sajok aristocrats
clearly defined themselves as having membership within a Korean historical en-
tity, seen as having existed since early times in the constant geographic location
of the Korean peninsula, which thus naturally possessed cultural and linguistic
differences with China. They referred to this historical and geographic entity
with such names as Haedong (East of the Sea), Tongguk (Eastern Kingdom),
Chwahae (Left the Sea), or Samhan (Three Han)—which certainly represented
Korea by using its geographic relation to China but which also were terms that
referred to Korea without regard to individual dynasties.

In fact, many contentious issues during the Chosŏn period, which are now
seen as revealing a divide between nativists and Sinocentric understandings,
can in fact be shown to have been concerned with topics that do not fit clearly
with present-day obsessions or fall neatly alongside current fault lines. Debates
during the early Chosŏn—for instance, concerning whether or not to offer sacrifices to heaven directly or concerning the use of the vernacular alphabet hun-min chŏngŭm—which are often interpreted now as debates over dependence on China versus autonomous culture and politics, were actually debates on subjects that now seem obscure and hard to fit into modern categories, and in contexts that assumed both the existence of an independent Chosŏn culture (in part determined by geographic difference) and the cultural and political preeminence of Ming China. Late Chosŏn intellectuals, like twentieth-century intellectuals, made revanchist claims on the Liaodong region of the Qing empire, asserting that it was properly Chosŏn territory—but unlike the twentieth-century nationalist intellectuals, they did so because the Qing conquest had broken the Chunghwa unity that they imagined had linked early Chosŏn with Ming Liaodong. For that matter, as Hŏ T’aeyong has argued, late Chosŏn intellectuals explored not only symbols related to China but also such Korean heroes as the Koguryŏ general Ŭlchi Mundŏk who was known for defeating the Chinese Sui dynasty in 612 C.E. In the twentieth century, Ŭlchi Mundŏk became a national symbol of nativist resistance to China. In this, modern historians were building on the work of late Chosŏn historians, who also admired Ŭlchi Mundŏk, but who saw him as a symbol of military strength and loyalty that needed to be revived in an East Asia in which the barbarous Qing had conquered China. In other words, late Chosŏn intellectuals remembered Ŭlchi Mundŏk as both a source of pride as a Korean military hero and as a paragon of Chunghwa and Confucian civilization.

My purpose here is not to wade into the debate between those who Anthony D. Smith calls primordialists and modernists, or indeed to continue the debate on whether Chosŏn can properly be called a “nation” or a “proto-nation.” Rather than trying to read twentieth-century nationalism back to the Chosŏn period, I intend to define the changing nature of collective identities during the Chosŏn period. If the Chosŏn monarchy was different from the states of nineteenth-and twentieth-century Europe, it was also organized very differently from prenationalist medieval and early modern Europe. As Jahyun Kim Haboush says, much of the discussion of nations and nationalism is irreducibly Eurocentric and applies poorly to the circumstances of East Asian states. A similar point is made by Nicholas Tackett, who makes use of Benedict Anderson’s concept of an imagined community to compare Song self-identity to modern nationalism. Tackett points out that the Song had abandoned the universalistic goals of the Tang and was content to govern only those regions inhabited by Sino-phone Huaxia (Chinese). Song’s governing elite, the shidafu, were, unlike the
capital-based ruling class of the Tang, from all ends of Song territory and were bound together, in part through meritocratic exam competition, to each other by horizontal bonds. In this they resembled the colonial bureaucrats and creole elites of nineteenth-century European colonies, whose identities, following Anderson, were in part determined by the colonial territory to which their careers were restricted. During the Song, educated people who did not pass, or even write, the exams were nevertheless linked as part of a broad imaginary community via commercial printing—in much the same manner as, following Anderson, the new European and American nations of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were formed by print media. As Tackett argues, although the resulting society was notably different from the national communities of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Song should not be understood as either pre-nationalist or proto-nationalist, but rather on its own terms, as a different form of imagined national community.32

No reading of Chosŏn dynasty texts could possibly lead one to the thoroughly indefensible claim that Korea in the abstract is an entirely modern concept. Rather, in many ways, Chosŏn resembles the Song as discussed by Tackett, with an elite operating exclusively within the boundaries of the Chosŏn state and linked together by statewide networks. To be sure, in contrast to late imperial China, Chosŏn was characterized by a far more rigid system of social status, with an endogamous hereditary aristocracy that nevertheless advanced into the higher ranks of bureaucracy only through competing in challenging examinations. Chosŏn sajok were organized into descent-groups marked by a combination of a surname (sŏng) and clan seat (pon'gwăn), which referred to the power base of the descent-group’s supposed founding ancestor (sijo), often from the late Silla or early Koryŏ periods, and which had nothing to do with the residence of members of a descent-group, or indeed with the place of residence of any recent ancestor. A member of the Munhwa Yu in the fifteenth century, for instance, might have no recent connections at all to the administrative district of Munhwa in Hwanghae province.33 At the same time, during the Koryŏ and early Chosŏn periods, sajok status had a close relationship with success in the examinations and participation in officialdom. Indeed another term for sajok is yangban, referring to the “two orders” (pan) of officialdom, civil and military—sajok status thus had a close connection to participation in the civil (munkwa) or military examinations (mukwa), with civil examinations having much greater prestige.34 An additional set of examinations, the chapkwa (miscellaneous examinations)—on languages, medicine, math, and other technical subjects—was avoided by Chosŏn sajok and was thus generally the province of
those outside of the ruling elite; by the seventeenth century, though, families who took the chapkwa had also formed their own social status grouping, that of the *chungin* specialists, who were below the sajok in social terms but stood clearly above commoners and slaves. Commoners made up the majority of the population and carried most of the burden of taxation and corvée labor, while base people (*ch'ŏnmin*) made up approximately 30 percent of the population and included private slaves—"the hands and feet of the yangban"—public slaves, and hereditary practitioners of various base professions.35

What mobility had existed in the late Koryŏ between rural strongmen (*hyangni*) traveling from the countryside and the capital-based aristocracy located in Kaesŏng came to an end with the establishment of various laws during the early Chosŏn specifically designed to narrow the range of those who could take the civil examinations and participate in the higher ranks of the bureaucracy. Hyangni, reduced steadily to the ranks of petty subbureaucrats, were fixed to their home locales and suffered significant restrictions in taking exams, while the descendants of yangban men and base-born secondary wives, the so-called *sŏŏl*, were simply banned from participation in the civil examinations—both became, in broad terms, part of the chungin class. No restrictions were placed on commoners taking the examinations, but that was simply because, in practice, commoners lacked the resources necessary to take even the various preliminary examinations. The sajok aristocracy further cemented their unity through intermarriage, as is made evident by the earliest surviving genealogies, which reveal an extremely high level of intermarriage between sajok descent-groups during the early Chosŏn.36

This ruling elite, it should be noted, was entirely bound within the Korean peninsula, in both their aristocratic and bureaucratic identities. Although some sajok descent-groups did claim distant Chinese ancestors, there was rarely any solid evidence, or even detailed descriptions, concerning those supposed distant ancestors or the generations immediately following them, to the extent that the historical reality of these ancestors generally is to be doubted. By contrast, the actual formation of sajok descent-groups, and the development of more than one branch within their genealogies, almost always occurred in Korea during the Koryŏ period, and the clan seats themselves invariably referred to a location within the Korean peninsula. By the Chosŏn period, sajok descent-groups did not seek to marry people from beyond Korea, and officials, whether civil or military, pursued their careers exclusively within Korea. Though many sajok did have strong connections to particular locales, the regions themselves were not administered, as in Europe, by prominent local aristocrats, but by exam-passers
selected by the central court and dispatched from the capital. Chosŏn’s sajok, for all their mastery of Literary Sinitic and of texts from the “Chinese” tradition, pursued their careers exclusively within the territory of the Chosŏn state and maintained social networks that only rarely and to a distinctly limited extent passed over into China. They also generally did not speak Chinese—a technical skill that was handed over to their interpreters, their social inferiors and members of the chungin specialist class.

To be sure, the Chosŏn sajok aristocracy became more and more differentiated during the later Chosŏn. Military yangban, for instance, became increasingly distinguished from civil yangban, with the lower ranked military officials not placed within the ranks of the sajok aristocracy. Politically, during the sixteenth century, sajok also divided by factions centered on key private schools (sŏwŏn). This process began with the split between Sŏin (Westerners) and Tongin (Easterners) in 1575, followed by the fissuring of the Tongin into Pugin (Northerners) and Namin (Southerners) in 1589, and the division of the Sŏin into the Noron (Old Doctrine) and Soron (Young Doctrine) during the late seventeenth century. Although factions were by no means impermeable social barriers, they went beyond mere political rivalries to include divergent scholarly traditions and were also key factors in forming marital alliances. They also had a regional aspect, as Namin and Pugin, on the losing end of the factional conflict, were generally based in Kyŏngsang province far from the capital. Otherwise, during the late seventeenth century, a small number of capital-based sajok descent-groups, generally from the Noron faction, increasingly dominated all significant bureaucratic positions. This left rural sajok, often resident in single-surname villages and associated with private schools with specific factional identities, to organize themselves through local governance associations and pursue prestige and social status without any relationship to bureaucratic advancement.

Much as Tackett has for the Song, Rian Thum has identified the development of an imaginary community among the Turkic-speaking people of Western China who are now called Uighur. He accepts, of course, that the modern category of Uighur, which was revived from the medieval Uighur empire, is indeed a new creation. However, he also traces the development of an earlier Altishari identity formed through handwritten manuscripts and visits to Islamic shrines among the Turkic people of the oases of what is now Xinjiang. In addition to the modern national community, Thum argues, we should “look for other kinds of imagined community and other associations between such identities and common historical contexts.” Similarly, even after Chosŏn’s sajok fractured into separate factions, their networks continued to be primarily restricted to
Chosŏn, and the subjects concerning which they disputed were also overwhelmingly Korea-centered, including questions of court rites, disputes over royal marriages, policy concerning slavery, and the debates over the merits of different Korean Confucian teachers. To be sure, Chosŏn sajok were not engaged in the search for national uniqueness that is characteristic of modern nationalists, and indeed their education linked them to the Chinese tradition. Yet from the beginning of the dynasty until the end, their careers and social networks were overwhelmingly located within the Korean peninsula. They hardly doubted the existence of a dynastic tradition specific to Korea, or that their primarily loyalties were to the Chosŏn state. With Chosŏn, as with the Song and the Altishari Turks, the proper question is not when a “nation” was born in Chosŏn Korea, but how people imagined the boundaries of the Chosŏn state, how this imagined community related to the social and political organization of Chosŏn, how this imagined community changed over time, and how this changing imagined identity determined who was accepted as an insider and who was excluded as an outsider.

Aliens and Subjects: Social Status and Belonging in Late Chosŏn

Identity throughout the late medieval and even early modern periods was generally fluid and relational, with key markers of difference and group connection—language, clothing, religion—operating with only limited relationship to formal political divisions. During the early modern period, however, some European states sought to strengthen their control by imposing exclusionary religious and national identities on the diverse subjects under their control. For instance, Anthony Marx argues that the formation of the exclusionary religious identity of early modern states in western Europe developed through the elimination, assimilation, and marginalization of domestic religious minorities. According to Marx, the early modern French collective identity was formed through the violent purging of the Protestant minority, the early modern Spanish identity through the purging of Jews and Muslims, and the early modern English identity specifically through attacks on Catholics—developments that were vital, as they allowed the growing early modern states to mobilize securely their heterogeneous populations. Similarly, Peter Sahlin has shown that the concept of absolute citizenship—defined as absence of the disabilities suffered by noncitizens (aubain), and embracing French subjects regardless of class—had already come into being in the late sixteenth century.
Introduction

As the risk of reinforcing the Eurocentric assumptions that Western Europe is the norm, it is profitable to compare the circumstances of Chosŏn Korea with that of early modern Europe. Despite the complete disestablishment of Buddhism during the sixteenth century, the hostility among Chosŏn’s sajok elites and bureaucracy to shamanistic popular religious practices, and following the late eighteenth century, the purges of the tiny Catholic community, little in Chosŏn history resembles the vigorous purges of large religious minorities of early modern Europe. However, Chosŏn, especially the early Chosŏn, was not a homogenous realm, nor was homogeneity an imagined goal, and attitudes toward migrants from outside of the peninsula were markedly different from those of twentieth-century South Korea. For instance, one of the key foundation myths of the Korean dynastic tradition during the Chosŏn period involved a migrant, namely Kija (Ch. Jizi). Along with Tan’gun, the reputed founder of the Old Chosŏn state during the reign of the legendary King Yao, Kija was treated as a secondary founder, the one who brought moral civilization and “Confucian” rites and laws to Korea. The story varied, but, roughly, Kija/Jizi was a loyal Shang official who had fled to Old Chosŏn to avoid serving the new Zhou dynasty, but who later nevertheless offered tribute to King Wu. He also provided King Wu with instruction, the “Great Plan” (Ch. Hongfan, K. Hongbŏm), an apocryphal text and a chapter within the Venerated Documents (Ch. Shangshu, K. Sangsŏ). Although the connection between Kija and Chosŏn seems to have entered into Chinese historiography only during the Han period, by the late Koryŏ, this story had become an accepted part of the Korean historical tradition, with both Tan’gun and Kija receiving ritual honors—Tan’gun, as founder of the Korean dynastic tradition and Kija as the one who provided moral edification and the beginnings of a Korean Confucian tradition. Disputes concerning their relative priority in state-sponsored rituals were unrelated, as Pae Usŏng has shown, to debates of nativism versus Sinocentrism, but were rather concerned with disputes about the proper priority between Tangun as initial ruler and Kija, as unrelated subsequent ruler who was nevertheless significant enough to gain supreme honors himself.

The treatment of these two figures strongly diverged following the development of modern historical scholarship and Korean nationalism. Tan’gun was reinvented, not as a dynastic founder but as a racial ancestor—with Koreans describing themselves increasingly as “descendants of Tan’gun” (Tan’gun ŭi chason). By contrast, Kija was frequently ignored, his historicity denied while the even more incredible accounts of Tan’gun were asserted as undeniable historical truth; even when Kija’s historicity was accepted, he was nevertheless seen as a
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problem for the national narrative that was in need of explanation, at times even by transforming him into a Korean. Kija, as migrant, could be a representation of a Korean historical continuity and Chosŏn’s collective identity during the Chosŏn period, but was rendered inappropriate for just this role during the twentieth century by the very fact that he was a migrant.

Not surprisingly, considering that the early Chosŏn court traced the Korean dynastic tradition itself to a migrant, it showed little of the discomfort concerning foreign elements that characterized twentieth-century Korea. As I discuss in chapter 1, the early Chosŏn state emerged, like the Ming, from the collapse of the Mongol empire. During the period of submission to the Mongols, Koryŏ subjects had been full participants in the Yuan empire, competing against and working with the Eurasian elite who governed the Yuan. With the collapse of the Mongol empire, first the Koryŏ and then the Chosŏn state competed for the loyalties of former Yuan subjects, including especially Koreans, but also Jurchens and others. In fact, many of foreign ancestry allied themselves with the Korean monarchy during the chaos of the Yuan-Ming transition. Notably, the founding monarch of the Chosŏn dynasty, Yi Sŏnggye, was himself from a family of Korean administrators of the Yuan empire who had operated in the culturally diverse world of Korea’s northeast.

The early Chosŏn state, especially during its first century, was tasked with governing not only Koreans but also diverse Yuan subjects within its territory and Jurchens and Japanese on its frontiers. Chosŏn officials established a diverse apparatus of techniques to exert influence on Jurchens located in Chosŏn’s chaotic northern borderlands and Japanese from the Japanese islands, which were then decentralized and often in a state of civil war. The Chosŏn court encouraged borderlanders to replace raiding with trade (to adapt a phrase by Kenneth R. Robinson) and brought their leaders into a formal relationship with the Chosŏn court by offering them titles, positions in the Chosŏn bureaucracy, tribute visits to the Chosŏn capital of Hansŏng, and positions in the palace guard. In fact, outsiders were also allowed to settle on Chosŏn soil, in exchange for which they were granted submitting-foreigner status, which involved protection from most taxes and the granting of land, farm tools, and often wives. Ultimately, through these techniques, the Chosŏn state created networks of people, inside and outside territory directly administered by the Chosŏn court, who had varying degrees of political, cultural, and economic connections to the Chosŏn court, and who linked the Chosŏn state, through informal ties, to the outside world. In addition to ruling Chosŏn, the Chosŏn monarch placed himself at the center of a number of small and semi-independent polities, including Jurchen towns.
and small Japanese states, and most famously including the island of Tsushima located between Japan and Korea.\textsuperscript{51}

Such divisions had their ideological aspect as well. The Chosŏn court depended heavily on these informal ties, which also raised the status of the Chosŏn monarch by situating it as a civilizing center, operating in much the same manner as the Ming empire to which Chosŏn was subordinate. The ritualized submission of outsiders in the Chosŏn capital of Hansŏng established the Chosŏn monarch as the center of Chunghwa civilization in its own right. Indeed, often the Chosŏn court made rhetorical use of the Confucian distinctions between civilized (Ch. hua, K. hwa) and barbarian (Ch. yi, K. i), although this logic was imposed variably according to the particular needs of the Chosŏn court at the time. By no means was a strict distinction drawn, and Jurchens or Japanese were not necessarily unwelcome or marginalized by the Chosŏn state. In fact, ultimately Jurchens and Japanese were weakly controlled subjects of the Chosŏn court who nevertheless played a vital role in Chosŏn’s defense, diplomacy, and ideology, and they thus could not be simply excluded or condemned.

The Chosŏn court’s tools for managing its frontiers were put to the test during the half century following 1592, when first the Japanese, and then the Jurchen, coalesced to form powerful and centralizing states, which eliminated the diverse polities that had previously controlled the island of Japan and the Jurchen regions to Chosŏn’s north. This in turn brought war, and large numbers of foreign soldiers, into Chosŏn territory. In chapter 2, I discuss the first of these wars, the Imjin War of 1592–1598, which brought large armies of invading Japanese into Chosŏn, followed by a similarly large and culturally diverse Ming military force, which came to defend Chosŏn. A significant number of these soldiers remained in Chosŏn after the war and were integrated into the Chosŏn state. Chapter 3 continues the discussion of foreign invasions, focusing on the early seventeenth-century wars associated with the rise of the Manchu khanate, which was formed initially from a coalescence of Jurchen groups, including former Jurchen subjects of the Chosŏn court. As the Manchu khanate expanded, eventually forming itself into the Qing empire that invaded the Ming empire between 1644 and 1661, it drove diverse peoples into Chosŏn territory, including Chinese-speaking refugees from Ming Liaodong and Jurchen refugees from the Tumen River.

Within this chaos, the Chosŏn court continued to make use of much the same techniques for administering foreign subjects that it had employed before 1592. The Chosŏn court continued to compete actively for the loyalties of Japanese and Jurchens, especially as the Japanese brought military skills that the
Chosŏn court needed. In fact, the Chosŏn court was if anything less welcoming to deserters and refugees from Chosŏn’s Ming hegemon. Ming deserters and Liaodongese refugees, like Japanese deserters, were welcomed by the Chosŏn court, especially if they had valuable skills. However, in contrast to Japanese and Jurchens, whose submission to the Chosŏn court could be envisioned, much as it had before 1592, as submission to the Confucian edification of the Chosŏn monarch, the submission of the Ming migrants and refugees carried with it the implication of disloyalty to the Ming state to which the Chosŏn court was, supposedly, loyal. As for common people, I have found less evidence of ethnic resistance than of cultural fluidity, and indeed, the ease with which large numbers of Ming, Jurchens, Japanese, and border-crossing Koreans were able to move across cultural boundaries—by changing clothes or learning new languages—became a source of anxiety for the Chosŏn court. Whether Liaodongese, Japanese, or Jurchen, the Chosŏn court was concerned to prevent them from passing to easily across social, cultural, and political barriers, and through that, outside of the administrative control of the Chosŏn court. Thus, more important than questions of civilized versus barbarian were questions of outsiders and insiders, which is to say, the question of who could, and who could not, be trusted to participate loyally under the Chosŏn monarch and within Chosŏn’s system of social hierarchy.

New Identities in the Age of Centralizing Empires

Pamela Kyle Crossley has argued that the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were an age of civilizing empires, as such military formations as the Qing, the Ottomans, and the Saffavids made elaborate claims to their inheritance of the grand classical traditions of earlier empires and religious revelations. Taking advantage of much expanded literacy and availability of texts, these empires also sought to create new typologies for the peoples under their control, in the case of the Qing, “inventing coherent if formulaic cultural identities for its historical constituencies of Uighurs, Mongols, Manchus, Tibetans and Chinese, and producing histories of the origins of them as homogeneous peoples.” These new identities and histories, of course, were brought under the grand and overarching imperial project. Her argument accords well with scholarship by Alexander Woodside and Victor Lieberman, who note a worldwide trend toward territorial consolidation, notable in the decline of small polities in Southeast Asia and the rise of large states such as Burma, Vietnam, and Thailand. Woodside and Lieberman also discuss the vernacularizing of high culture, whereby in East and Southeast Asia elite cultural norms (Confucian in Vietnam, Buddhist in Siam
and Burma) were extended over minority populations and lower-class communities, even as distinctions in social status themselves were preserved.\textsuperscript{54} Evelyn S. Rawski and Laura Hostetler, similarly, point to the role that new technologies and economic structures, in some cases originating from maritime Europe, played in the construction of increasingly centralized states in East Asia.\textsuperscript{55}

Social and political developments in the late Chosŏn show much similarity to those happening elsewhere in the early modern world. To be sure, the late Chosŏn monarchy had pretensions to universality but was not an empire in the manner of the Qing, or indeed in the manner of the emerging Southeast Asian states.\textsuperscript{56} In contrast to the early Chosŏn, late Chosŏn’s influence was limited to the eight provinces that it governed directly through civil and military officials dispatched from the center aided by hereditary local petty subofficials and the local sajok aristocracy. Unlike the Qing empire, and indeed unlike Edo Japan and unlike Vietnam, the late Chosŏn monarchy did not have border peoples, minorities, or conquered populations over which to exert its civilizing mission. Yet the late Chosŏn monarchy, at once the subject and rival of the Qing empire, nevertheless maintained a community of foreign subjects—Jurchen, Japanese, and especially Chinese—who were governed and understood, initially at least, using much the same language that had been employed for foreigners during the early Chosŏn, even as the domestic and international contexts were completely different. Indeed, Chosŏn’s 1637 submission to the Qing brought to an end its active participation in the wars and conflicts of East Asia and signaled an end to the arrival of migrants. As both Japan under the Tokugawa shogunate and Manchuria and China under the Qing were reorganized under centralized control, the small polities with which Chosŏn had previously pursued its network of foreign affairs vanished, with the single exception of the island of Tsushima. Chosŏn clarified its own boundaries, establishing a joint border with the Qing in 1712, and generally policing border crossing closely in coordination with both the Qing empire to the north and the Tokugawa shogunate to its south.\textsuperscript{57}

Nevertheless, as I discuss in chapter 4, although very few migrants continued to arrive in Chosŏn, submitting-foreigner status, which had become essentially hereditary, continued to be used to administer migrants who had arrived before 1637. It was imposed identically on all foreigners and their descendants, Chinese, Japanese, and Jurchens, and it continued to be expressed rhetorically, by both Chosŏn court officials and by submitting-foreigners themselves, as a protected status granted to outsiders who sought the Confucian edification of the Chosŏn monarch. As a tax status, it certainly became part of the centralizing tax reforms of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as the Chosŏn court
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sought to assert greater control over all of its subjects. However, except for a few submitting-foreigners who gained significant positions in the military or as interpreters, it was also a status notably lacking in prestige, such that its recipients, who inherited their status on the maternal line just like slaves, were frequently exposed to the extralegal exactions of petty functionaries.

Change in the status of submitting-foreigners did not occur until the mid-eighteenth century. The eighteenth century saw an ideological shift in the Chosŏn court. Through much of the seventeenth century after Chosŏn’s submission to the Qing, the Chosŏn court engaged in secret and largely ineffectual plotting against the Qing empire, which they considered to be a barbarous usurper of the Ming legacy. With the fall of the last Ming successor in 1683, this plotting had gradually shifted to a belief that Chosŏn was the last remaining representative of the Chunghwa tradition, a belief that was expressed ritually through an altar, the Taebodan, established in the Chosŏn palace complex, and through the active involvement of eighteenth-century monarchs in these rituals. This ritualization of the Chosŏn court’s Ming loyalism resulted, as is discussed in chapter 5, in the transformation of the social status of those submitting-foreigners who could claim Ming migrant origins. Those who could were recategorized as “imperial subjects,” given preferment in military examinations, and encouraged by the Chosŏn court to participate actively in rituals in the Taebodan. These changes benefited the Chosŏn court by strengthening its claim to inheritance of the Ming mantle. It was beneficial also to the imperial subjects themselves, who gained a much-improved social status as a result.

Clearly, one cannot treat these developments as simply a reflection of the Confucian nature of Chosŏn’s monarchy and sajok aristocracy, for the simple reason that there had been no obvious growth of Confucianism during the eighteenth century that could account for such a shift. Nor should it be seen, superficially, as simply a response to changes in court ritual, or as an aspect of the rise of Ming loyalist ideology. Rather, these developments were deeply bound up with broader trends occurring both domestically and internationally. Domestically, the developments were related to the fiscal reforms of the eighteenth century and were part of a series of attempted reforms of the tax system. In this sense, as Kimura Takao has argued recently, the development of imperial subject status was related to the general attempts during the eighteenth century to strengthen the monarchy. It may thus be seen as a part of broader state activity to expand the reach of the central state by rationalizing the tax system, registering the unregistered, and extending state surveillance of frontier regions and offshore islands.
Internationally, these reforms were linked to attempts by increasingly centralized empires to define the identities of the peoples under their control. Above all, the rise of imperial subject status has echoes in the Qing empire, which, unlike the Ming empire, governed as a multiethnic empire over diverse peoples: Manchu, Mongol, Tibetan, Uighur, as well as Han Chinese. During the eighteenth century, the Qing court increasingly sought to mold these formerly fluid and relational subject identities into absolute bureaucratic categories clearly under Qing control. Both by weeding out those with the wrong genealogy, and by standardizing Manchu and Mongol customs, the Qing created new categories for these groups, which were under the direction of the Qing court. For instance, the Qing court actively sought to clear out those with Han Chinese genealogies from the Manchu banners. In fact, although the Qing had only defeated the Ming through the support of the Ming defectors, during the eighteenth century these same defectors were posthumously condemned for betraying the Ming, by the Qing court, which by this time saw itself as the only proper heir to the Ming. The formation in Chosŏn of imperial subject status, a court-defined, ritualized identity, predicated on the absolute nature of their ancestors’ loyalty to the Ming, must be seen as a parallel development. Indeed, considering the extensive interaction between the Qing and Chosŏn courts, Chosŏn trends should be seen in part as responding to Qing developments.

There is a significant quantity of sources available concerning foreigners in late Chosŏn, although this is to some extent obscured by the fact that the different sources reveal a very different image of migrants. Especially for the early Chosŏn, the bulk of surviving sources are official court records, including the Journal of the Royal Secretariat (Sŭngjŏngwŏn ilgi), The Transcribed Records of the Border Defense Command (Pibyŏnsa tŭngnok), and the Journal of the Office of the Custodian of Foreign Visitors (Chŏn’gaeksa ilgi), as well as legal documents and Household Registry documents. These texts reflect the position of foreign groups and their descendants at the time that they were written from the perspective of high officials, and the institutional challenges in managing foreigners. Broadly speaking, they reveal above all the generally low social status of most foreigners, and the difficulties from the point of view of the Chosŏn court in administering them, although they also reveal considerable shifts over time in the Chosŏn court’s response, with those written post-1750 increasingly reflecting the development of imperial subject status. Also in this category are the Veritable Records (sillok) for each reign, which were compiled at the death of each monarch and made up of court documents, organized chronologically according to date, edited, simplified, and frequently sanitized, eliminating doubt, debate,
and views and information that were uncomfortable to the editors, although
the extent of this sanitization varied from reign to reign. Somewhat different
from these official sources were notes and private writings of scholars who en-
countered foreigners and foreign descendants before the 1750s. These private
writings, appearing in the collected works of prominent scholars, in private his-
tories, or in collections of stories, were inevitably more personalized than official
documents and less concerned with matters of policy.

Especially beginning with the 1750s, however, a new category of text appears:
biographies of Ming Chinese migrants produced either under court auspices
or by private authors, including Ming migrants themselves. As I discuss first in
chapter 5, and in greater detail in chapter 6, the formation of imperial subject
status required the compilation of new texts and new archival materials. These
new texts were sometimes based on edited versions of earlier documents, and
sometimes, seemingly, entirely fraudulent new documents. Earlier records, es-
especially those produced by private historians, could result in the Chosŏn state
looking for the descendants of a Ming migrant to honor. At the same time as
the Chosŏn state discovered new claimants to imperial subject status, it often
uncovered documents—at times of doubtful veracity—to confirm their claims.
Genuine documents that had undergone editing and reinterpretation were gath-
ered together along with fraudulent documents in new archival collections, such
as the late eighteenth-century *Traces of the Acts of Imperial Subjects* (*Hwangjoin
sajŏk*). They were also edited and fashioned into biographies contained with
the court-sponsored *Collected Texts on Honoring the Zhou* (*Chonju hwip’yŏn*),
or into collections produced by Kyujanggak scholars such as the *Noble Pur-
pose* (*Noeroe nangnak*) by Yi Tŏngmu (1741–1793) or the *Biographies of Rem-
nant Subjects of the Imperial Ming* (*Hwangmyŏng yumin chŏn*) by Sŏng Haeŭng
(1760–1839). While the contents of the biographies differed, they all agreed in
treating Ming migrants as a coherent category. Instead of the low-status refugees
in fishing villages, intermarrying with base-born Chosŏn women, that we find
in seventeenth-century sources, these palace-sponsored narratives created elite
and educated Confucian paragons whose retreat to Chosŏn was entirely deter-
mined by their hostility to the Qing and their recognition of Chosŏn’s exclusive
inheritance of Chunghwa civilization.

As will be discussed in chapter 6, during the nineteenth century impe-
rial subjects themselves took control in this process, actively internalizing
court-sponsored narratives and developing them further in often incredible
directions, often far beyond what the palace scholars had been willing to ac-
cept, even as they further strengthened their ritualized Ming loyalist identity by
creating their own Ming loyalist shrines and altars. Through this process, new texts were written, based in part upon the official court narratives but frequently involving flights of fancy that went far beyond what the court would accept, including The Record of Remnant Subjects of the Imperial Dynasty (Hwangjo yumin nok) by Wang Tŏkku, or the improved and expanded Collected Works of Mohadang (Mohadangjip), which provided a much more orthodox history for a key Japanese defector lineage in Chosŏn. By doing so, these foreign descent-groups fully accepted the historical identities the Chosŏn court had imposed upon them. This represented a vernacularization of the Chunghwa ideology of Chosŏn’s sajok aristocracy. These texts have continued to be reproduced by the descendants of imperial subject families, who have gathered them together in easily accessible form, and they have in turn attracted a certain amount of scholarly attention, including excellent studies by U Kyŏngsŏp and Liu Chunlan, with Liu especially using them to provide a pioneering survey of the key migrants and descent-groups. On face value, they seem to have very little relation to the records from the period of migration or from the seventeenth century, and it can thus seem as if we suffer from a dearth of records on Ming migrants to Chosŏn. However, read carefully, these texts reveal echoes of the very different circumstances of the seventeenth century and also provide a window into the later social processes experienced by the migrants. Much like the spread of norms of widow chastity among low-status people, the spread of surnames among slaves, and cultural assertions of chungin specialists and petty functionaries during the same period, this involved a spread of elite norms to nonelites. Imperial subjects were not a diasporic community of Chinese rediscovering their identities, but Koreans, of generally foreign ancestry and of low or middling status, internalizing a narrative provided for them by the Chosŏn court.

Chosŏn’s sajok aristocracy formed an imagined community that was markedly different from that of the modern nation-state, and certainly with only limited resemblance to the racialized nation-state of twentieth-century Korea. During the early Chosŏn, despite the presence of the admired Ming empire that most sajok aristocrats agreed in honoring, Chosŏn formed its own rival Chunghwa centricity, through which it encompassed Jurchens, Japanese, and indeed Ming deserters who it brought under its control. The late Chosŏn saw a shift, not to nationalism, but to a more bureaucratic and centralized relationship with people seen as foreign, as the Chosŏn court, which at this point considered itself to be the only remnant of Chunghwa civilization, defined some of its foreign subjects as “imperial subjects” and representatives of the fallen Ming. Understanding migrants and foreigners during the Chosŏn period requires us to look beyond the
clichés of Western nationalism and rather to consider the changing ideological
and administrative contexts of the early modern Chosŏn state.

A Note on Names, Languages, and Dates

An omnipresent challenge when writing about border-crossers is the question
of names. Many of the people I discuss began their careers in China and ended
them in Korea. In the sources, their names are written in Chinese characters,
but when writing in English it is necessary to choose between pinyin roman-
ization (which represents them as Chinese) and McCune-Reischauer (which
represents them as Korean). My general solution is to romanize the names of the
original migrants in pinyin, while occasionally placing the McCune-Reischauer
in parentheses—for instance, Kang Shijue (K. Kang Sejak). However, in the
case of the Shang migrant Kija (Ch. Jizi), I use the McCune-Reischauer be-
cause the story of Kija had become so thoroughly Koreanized. Titles of books
published in Chosŏn containing the name of the migrant are also rendered in
McCune-Reischauer (for instance, Kang Sejak chasul), as are the names of the
Korean-born descendants of the migrants. In some cases, this will result in the
surnames of the original migrants becoming confusingly different from their
descendants—thus, the surname of the Uighur Xie Xun is pronounced “Sŏl”
in Korean.

Most foreign terms and titles used in this book are Korean, with some in
Chinese. In some cases, I provide both Korean and Chinese romanizations: for
instance, Chungwha (Ch. Zhonghua). When I refer to Japanese (Ja.), Jurchen
(Ju.), Russian (R.), Mongol (Mo.), or Manchu (Ma.) terms, I generally indicate
this specifically unless it is otherwise obvious. As a general rule, foreign terms
are Korean (K.) unless noted otherwise.

My translation of terminology follows a mix of authorities, referring to Huck-
er’s *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China,* as well as the online glos-
sary provided by the Academy of Korean Studies and Sun Joo Kim’s “Korean
History Glossary,” which themselves are compiled based on the work of earlier
authorities.

This book discusses a considerable diversity of premodern nationalities, or
*ethnies,* to use Anthony Smith’s terminology. Perhaps the most difficult eth-
nie to refer to consistently are Koreans. Although it may seem anachronistic
to some, it is simply impossible not to use the term Korean, for instance to dis-
tinguish Korean subjects of the Chosŏn court from those of Japanese, Jurchen,
and other origins who had also become subject to the Chosŏn court. It is also
necessary to use “Korean” when referring to people across dynastic traditions. Of course, as I have discussed in this introduction, there were terms such as Tongguk that did indeed refer to Korea without respect to dynastic boundaries, so it is not perhaps as anachronistic as some might imagine. The group that I refer to as Jurchens, for that matter, was both internally diverse and, especially in Chosŏn records after the late fifteenth century, frequently referred to very simply as bo, boin, or yain—northern nomads or wild people. My use of “Jurchen” is thus an anachronistic simplification, but also hard to avoid.

Finally, most dates within this text refer to the lunar-solar calendar in standard use in early modern Korea and China. I do provide the year in the Gregorian calendar that corresponds to most of the East Asian lunar-solar year. However, as the Gregorian year and the East Asian lunar-solar year are not precisely identical, there is some mismatch—so, the thirtieth day of the twelfth month of the pyŏngja year under Injo is in fact early 1637 according to the Gregorian calendar, not 1636. I only rarely make note of such inconsistencies.