CHAPTER 6

New Narratives

Until the opening of Chosŏn to the imperialist world order in 1876, the descendants of Ming migrants were the largest community in Korea that continued to be classified as foreigners. Substantially Korean, and fully part of Chosŏn society, they were nevertheless distinguished from other Chosŏn subjects through the imperial subject status that had been developed under the courts of Yŏngjo and Chŏngjo. Beyond bureaucratic convention, the foreignness of these imperial subjects was produced and maintained also through historical narratives that transformed the often-messy process whereby Liaodongese migrants established themselves on Chosŏn soil into a glorious history of Ming loyalist heroism. Pan Ch’unggyŏm, as discussed in chapter 5, transformed his ancestor Pan Tengyun (concerning whom the Chosŏn court could find nearly no records) into a Ming loyalist paragon whose father and mother both had been martyred for their opposition to the Qing, while Sŏk Hanyŏng presented to the court an actual, if rather dubious, text describing his ancestors as Ming loyalists.

Even as the Chosŏn court organized the new category of imperial subject, it also sponsored the compilation of biographical anthologies of Ming migrants. The descendants of these migrants were no mere passive onlookers but were active participants, both creating their own biographical texts and establishing private Ming loyalist shrines. Both the written biographies and the physical shrines have come to the attention of modern researchers, and much of the modern scholarship on Ming migrants in Korean, Chinese, and English takes the histories provided in these biographies at face value, treating them as genuine family chronicles of the migrants themselves.1 It is true that these narratives contain a certain amount of genuine information concerning the original migration of Ming migrants during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Yet, written after the growth of Ming loyalist ritualism and the creation of imperial subject status, they overwhelmingly reinterpret the lives of the original migrants to reflect the new ideological and ritual context of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Chosŏn.
In this chapter, then, I will engage in a critical discussion of these new narratives. In part, my purpose is to demonstrate the gap between the seventeenth-century realities and their eighteenth-century reinterpretations, and by doing so, show the problems with treating these narratives as accurate accounts of the original migrants during the seventeenth century. Additionally, a close analysis of these texts is also informative because it reveals the social and ideological processes whereby imperial subject families internalized the Chosŏn court’s Chunghwa Inheritance Consciousness, making state ideology part of their own identity.
Accepting the Attire of Civilization

By the late eighteenth century, as the Chosŏn state sought to recategorize and redefine submitting-foreigners, submitting-foreigners themselves responded by transforming themselves to fit the court-sponsored categories, taking the historical narratives imposed upon them and making them their own. This was by no means unique to them, and may be seen, following Alexander Woodside and Victor Lieberman, as part of a broader worldwide shift toward cultural and territorial consolidation and the vernacularizing of high culture. In Vietnam, during the same period, the dominant Vietnamese spread out to Cham, Khmer, and Tay areas, while lower-status people were brought into a “Confucian” ritual order associated with the governing ruling class. In Burma, a regularized system by which boys were sent to spend time in Buddhist monasteries spread not only literacy but also a common language and religious morality to a far larger class. Certainly, differences of social status and ethnicity were not eliminated, but East and Southeast Asia in general did experience an expansion of common cultural norms across ethnic and social boundaries within increasingly centralized polities.

Such vernacularization often leaves its trace on historical narratives, as people rewrote their family histories to fit in with their new historical identity. For instance, as Michael Szonyi has shown, the process by which Dan fishing people in coastal Fujian transformed themselves into north Chinese migrants is often still visible. In many cases, it is possible to find references in both the written genealogical materials and the oral traditions to the actual Dan origins of the lineages as well as to their adopted northern Chinese origins. David Faure, studying the formation of lineages in the Pearl River delta, has explored the role the state played in defining and organizing lineages as well as the role the emerging lineages themselves played in integrating the Pearl River delta into the Ming and Qing states. Emerging lineages, defined in part through lijia tax status, subsumed local religion into ritual Neo-Confucian orthodoxy and tied Pearl River identities to a broader Ming and Qing Han Chinese identity, a process that can be uncovered through careful investigation of the discontinuities and contradictions within family narratives.

The late Chosŏn also experienced a general expansion of elite norms and rituals to encompass lower-status people, who in turn rewrote their histories to reflect their newfound improved status. During the late Chosŏn, for instance, the ideal of widow chastity spread to low-status women, a change that was also made visible in new narratives of chaste widows that included women from
lower-status groups. Members of what Kyung Moon Hwang calls “intermediate status groups” were also notably active in establishing narratives that raised their status by associating themselves with the ethos of sajok society. As Kim Hyŏnyŏng describes in his study of the T’amjin Ch’oe family, the T’amjin Ch’oe of Ch’ŏn’gok in Chŏlla were the descendants of Ch’oe Sarip, a general who died fighting the Qing during the Pyŏngja War of 1636–1637. Following the recognition of his sacrifice by Yŏngjo in 1766, this politically and economically marginal lineage had produced texts through which they established that their ancestor had been declared a merit subject, and so they demanded to be freed of tax and corvée burdens. While this document, along with two others—one describing the suffering of one ancestor during the Kimyo Literati Purge of 1519 and the other describing the military activities of Ch’oe Sarip—could hardly rival the extensive collection of records held by established sajok families, and although the surviving documents contained numerous obvious inaccuracies, they did succeed in protecting the T’amjin Ch’oe from tax and corvée, and thereby gave them marginal, but still valuable, sajok status.

Similar processes were also visible for the families of sŏŏl, that is to say, the descendants of sajok men and base women, whose criticism of the persecution that they experienced was not generally intended to overthrow the system of social status but to improve their own position within it. It was also characteristic of numerous literary works of the period, such as The Mirror of Clerks (Yŏnjo kwigam), that sought to reveal a depth of scholarship, devotion to Confucian values, and loyal participation in the kingdom and system of social status by village clerks (hyangni), who were otherwise limited in their access to bureaucratic positions. Collections, such as Yu Chaegŏn’s (1793–1880) Things Seen and Heard in Ordinary Villages (Ihyang kyŏnmun nok), praised the loyalty and intelligence not only of members of intermediate status groups but also of slaves who had shown their superior morality by loyally serving the state and their sajok masters.

This example of intermediate status groups is significant, as above all the descendants of Ming migrants could not aspire to anything higher. Sŏng Haeŭng (1760–1839), for instance, in his “Biographies of the Eight Surnames” (P’alsŏng-jŏn), noted that when they first came to Chosŏn, the official families (sadaebu) “had not treated them as being of equal status.” Sŏng thought this to be in stark contrast to earlier Korean tradition, as “numerous Chinese of prominence and fame came to the Eastern Kingdom from the Three Kingdoms to the Koryŏ period,” but only the remnant descendants of the imperial dynasty were so despised and mistreated that they all became “townspeople, or hid deep in the mountains and countryside, or wandered obscurely at the water’s edge and would net fish.
to offer as tribute. At first it was a token offer showing their sincerity, but over time it became a most burdensome tax. Also, when they organized militarily, they were daily insulted as Japanese soldiers. This was a most extreme insult.”

Sŏng’s history was wrong, of course. As was discussed in chapter 1, Chinese officials did not often rise into high official ranks in either Koryŏ or early Chosŏn Korea but were generally placed clearly in low-ranked clerical or technical positions. Moreover, although Sŏng viewed the category of townsperson as a status reduction, if anything, the evidence suggests that this was not a fall but rather a rise in status for most submitting-foreigners of Ming origin or otherwise. Despite often uncertain origins, and despite contracting marriages with base women, Ming migrants during the late Chosŏn were able to improve their social status significantly by obtaining minor posts, generally in the military. Although they were never allowed to rival the powerful sajok families of the capital, some of them at least were able to rise to the ranks of intermediate status groups, enjoying the advantages of military posts and bringing their histories in closer accord with that of the official ideology of the Chosŏn state.

This process of transforming narratives occurred not only with those of Chinese ancestry but also with the descendants of the Japanese defector Kim Ch’ungsŏn. In the mid-seventeenth century, this family of Japanese defectors was considerably more prominent than most Ming migrants. Not only had they established a village for themselves at Urok-ri, but from early on they had sought out connections to prominent Chosŏn sajok officials and had already developed a connection with the Neo-Confucian orthodoxy of the Chosŏn court. They solidified their status as a family of exceptional Japanese defectors with their publication, in 1798, of the complete works of Kim Ch’ungsŏn, called *The Collected Works of Mohadang* (*Mohadang jip*), and, in 1842, with an expanded version. These volumes had much more material available to them than was the case for Ming migrants, for the simple reason that both Kim Ch’ungsŏn and his descendants seem to have been significantly better educated and more active as writers than were most Liaodongese refugees. As a result, in contrast to many Ming migrant descent-groups, they did not need to justify a lack of evidence with a facile claim that all their vital documents had been destroyed.

As I discussed in chapter 4, writings by Kim Ch’ungsŏn, such as the “Annals of Deer Village,” deliberately represented Kim Ch’ungsŏn as submitting to Chosŏn because he saw Chosŏn as being the true representation of Chunghwa civilization. To be sure, it is possible, as Fujiwara Takao argues, that many of the texts in the collected works were revised by the eighteenth-and nineteenth-century editors to fit Kim Ch’ungsŏn’s story into the changed
ideological context. Certainly, Fujiwara argues effectively that those documents in the collection that would seem to date Kim Ch’ungsŏn’s defection to immediately after his arrival in 1592, or which declare his defection to be motivated by a Confucian admiration for the civilization of Chosŏn, are either later works or had been interpolated by later editors. Kim Ch’ungsŏn’s own writings are unclear on this subject, but broadly it would seem that he, like most Japanese, defected after 1593. Fujiwara claims also that later editors interpolated descriptions of Kim Ch’ungsŏn submitting to Chosŏn out of a longing to conform to Chosŏn’s Chunghwa order, which seems quite possible. It also seems possible, as I suggest in chapter 4 following work by Yang Hŭngsuk, that Kim Ch’ungsŏn and his sons might have themselves included such claims as part of their negotiations to survive in Chosŏn during the politically turbulent seventeenth century.

A text that clearly fits Fujiwara’s conditions for a late or interpolated text is the “Record of Mohadang” (Mohadang-gi). Kim Ch’ungsŏn or his descendants named their house “Mohadang”—literally “Longing for China Hall,” with “China” in this case represented by the Xia (K. Ha), the semilegendary first dynasty among the idealized Three Dynasties of ancient China. Xia also became the standard name for “Chinese” during the Song. This also became both Kim Ch’ungsŏn’s sobriquet and the title for his complete works. By using it as the title of the complete works, his descendants clearly represented his decision to defect to Chosŏn in the language of submitting to Chunghwa civilization. This is explained clearly in the “Record of Mohadang,” which deciphers the title as follows: “I longed for the rituals of Chungha (Ch. Zhongxia), I longed for the civilization of Chungha, I longed for the clothing of Chungha, and I longed for the popular customs of Chungha.” Yet it also leaves no doubt that Chosŏn itself was Chungha/Chunghwa:

Even this region of Ch’ŏnggu, isolated on a remote corner of the sea, has achieved the proper proportion of adornment and simplicity, and has achieved perfection in rites and teachings. It maintains the relationships of father and son, king and official, husband and wife, elder and junior and friend with friend. In the conduct of true goodness, righteousness, rites, wisdom, filiality, respect for elder brothers, loyalty and honesty, one may say that it is little different from the reigns of Yao and Shun, and one may say that it is the fourth of the three dynasties [of Xia, Shang and Zhou]. In its hats, clothes and civilization, in comparison to the great Chungha it is a lesser Chungha.
It was by no means unusual for late Chosŏn sajok aristocrats to express the intention of establishing a state that equaled the golden age of Yao and Shun. Even the most fulsome flatterer might avoid declaring that Chosŏn under Sŏnjo had reached a level of civilization that equaled the idealized Three Dynasties of early China—that Chosŏn was a fourth dynasty, to accompany the Xia, the Shang, and the Zhou, and logically then must have exceeded both the Song and Ming in moral excellence. In the mouth of a foreigner—a defector to superior civilization, and a submitting-foreigner—such over-the-top praise became acceptable. The phrasing followed the established ideological content of submitting-foreigner status of the early Chosŏn, updated to fit the Chunghwa Restoration Consciousness of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Kim Ch’ungsŏn’s descendants did not have to transform themselves alone. By matching their family’s identity so closely to the Chunghwa Restoration Consciousness, they inevitably received the support of prominent civil sajok. For instance, Sŏ Chonggŭp (1688–1762), an influential civil official and a disciple of the Noron intellectual leader Kwŏn Sangha, wrote a preface for a genealogy of Kim Ch’ungsŏn’s descendants, published in 1759 that was also included in the 1795 edition of The Collected Works of Mohadang. Sŏ began his preface by comparing Kim Ch’ungsŏn to the Chinese sage kings Shun and Wen, who were both, according to tradition, born among barbarians but were transformed by Chunghwa culture and traditions. It was most unfortunate, Sŏ wrote, that Kim Ch’ungsŏn had been born outside Chunghwa civilization and had been forced to dress in barbarian fashion. It would have been tragic if he had been forced to live that way until the end of his days. It was consequently most fortunate and praiseworthy that he should have escaped such a fate. Indeed, Sŏ cited an official document directed to Kim Ch’ungsŏn’s son Kim Kyŏngwŏn, which stated that “the officer Kim Ch’ungsŏn showed integrity in his submission to edification and return to morality, and showed complete loyalty to the kingdom. He is truly praiseworthy. May his descendants always be rewarded with salaries and employment, and may they be granted freedom from personal taxes and corvée duties.”

The advantages for Kim Ch’ungsŏn’s descendants in a preface of that sort are not hard to divine. Kim Ch’ungsŏn’s descendants, like Ming migrants, were military officials based in the countryside, and the attention of Sŏ, an influential civil official closely associated with the Noron faction, inevitably benefited them in terms of social status. Certainly, on the one hand, the decision of Sŏ to emphasize the privileges that they were owed in the context of the reworking of submitting-foreigner status during the eighteenth century must have been welcome. On the other hand, this preface ultimately benefited the Chosŏn state
as well, reinforcing the claim by sajok elites that they were the last remnants of Chunghwa civilization, and indeed that Japanese could choose Chosŏn, and not the Ming, as a place to receive edification. The comparison between Kim Ch’ungsŏn and Wen and Shun (also present in the “Record of Mohadang” attributed to Kim Ch’ungsŏn), reminded the reader that not only Kim Ch’ungsŏn, but Chosŏn itself, had passed from their former barbarian conditions into the refinements of civilization and Chunghwa.

A similar intervention by sajok elites into the histories of foreign descent-groups may be noted in the case of the Liaodongese refugee Kang Shijue. Kang Shijue was unusual in that he had biographies written of him during the late seventeenth century as a result of his fortuitous connections with two prominent officials concerned with settling the border, namely Nam Kuman and Pak Sedang. Because this occurred before the formation of imperial subject status, many of the details of his early biographies were troublesome and in need of editing to fit the new ideological context. This may be seen in a biography of Kang Shijue, the “Record of Chu Hat Hall” (Ch’ogwandang-gi), written by Hwang Kyŏngwŏn (1709–1787), an official and Ming loyalist historian known especially for his history of the Southern Ming.

This brief piece begins with the sentence, “The Chu hat hall is the ancestral hall of the Kang descent-group of Hoeryŏng. Hoeryŏng is at the mouth of the Tumen River.” Having established in one short passage extreme geographic ignorance concerning northern Hamgyŏng Province (first, because the region in which Kang Shijue lived had by then been reorganized as Musan, and second because Hoeryŏng is in fact considerably upstream on the Tumen River, and nowhere near its mouth), Hwang Kyŏngwŏn proceeded to outline briefly the history of Kang Shijue and his family by summarizing Nam Kuman’s work. Following that, he launched a comparison of Kang’s fate with that of the Ming remnant subjects who took refuge in Southeast Asia:

As they moved from the Ming to the south, all the high Ming officials who fled to Burma were killed, and of the eighty imperial princes who entered Siam, a minute number did not cut their hair or tattoo their bodies. Only Kang Shijue of Hoeryŏng, living out his life in the village, did not change his Chu hat. I once said that of all subordinate countries, none has been so close to a Chinese dynasty as our country has been with the Ming. Had the gentlemen of our country fled to the Ming, then the early emperors would surely have accepted them. So when Kang came to our country from Fenghuang, he did not worry that he would not be well received.
Hwang then lamented that the Ming high officials and princes had not come to Chosŏn:

Was it perhaps that the eastern sea is too wild and wide and the ships could not pass over the winds and the waves? Was it not because the world had already been transformed, and they could no longer move to our kingdom? Of those gentlemen of the Ming who stayed among the southern barbarians, few indeed could preserve themselves, but Kang, residing in our country, lived at ease in the village for sixty years and ended his life there. So how can the world say that we do not receive the gentlemen of the Ming! Alas! Kang left Xingwen and stayed in our country, where he could no longer ascend the Jiuyi mountain and could no longer boat in the Xiang River. There was no need for him to long for Xingwen, but because he grew up there, however old he became, he would never forget it. Even as he lived at ease, he never changed his Chu hat. *The Classic of Poetry* says: “He did not change his appearance.” This poem could be referring to Kang. After Kang died, the people of Hoeryŏng all pitied him, and so they named his sacrificial hall after his Chu hat. And so I have recounted this. Both of Kang’s two sons were good at mounted archery and had the airs of Chu gentlemen.¹⁵

Hwang Kyŏngwŏn, as a well-established official, was also, in his private capacity, one of the leading Ming loyalist historians of Yŏngjo’s era, writing not only a history of the Southern Ming, but also a collection, the “Biographies of Secondary Subjects” (*Myŏng paesin chŏn*), that praised those Chosŏn subjects such as Hong Ikhan who had shown exemplary loyalty to the Ming. The concept of *paesin*, “subjects of subjects,” connected Chosŏn officials—who were subjects of the Chosŏn king who was in turn a subject of the Ming emperor—within the broader Ming world order, and mirrored the ritual category of descendants of the loyal and good who had, along with the descendants of imperial subjects, been encouraged to participate in Ming loyalist rites at the Taebodan.

Hwang’s ideological orientation to the Chunghwa Inheritance Consciousness caused him to add historical inaccuracy to his geographic illiteracy in his account of Kang Shijue. When men like Kang Shijue were first crossing the boundary between Liaodong and Chosŏn, they were accused not of refusing to change their Chinese-style clothes but of slyly insisting on changing them the better to conceal their identities. And Kang Shijue himself was, as surely Hwang Kyŏngwŏn must have known, hardly a good example of how well Chosŏn treated all refugees from the Ming. During Hwang’s own lifetime, the descendants of
these refugees were seeing their statuses raised by a monarch, Yŏngjo, who specifically lamented the poor treatment they had received in the past. Kang’s Chu hat was not noted by Nam Kuman or Pak Sedang or anybody else who encountered him while he was still alive, and so it seems likely that Hwang invented it himself. This impression is strengthened by the fact that Hwang mentioned the Ming hats of other Ming migrants as well. For instance, in a poem concerning the Ming remnant subjects of Tŏkch’ŏn-ri in Kŏje, Hwang began by lamenting that “after the Manchu conquered the divine capital [of Beijing], the whole realm wears hair in a barbarian fashion.” Further down, he praised the Ming remnant community for concealing themselves in Chosŏn to avoid “changing their clothing and hats.”

The historical inaccuracy of Hwang’s account is less significant than the ideological meaning that he imposed upon the imperial subjects. In a similar manner to Sŏ Chonggŭp, who had Kim Ch’ungsŏn leave Japan for Chosŏn to accept a proper Confucian clothing style, Hwang could describe Kang Shijue and the Tŏkch’ŏn-ri villagers as proof of Chosŏn’s unique role as defender and last remnant of Chunghwa culture. As Hwang argued, although a proper Confucian clothing style had vanished from all other parts of the world, it continued to survive in Chosŏn, as proved by Kang Shijue’s retreat there with his Chu hat intact.

Anthologies, Official and Unofficial

Important though Hwang’s private Ming loyalist historical work was, during the reign of Chŏngjo it was subsumed into state-sponsored Ming loyalist historiography. Through the Kyujanggak Library established by Chŏngjo near the Ch’angdŏk-kung Palace, scholars, many of sŏŏl background, were encouraged by Chŏngjo to gather Qing books and produce works of their own that would rival the scholarly of the lower Yangzi River region and the Four Treasuries project of the Qianlong court. While one effect of a wider participation in Qing scholarship was a decline in hostility toward the Qing, Kyujanggak-based scholars were still taking as their starting point the Qing’s illegitimacy and Chosŏn’s exclusive identity as inheritor of Chunghwa civilization. One representative Kyujanggak scholar, Sŏng Haeŭng, produced a considerable body of work emphasizing Chosŏn’s position as heir of the Chunghwa tradition and calling for better defenses in Chosŏn’s northern border in preparation for the turmoil of the last gasps of the Qing. Under the overall direction of Chŏngjo, he participated in the drafting of The Collected Texts on Honoring the Zhou (Chonju hwip’ŏn), a work that explicitly denies the legitimacy of the Qing. Nevertheless, even such
openly anti-Qing scholarship showed the evidence of Qianlong-era Qing historiography, including those works, such as *The Record of the Dynastic Foundation (Kaiguo fanglue)*, that attempted to formalize a Manchu heritage that was both venerable and free of Chinese influence. Sŏng Haeŭng compiled a work related to *The Collected Texts on Honoring the Zhou*, his *Biographies of the Remnant Subjects of Imperial Ming (Hwangmyŏng yumin chŏn)*, partly through reference to Qianlong-era texts. As his sources, he listed some simply as authored by “many officials of the Qianlong era,” also referring to such Ming loyalist works as those by Huang Zongxi (1610–1694), which presumably had been obtained through the Beijing book trade and interaction with Qing officials by Chosŏn legations.

In fact, the uncompromising Ming loyalism of the Chosŏn court was not necessarily at odds with Qianlong histories of the Ming-Qing transition, which, as described by Lynn Struve, aimed generally to “sanitize and dignify the Ming versus Qing armed conflict,” “defend monarchical control and proper institutional balance,” and “encourage loyalty unto death for the ruling dynasty,” and which consequently tended to demonize those Chinese officials who had abandoned the Ming to serve the Qing. Sŏng Haeŭng, in fact, read the Qianlong-sponsored *Biographies of Twice Serving Ministers (Erchen zhuan)* and wrote his impression of it, in which he agreed substantially with the Qianlong emperor that their disloyalty had been unforgivable. He differed from the Qianlong emperor in attacking them for serving under “dogs and sheep” like the Manchus. More positively, Sŏng’s *Biographies of Remnant Subjects of the Imperial Ming* was an anthology of biographies praising those who had refused, in some manner, to “serve two surnames” or to “shave their heads.” Whether their refusal took the form of courting death, of retreating to the countryside, or of fleeing to other countries including Chosŏn, he treated them as worthy of admiration. Ultimately, although Sŏng was explicitly anti-Qing, he shared much of his ideological tendencies with the Qing court under Qianlong.

Such Ming loyalist publications became fertile ground for the creation of anthologies of Ming migrant biographies, a process that was also connected with the push, during the reign of Chŏngjo, to identify and classify subjects with Ming migrant lineages. For instance, the last few pages of *The Collected Texts on Honoring the Zhou* contain a series of biographies of Ming loyalist migrants at the end of a long section of biographies of loyal Chosŏn subjects that were derived from Hwang’s *Biographies of Ming Secondary Subjects*. Almost identical biographies of Ming loyalist refugees in Chosŏn were anthologized by Sŏng Haeŭng in his *Biographies of Remnant Subjects of the Imperial Ming*, and by another Kyujanggak scholar, Yi Tŏngmu (1741–1793), in a collection of biographies.
called Noble Purpose (Noere nangnak). Both Sŏng’s and Yi’s works anthologized biographies of Ming loyalist refugees in Chosŏn together with biographies of Ming loyalists in China and Southeast Asia. The biographies in Collected Texts on Honoring the Zhou also closely resemble a collection of sources, possibly gathered as preparatory text material for The Collected Texts, called The Sources for the Acts of Imperial Subjects (Hwangjoin sajŏk).26

Anthologies, as Thomas A. Wilson argues, create lineages and hierarchies, clarifying the boundaries of the canonical.27 The migrants whose stories were recounted in these biographies were by then a familiar group, beginning with Kang Shijue (whose biographical tradition was the oldest) and including the supposed descendants of Li Rusong, comprising the Ming migrant community in the Chinese Village in Ŭi-dong, as well as other more minor figures such as Ma Shunshang, Wen Keshang, and so forth. This brought the diverse group of Ming migrants together into one coherent category, giving a historical shape to what had become a key ritual category within the Ming loyalist rites at the Taebodan. The Collected Texts of Honoring the Zhou, by combining biographies of imperial subjects with those of Chosŏn loyal subjects, put into textual form the pairing of imperial subjects and the descendants of Chosŏn loyal subjects that was well established in Ming loyalist rites. Moreover, just as imperial subjects were subordinate to Chosŏn loyal subjects in Ming loyalist rites, so too, in The Collected Texts of Honoring the Zhou, the biographies of imperial subjects comprise a small number of pages at the end of far longer and more extensive biographies of Chosŏn loyal subjects. By contrast, Sŏng Haeŭng’s Biographies of Remnant Subjects of the Imperial Ming and Yi Tŏngmu’s Noble Purpose linked Chosŏn’s imperial subject descent-groups to the broader Ming loyalist world, benefiting in this from the research into Ming history that improved intellectual exchange with Qing scholars had made possible. These Ming loyalist connections, however, were also anachronistic, as Chosŏn’s plans for restoring the Ming during the seventeenth century had been pursued with nearly no actual cooperation with pro-Ming forces elsewhere. This fantasy is meaningful, however, as it reveals that even Kyujanggak scholars like Yi Tŏngmu and Sŏng Haeŭng could at once imagine Ming loyalist migrants in Chosŏn as part of an inward-looking, Chosŏn-centric tradition when they participated in the court-sponsored Collected Texts and position themselves as part of a broader Ming loyalist world when they wrote privately.

Following Chŏngjo’s death in 1800, anthologies of Ming migrant loyalists were produced outside the purview of the court. Two notable examples are The Record of Remnant Subjects of the Imperial Dynasty,28 written by Wang Tŏkku
(1788–1863), a Taebodan guard (sujikkwan) and member of the Chenam Wang lineage of Ming migrant descendants,29 and, in 1830, the eclectic but clearly sourced *Unofficial History of a Lesser Chungwha*, by O Kyŏngwŏn (1764–?), which also included biographies of Ming migrants and their descendants, divided into three sections: “Those Who Stayed in Chosŏn after the War against the Japanese,” “Those Who Had Fled Their Land to Come East,” and “Those Imperial Palace Women Who Came East.” Many of O Kyŏngwŏn’s biographies followed the account in *The Collected Texts on Honoring the Zhou* (which is cited frequently), as also did Wang Tŏkku’s *Record of the Remnant Subjects of the Imperial Dynasty*. At the same time, O Kyŏngwŏn and Wang Tŏkku both brought in a great deal of new information from new sources, and new biographies of otherwise unanthologized migrants, including the Imjin-era refugee Du Shizhong and the seventeenth-century refugee and supposed descendant of Shi Xing, Shi Jizu.

These new, private accounts represented significant reconsiderations of the established court tradition. Indeed, Wang Tŏkku, in his preface, described the composition of this new history as a matter of great urgency. He wrote that, “in the final years of the Chongzhen reign, remnant bastards of the Jurchen took the capital and controlled China, dressing the Central Continent on the left [in barbarian fashion].” As a consequence, “countless numbers of high officials sailed east across the sea [to Chosŏn], while an also incalculable number were taken captive, refused to humble themselves and were taken as prisoners to Mukden.” As for his own ancestor Wang Fenggang, Wang Tŏkku noted how he and the other Ming remnant subjects in Mukden had so impressed the future King Hyŏjong (in Wang’s account referred to as Sŏnmun-wang) during his captivity in Mukden, that when he was allowed to return to Chosŏn he brought Wang Fenggang and the other eight Ming loyalist Chinese back with him. In Hansŏng, Hyŏjong housed the nine outside the palace gate, where “not a day went by that they did not discuss the matter of revenge [against the Qing].” Although the death of the king brought this great plan to an end, the glorious intention of his ancestors and of the other Chinese of Ōŭi-dong was still worth preserving for later ages. Because Wang Tŏkku believed the memory of that spirit was in danger of being lost to the changing eras, he “gathered together the traditions of all the families, cautiously organizing them together into a book.”30

Of course, the fear he expressed of losing the grand purpose of his ancestors would seem to be largely without foundation, since biographies of his ancestors and the ancestors of the other Ōŭi-dong imperial subject families had already been produced under court auspices for circulation by prominent scholars.
Within these official biographies, the ancestors of Wang Tŏkku and his fellow imperial subjects had already been clearly described as vigorous opponents of the Qing, who had even engaged in effective anti-Qing plotting. This is most unlikely, as Wang Fenggang and the others had in fact been allowed to move to Hansŏng by the express permission of the Qing. Nevertheless, *The Collected Texts on Honoring the Zhou* described Wang Fenggang, also known as Yiwen, as from Jinan in Shandong, and as the grandson of a prominent Ming official. After Wang Fenggang had been taken as a prisoner to Mukden, he had encountered the Sohyŏn crown prince and had been allowed, along with migrants surnamed Feng, Yang, Zheng, Liu, Pei, and one other, to return with the crown prince to Chosŏn after Beijing fell to the Qing. There he had settled outside the palace gates, refusing the offer of a bureaucratic position by Hyojong because he saw himself as a sinner who had betrayed both emperor and family; he wept whenever he heard of matters related to the Ming. Wang Fenggang’s wife became a lady-in-waiting to Queen Insŏn (1618–1674). After Wang Fenggang’s death, those of his descendants who could were encouraged to catch fish and present them to the court. *The Collected Texts* described how they were later placed within the Military Training Agency and freed from the responsibility of offering fish to the court. Finally, *The Collected Texts* recounted that all but one of the Nine Righteous Officials had many children, becoming an especially productive group among the townspeople of the capital after the establishment of the Taebodan by Sukchong.

Wang Tŏkku’s biography of his ancestor, who he called Wang Yiwen, differs little in the basic outline from that in *The Collected Texts on Honoring the Zhou* but does develop a number of additional interpretations. Some of Wang Tŏkku’s elaborations seem plausible, including, for instance, his description of Wang Yiwen being captured by Kong Youde’s (?–1652) pirate regime in the Gulf of Bohai before being taken to Mukden, in contrast to *The Collected Texts*, which simply had him appear in Mukden with little explanation. However, Wang Tŏkku granted his ancestor greater moral independent agency. It was for this account that Wang Tŏkku first coined the name “Nine Righteous Officials” (*kuŭisa*) for those nine Ming loyalists who were redeemed from the Qing by Hyojong. This new title, as Kimura Takao points out, placed Wang Fenggang and others as the driving force of conflict with the Qing, instead of simple beneficiaries of royal grace.31 Wang Tŏkku also largely ignored the history of eighteenth-century developments in imperial subject status (although these had been of great importance in the official court tradition), and, at the same time, anachronistically imagined those eighteenth-century developments were fully in
place already in the 1640s. For instance, the entire text uses southern Ming era-names, including Hongguang and Yongli, thereby revealing primarily that Wang Tŏkku had benefited from Chosŏn research into the southern Ming during the eighteenth century, since of course his ancestor, imprisoned in Mukden or taking refuge in Chosŏn at this time, could have been, at best, only dimly aware of the dynastic changes occurring in the southern Ming. Throughout the text, Wang Tŏkku referred to the community where Wang Yiwen and other Ming refugees resided in Hansŏng as “the imperial subject village,” a term that, in contrast to “the Ming village” and the “Chinese village,” was not used to any great extent before Chŏngjo. In other cases, he substantially altered the meaning of specific events. For instance, Wang Tŏkku discussed Wang Fenggang’s fishing, not as an aspect of submitting-foreigner status, but as an example of mistreatment under Hyŏnjong who, worried about the growing number of Ming remnants residing in Hansŏng, had ordered Wang Fenggang placed in an uncompensated position within the Military Training Agency. Receiving no salary, he and his sons were to survive by fishing in the Han River. Wang Tŏkku’s description of the fishing, however, makes it seem to be neither a tax obligation nor a tool for survival, but rather an aesthetic expression of his Ming loyalty. In Wang Tŏkku’s account, whenever Wang Fenggang came upon a tree by a picturesque river bank, “he would sit all day, from flowery morning until moonlit evening, silently weeping, attracting the pity of all travelling along the Han River.”

Beyond such embellishments, perhaps the greatest innovation of Wang Tŏkku’s history was his anachronistic re-creation of the community of imperial subjects in the seventeenth century, although they had been formed through the activity of Yŏngjo and Chŏngjo during the eighteenth century. Thus, Wang Tŏkku added to his biography accounts of his ancestor’s interaction with other Ming migrants, including such historically well-attested cases as the Ming palace women and Tian Haoqian, as well as those who had no recorded connections to Hansŏng, namely the descendants of Ma Gui previously encountered by Kim Yuk. And it is here that we can clearly see that Wang was not so much preserving family records as responding creatively to the evolving category of imperial subject status at that time.

As was discussed in chapter 4, the only evidence for Ma Shunshang’s migration to Chosŏn and settlement in Chŏlla Province during the first half of the seventeenth century was a brief note by Kim Yuk (1580–1658) in Brush Notes of Master Chamgok. This, along with a story concerning Wen Keshang found in the Gazetteer of the Interpreters’ Bureau was enough to allow Chŏngjo to call for a general search for the descendants of both men. What a monarch searches for
he often finds, and Chŏngjo did turn up claimants to the status, who nevertheless had a family tradition that was at odds with the matter-of-fact story of the arrival of Ma Shunshang, as described by Kim Yuk. The Sanggok Ma discovered by Chŏngjo’s court traced their ancestry to a man named Ma Pengzhi (K. Ma Pongjik). The story of Ma Pengzhi, as recounted by Wang Tŏkku, was certainly much more exciting than that of Ma Shunshang. It had Ma Pengzhi leaving Chosŏn by boat in 1636 to defend the Ming against Qing aggression, then moving first to Huian and then Nanjing to defend the Ming until both fell to the Qing, at which point he returned to Chosŏn, staying in T’aean in Ch’ungch’ŏng Province. After this he moved to Sŏksŏng, where the local sajok purchased a farm and house for him, and where he made his living from fishing. Otherwise, he would occasionally climb up onto a high hill, look west, and weep while thinking of the Ming. He also made friendships with the Ming remnant subjects who settled in Hansŏng, only later to wander off in the mountains of Kangwŏn Province, never to be seen again. This new story, although containing clear evidence of the submitting-foreigner origins of the Sanggok Ma descent-group (notably in the description of his fishing), otherwise fits far better into the image of the Ming loyalist that Wang Tŏkku himself was cultivating than does the story of Ma Shunshang. It was also more interesting, and so Wang Tŏkku made use of it, ignoring in its entirety Kim Yuk’s more reliable account.

Similarly, new stories concerning Wen Keshang also came to Wang’s attention. The biographies found in The Biographies of Remnant Subjects of the Imperial Ming and Collected Texts on Honoring the Zhou had followed the original account found in The Record of the Interpreters’ Bureau closely by describing Wen as traveling from the Yangzi River in 1635 to Ŭryu in Hwanghae Province. By contrast, Wang Tŏkku’s Record of Remnant Subjects of the Imperial Dynasty either expanded upon this description or found an entirely new account, and claimed that Wen had been a retiring scholar forced by the advance of the Manchu (presumably in 1644–1645) to set out from Shamen for Chosŏn, where he engaged in regular conversation with another Ming migrant named Zheng Xianjia. The connection between Wen and Zheng is indeed historical, as both were employed as translators at the same time during the reign of Sukchong. The date for Wen’s arrival, however, would seem to be a later invention.

Such elaborations seemingly proved irresistible for later scholars. Writing two decades later, and consulting Wang Tŏkku’s work, O Kyŏngwŏn, instead of choosing between Ma Shunshang and Ma Pengzhi, took both. Whereas Wang Tŏkku had Ma Pengzhi leaving Chosŏn for Nanjing without first telling us that he had arrived in Chosŏn, O Kyŏngwŏn overcame this contradiction by making
Ma Pengzhi the son of Ma Shunshang, thus including both Ma Shunshang’s original arrival in Chosŏn from the camp of Mao Wenlong and the exciting and improbable story of Ma Pengzhi’s later return to the struggle in Nanjing.\(^38\)

Moreover, O described Ma Pengzhi as the author of a text called, like the book by Wang Tŏkku, *Record of Remnant Subjects of the Imperial Dynasty*. O sourced this account to the *Sanggok Ma Genealogy* (*Ma-ssi kasŭng*). This text seems to have been immensely useful to O, allowing him to give historical reality to a number of figures whose self-styled descendants had claimed imperial subject status during the reign of Chŏngjo, notably Shi Jizu and Pan Tengyun, as well as such mysterious figures as Liu the Fortune Teller and Chinese Wang. In fact, O attributed the “Travels to the East of the Chao and Shi Lineages” (*Cho-ssi Sŏk-ssi Tongnae ki*) to Ma Pengzhi, although this text seems to include the same information that was described in court discussions during the reign of Chŏngjo as having been authored by Yi Seyŏng. As discussed in chapter 5, Yi Seyŏng was a mysterious and, to the Chosŏn court, unreliable Chosŏn wanderer adopted into the Sŏk family. Much like the story told by Yi Seyŏng according to court reports during the reign of Chŏngjo, the story provided by O also has Shi Jizu fleeing to Chosŏn with a Daoist, in this case referred to as Grand Preceptor Daoguang. However, perhaps in a similar manner to Wang Tŏkku’s rewriting of the history of Wen Keshang, either O or the author of the original text—whether Yi Seyŏng or Ma Pengzhi—took the phrase “during the disturbances of the *kapsin* year” literally, to mean not just the Ming-Qing transition in general but 1644 itself. Indeed, the text, improbably, has the two fleeing from the Qing invasion of Beijing in 1644 to Liyin Hermitage in Liaodong. According to the account, only six years later they then escaped to Kanggye in Pyŏngan Province, where Shi Jizu encountered Li Rusong’s descendants and formed a close connection with Ma Pengzhi’s family as well. Eventually, Shi Jizu moved to Anhyŏp, having married a woman from there.\(^39\)

These narratives clearly developed out of the mainstream historiographic tradition—indeed, were frequently linked with the very myth of origin for Chosŏn Korea: The story of Kija, the great legendary migrant to Chosŏn of the Shang-Zhou transition. Perhaps the earliest account that linked Ming migrants to the story of Kija was in discussions of the geomancer and Ming deserter Du Shizhong. When Du was still alive and active in Chosŏn, a prominent Sŏin minister Yi Sibal (1569–1626) wrote a poem in his honor, in which he compared Du’s decision to remain in Chosŏn to Confucius’s expressed desire to live among the Nine Yi (often interpreted as Chosŏn); Yi ended the poem by suggesting that, since the heritage of Kija’s enfeoffment is good, there was no reason to
leave Chosŏn. Although Yi died before the fall of the Ming, he described Ming migrants in terms that were echoed the nineteenth-century private histories. For instance, O, in the postscript to his “Record of Remnant Subjects of the Imperial Dynasty” in *The Unofficial History of a Lesser Chungbwa*, suggested that Chosŏn’s exclusive preservation of Confucian clothing and culture, as well as the vestiges of Kija’s sage rule, made it worthy of the residence of Ming migrants. Additionally, Hwang Kich’ŏn, in his postscript to *The Record of Remnant Subjects of the Imperial Dynasty*, argued that the preservation of Yin culture in Chosŏn by Yin migrants following Kija after Yin’s fall to the Zhou was comparable to the preservation of Ming culture in Chosŏn by Ming migrants; if anything, it was a far more desperate affair, as Chinese civilization was maintained following the rise of the Zhou but was obliterated after the rise of the Qing.

Yet, although these private histories were in many ways in accord with orthodox historiography, they were too weakly sourced and unbelievable to be credible even during the Chosŏn period. They certainly did not measure up to the evidentiary standards even of the biographies within *The Collected Texts on Honoring the Zhou*. Indeed, Sŏng Haeŭng, one of the key scholars involved in compiling those biographies, wrote a response, the “Biographies of the Eight Surnames,” to correct what he saw as the inaccuracies of Wang Tŏkku’s account. Presumably writing after his retirement from the Kyujanggak in 1815, he took a much more critical view of material concerning Ming migrants than he had when he was compiling the biographies for *The Collected Texts*. Although he did not appear to doubt the importance of the Ming migrants as a whole, he found that the evidence for many Ming migrants’ family histories left a great deal to be desired. His primary criticism was directed toward Wang Tŏkku’s scholarship. As Sŏng said of Wang: “[Wang Tŏkku’s] biographies of the eight surnames are called the *Record of the Remnant Subjects of the Imperial Ming*. However, there is much there that does not agree with my own account. All of that material lacks reference to proper sources, so that I cannot tell what is correct and what is incorrect. I record these matters briefly, to wait for the investigation of another day.”

Sŏng especially identified problems in Wang’s account of Wen Keshang. Sŏng noted that Wang had Wen Keshang travel directly from the Yangzi River to Chosŏn following 1644, which contradicted the official record that had him arriving in 1635. Moreover, Sŏng suggested that it was far more likely that Wen Keshang had, like many Ming migrants, passed into Chosŏn via Mao Wenlong’s satrapy on Ka Island. Sŏng raised similar doubts about the story of Ma Pengzhi as related by Wang Tŏkku, pointing out the contradiction in having two
different ancestors for the same lineage and also the unreliability of Ma Pengzhi’s story, involving as it did Pengzhi traveling from the Yangzi to Chosŏn after the fall of Nanjing; travel by land was clearly to be ruled out, and even travel by sea rather unlikely. As he wrote: “The two records do not agree, and my opinion is that, after the fall of Nanjing, there would have been no road on which Shunshang could travel to Chosŏn; or perhaps we are to suppose that he made the trip by sea.”

In O Kyŏngwŏn’s and Wang Tŏkkū’s accounts, both Wen Keshang and Ma Pengzhi are described as fleeing to Chosŏn after the fall of Beijing. They also more clearly establish the migrants as anti-Qing, pro-Ming heroes, rather than the more likely reality of escape from the chaos of Mao Wenlong’s satrapy. For Wang Tŏkkū, only recently established as a Taebodan guard, this emphasis was a response to the state’s reclassification of him and his lineage as Ming loyalists. Despite Sŏng’s involvement in, and support for, this very process of classification, the mythmaking in Wang Tŏkkū’s account went beyond what Sŏng, as a careful scholar, could accept.

Although Sŏng began his discussion critiquing Wang Tŏkkū’s scholarship in particular, by the end of his critique he had raised enough doubts to undermine much of his own earlier scholarship. In the conclusion he noted that frequently the Ming migrant descent-groups were completely without any evidence at all for their high status. “The Liaodongese [refugees] had frequently lost their documents, and their descendants have generally been stupid, and so cannot clarify their descent lines precisely, on account of which people accuse them of having transformed themselves and falsified their identities.” This statement he followed with a long list of Ming migrant descent-groups—the Sŏk of Anhyŏp, the Tu of Turŭng, the Wang of Kanggye, and the Song of Kangnŭng, with the regular refrain that “they say that they are the descendants” of some famous Chinese official—claims for which “truth and falsehood cannot be distinguished clearly.” The extent of the certain knowledge of Ming migrants, Sŏng argued, was that “many celestial soldiers were left behind in our territory and did not return. Following this, their descendants have become numerous.”

An example of his far more extensive critique may be found in his discussion of Chen Fengyi, a migrant who had been considered especially well attested by Chŏngjo on account of his possession of an imperial edict confirming Chen’s status as an imperial in-law. Indeed, a brief biography of Chen Fengyi was included in the official historiographic tradition of *The Collected Texts on Honoring the Zhou*, in which Sŏng had been involved. This biography had been straightforward and had hinted at no doubts, telling the reader not much more than that
Cheng Fengyi had married a woman of the imperial family and had a document to attest to this. However, in his “Biographies of the Eight Surnames,” Sŏng took a much more critical line, noting that while a fair number of migrants did indeed have the story of their arrival in part referred to in contemporary private histories (Ma Shunshang, of course, was an example, having had his arrival recorded by Kim Yuk), this was distinctly not true of Chen Fengyi. As Sŏng pointed out, there were no sources attesting to the supposed arrival of Cheng Fengyi during the Imjin War, and later histories that discussed this matter claimed that an ancestor of the Chin family had found the imperial edict, which provided their only evidence of a connection to Chen Fengyi and his imperial bride, in a well. Sŏng considered it ridiculous that anybody would hide an imperial edict in a well and believed that the lack of documentation otherwise made the status of the Chin family very doubtful.

Chŏngjo’s attempts to discover Ming migrant lineages and his support for the anthologizing of their biographies resulted, among other things, in a greatly expanded list of Ming migrant lineages and biographies. On the one hand, the labors of scholars working under his direction in the Kyujanggak, such as Sŏng Haeŭng and Yi Tŏngmu, allowed for the collection and rewriting of already extant documents. On the other hand, just as Yŏngjo’s and Chŏngjo’s push to Ming migrant lineages resulted in many lineages in isolated regions requesting court approval for their claim of Ming migrant descent, so, too, court support for the establishment of Ming migrant biographical anthologies had, as one result, the proliferation of accounts, some of them highly improbable, produced by members of imperial subject descent-groups themselves. These biographies were part of the classifying activity of the state, but imperial subjects actively supported this classification in order to secure their new status.

**Private Shrines and New Lineages**

Until very recently, the Chojongam continued to be the center of ritual Ming loyalist activity, with the families of the Nine Righteous Officials maintaining Ming loyalist rituals on behalf of the Ming, even after they had ceased to be practiced in the Taebodan. Indeed, especially under South Korea’s military rulers (1961–1987), one member of the P’ung family of Ming migrants, P’ung Yŏngsŏp, compiled a collection of sources (generally photocopied texts from the Kyujanggak), and through this managed to attract considerable attention from scholars working in Chinese and Korean. He even succeeding in attracting the attention of a scholar working in English during the 1990s. As a result, the
descendants of the descent-groups associated with the Chojongam have become established in the scholarship as typical examples of Ming loyalists. They are not alone, however, and other imperial subject descent-groups during the nineteenth century also asserted a corporate Ming loyalist identity to which they gave concrete form through the establishment of shrines to the Ming, or more mundanely, the writing of genealogies and collection of documents asserting the status of their ancestor as imperial subject.

Although in some literature the shrines established at Chojongam are treated as representative of Ming loyalism, in fact, the location was of marginal significance until the nineteenth century. The significance of the location can be traced to the seventeenth century, when three self-rusticated scholars, Hŏ Kyŏk (1607–1691), Yi Chedu (1626–1687), and Paek Haemyŏng (?–?), noted that the stream in the region flowed east rather than west, in accord with the famous phrase in Xunzi that compared human morality to the fact that all streams must flow to the east—a generalization that is true for northern China but not for most of Korea. Consequently, they carved Confucian phrases into the rocks and maintained unofficial Ming loyalist rituals at the location. For this they received the encouragement of Song Siyŏl, whose disciples nevertheless directed their interests toward the Mandongmyo—whose very name refers to the phrase “All streams flow east” (Ch. wanzhi bidong, K. manjŏl p’ildong), which determined the selection of Chojongam’s location. The three scholars also received some public notice from Chosŏn monarchs during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and a discussion of Chojongam was also included in the court-sponsored Collected Texts on Honoring the Zhou. Such public praise gave the location some status, although it did not grant it anything approaching the status of the court-sponsored Taebodan or the Noron-sponsored Mandongmyo. Still, by the late eighteenth century, it had already become a site for private commemoration of the Ming loyalist cause.

As Angela Zito, following Catherine Bell, points out, the act of participating in rituals should not be seen as separate from the process of theorizing or debating rituals; ritual practitioners themselves are frequently active theorists of ritual, imposing rival meanings and distinctions on the very activities in which they are participating. Such rival theorizations may also be discovered among imperial subject descent-groups, who, as some of the key beneficiaries of the new narratives surrounding Chunghwa Inheritance Consciousness, sought to take control of Ming loyalist ritual practices and theorizations in order to raise their status beyond what they had gained during the late eighteenth century. Thus, in 1831, two former Taebodan guards Wang Tŏkku (author of The Records of Remnant
Subjects of the Imperial Ming) and his brother Tŏgil, for reasons not completely clear, left the capital for Chojongam in Kap’yŏng, Kyŏnggi Province. At this site, they established two shrines, one to the Nine Righteous Officials called the Kuŭi haengsa (Temporary Shrine to the Nine Righteous Officials), and one to the Ming Hongwu emperor, called the Taet’ong haengmyo (Temporary Shrine to the Ming Calendar). Within these shrines, instead of the Chongzhen era-names employed by the Chosŏn court and sajok aristocracy, they used the Yongli era-name. By the late nineteenth century, their ritual and calendrical practices had both come to the attention of the anti-foreign Confucian activist Kim P’yŏngmuk (1819–1891), whose discussion of the shrines and the Nine Righteous Officials was quoted in the Chojongam Gazetteer (Chojongamji). Centered on these two new shrines, the group engaged in a range of publication activities, producing, among other texts, genealogies that traced the descendants of all of the Nine Righteous Officials.

Wang Tŏkku and Wang Tŏgil, as well as Kim P’yŏngmuk, claimed that a major impulse for their formation of the shrine was the declining interest and knowledge concerning Ming loyalism and Ming migrant families during the nineteenth century. Indeed, hostility to the Qing did decline during the nineteenth century, and this resulted in part in a decreasing emphasis by the nineteenth-century court on Ming loyalist rituals in the Taebodan, although Ming loyalism and hostility to the Qing continued to be major features of Chosŏn intellectual life until the fall of the dynasty. Notably, Wang Tŏgil, in a private letter, treated their establishment of a personal shrine as a restoration of the order developed under Yŏngjo and Chŏngjo, whereby Ming migrant descendants, as the direct subjects of the Ming, were placed in a superior position to the Chosŏn officialdom; under Chŏngjo, after all, Ming migrant descendants had been placed in front of the court officials during rituals at the Taebodan. This claim is dubious—as was discussed in chapter 5, descendants of Chosŏn loyal subjects were also placed in front of court officials, and by being placed on the same side of the ritual space with civil officials, were situated in a seemingly superior position to Ming migrant descendants who were placed before military officials and members of the royal family. Rather than viewing these developments as the result of worsening treatment of imperial subjects, they should rather be understood as part of a process whereby Ming migrant descent-groups formed collective identities, by establishing private shrines and separate imperial subject villages and, through this, their own private access to Ming legitimacy.

The descendants or claimed descendants of Ming migrants formed descent-groups that, notably, have clan seats located in China. The descendants
of Wang Fenggang, for instance, use the clan seat Chenam, which is the Korean pronunciation of Jinan, in Shandong. The P’ung descent-group of descendants of Feng Sanshi have the clan seat Imgu, which refers to Linqiu, also in Shandong. This is in contrast with the Chinese migrants of late Koryŏ and early Chosŏn who were deliberately granted Korean clan seats. Yet, while their Chinese identities were marked with their clan seats, the Chosŏn court encouraged them to construct shrines to their ancestors near their homes, strengthening their Chosŏn ritual identity. Examples include the shrines to Li Rusong and Li Rumei in Kang-hwa and Hansŏng, which, as discussed in chapter 5, were established through the extensive support of the Chosŏn court even though they were essentially the shrines of the Nongsŏ Yi descent-group. This process then took on a life of its own and, by 1853, in addition to their original establishments in Kanghwa and Hansŏng, the Nongsŏ Yi descent-group had formed a Nongsŏ Yi village of military sajok in Kang-dong, near P’yŏngyang and the Muyŏlsa shrine. There they had obtained the hereditary right to one of the two positions as shrine guardians (ch’ambong), with the other going to a local military official who had obtained the position through merit. Other imperial subject villages were formed at various locations on the peninsula. By the eighteenth century, Kang Shijue’s descendants were recognized as a key descent-group in the county of Musan in Hamgyŏng. Indeed, these descendants, the T’ongju (Ch. Tongzhou) Kang, were praised in a preface to an early twentieth-century genealogy for being an unusual example of a properly organized descent-group in the disordered and déclassé world of northern Hamgyŏng. The descendants of Du Shizhong formed a village near Taegu, with a building memorializing Du Shizhong’s admiration for the Ming, the Momyŏngjae—“the Longing for the Ming Studio”—although its existence is not well attested before the twentieth century. The descendants of Shi Wenyong are also recorded as establishing a shrine to the Ming, initially, at least without the clear support of the Chosŏn state. To this day there is a Korean descent-group called the Chŏlgang (Ch. Zhejiang) Si claiming to be Shi Wenyong’s descendants. Shi Wenyong, however, is clearly recorded in The Veritable Records as having been executed after the Injo restoration on account of his close connection with Chŏng Inhong, Kwanghae-gun, and the Pugin faction. Well before Chŏng Inhong was rehabilitated, Shi Wenyong and his descendants had their good name restored, although in the process of the rehabilitation, much of Shi Wenyong’s actual well-documented history had to be simply ignored.

Consider, for instance, the account in O Kyŏngwŏn’s Unofficial History of a Lesser Chunghwa of Shi Wenyong and Xu He, a man supposedly from the same
village in Zhejiang as Shi who also founded a descent-group, the Chŏlgang Sŏ. 
O described Shi and Xu as participating in the Ming intervention against the 
Japanese invasion of Korea of 1597. Sadly, however,

Shi Wenyong became extremely ill and could not return, and along with 
Xu He resided below Sŏngsan in the county of Sŏngju in Yŏngnam. He 
erected an altar behind his house on the mountain, and on the first day of 
each month both men would prostrate themselves four times facing the 
north. . . . They also painted the landscape of Zhejiang on the house, so 
the local people called the village Taemyŏng-dong (Great Ming Village). 
As a result, Sogyŏng-wang [Sŏnjo] took pity upon them in their refuge, 
and recognizing that they had achieved merit worth recording, granted 
Shi Wenyong a pension and the title of Fifth Minister in the Office of the 
Ministers-without-Portfolio.

Following this, O provided an account of Shi Wenyong’s involvement in the 
reconstruction of the Kyŏngbok-kung Palace, “during which he made specific 
and vital suggestions for rehabilitating the foundations, which still survive 
today.” O also noted Shi’s scholarly talents in military matters, fortune-telling, 
and geomancy, subjects on which he wrote three books. Sadly, and predictably, 
one of the books survived. O gave the day of Shi’s death as the kyemi year 
(1643), moving his death to a date exactly twenty years later than it actually was 
and thus removing from him the implication of association with the despised 
Kwanghae-gun and Chŏng Inhong.

This seemingly deliberate distortions of Shi Wenyong’s death dates was closely 
tied to the altar, Taemyŏngdan (Great Ming Altar), that became the focus of 
many of the narratives produced concerning him. We know such an altar existed 
already by the eighteenth century. There are references to a Shi descent-group 
residing in the Taemyŏng-dong of Sŏngju during the reign of Chŏngjo in 1793, 
in which Chŏngjo refers to the Taemyŏng-dong as the old residence of the Ming 
soldier Shi Wenyong, “who became a Chosŏn person.” The purpose of Chŏngjo’s 
discussion was to ensure that Shi Wenyong’s descendants, like other imperial 
subjects, be freed from all base labor services, although by then they had dis-
perssed from Sŏngju. Chŏngjo also referred to a Ming loyalist altar behind Shi 
Wenyong’s house, upon which Shi Wenyong had offered obeisance northward 
to the Ming. Two years later, The Chosŏn Veritable Records reported that an 
unspecified number of Shi’s descendants were being encouraged to take military 
exams and pursue bureaucratic positions, no doubt thanks to their newly discov-
ered imperial subject status.
Although it is clear that an altar to the Ming was raised in the Taemyŏng-dong in Sŏngju long enough before 1793 that Chŏngjo could notice it, not all early accounts make reference to it, and there is significant discrepancy concerning the date. Quite a number of accounts from the nineteenth century agree with The Unofficial History of a Lesser Ch'ungwha in dating the establishment of the altar improbably to the period immediately after Shi Wenyong’s arrival in Chosŏn. An exception is a far more elaborate reference by Hong Chikp’il (1776–1832), who composed the inscription for a pillar raised at the location of Shi Wenyong’s house. In this text Hong described Shi and Xu as raising the altar only after the Qing invasion of Chosŏn in 1636–1637 forced upon them the realization that they could never return to their homeland. Hong agreed with other accounts in dating the death of Shi Wenyong to 1643, “the year before the Chongzheng emperor martyred himself on behalf of the altars of the earth and grain.” By dating the establishment of the shrine to the period post-1637, Hong Chikp’il could free Shi Wenyong from any implication of disloyalty to the Ming—surely a potential problem with many of the earlier accounts. While this date makes better sense than the period immediately after Shi’s arrival in Chosŏn, Hong does not explain why Shi would have built an altar to the Ming in 1637, before the Qing conquered Beijing.

Whatever else may be said about the original founding of the shrine, Hong Chikp’il also discussed the revival of rituals at the Taemyŏngdan during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. According to Hong, after Shi Wenyong’s death, those of his descendants who still lived in the village prostrated themselves at the altar in the direction of the Ming every new moon. As this was not in accord with the rites, they then followed the practices of the Taebodan, prostrating themselves on the anniversaries of the deaths of the three emperors. The transformation of the descent-group occurred, according to Hong Chikp’il, in 1832 (the fourth anniversary of the Imjin War according to the sixty-year cycle), when Si Ch’ibak, Shi Wenyong’s seventh-generation descendant, decided to gather together the descent-group to rebuild the altar, and again in 1834, when he organized the decent-group to build a house, named P’ungch’ŏn, at the location where Shi Wenyong’s had been, and also to establish a stone inscription in honor of Shi Wenyong, authored, of course, by Hong Chikp’il.

While it seems unlikely that there would already have been an altar in the 1640s, there must have been some sort of one by the late eighteenth century for Chŏngjo to have noticed it. The description of the descent-group practicing Taebodan rites at that altar is certainly credible, and also informative, as it reveals the spread of the rites practiced by the Chosŏn court to the remote countryside
of Kyŏngsang Province well before the Chenam Wang built their own shrine in Kap’yŏng. More broadly, Hong’s account makes it clear that the reconstruction of the Taemyŏngdan and the construction of a building called P’ungch’ŏn over the remains of Shi Wenyong’s old house played a vital role in forming the corporate identity of the Chŏlgang Si during the nineteenth century. Whatever the beginnings of the Ming loyalist ritualism by Shi Wenyong’s descendants, by the early nineteenth century it had become substantially an extension of the Chosŏn court’s Ming loyalist rituals at the Taebodan.

Yet, the problem in all cases was that Shi Wenyong was a well-known figure specifically associated with the deposed King Kwanghae-gun and Chŏng Inhong who had been executed after Injo’s coup d’état of 1623. Simply, it was never possible to claim that Shi Wenyong was an exemplary Ming loyalist, although such attempts were made by the Chŏlgang Si descent-group when they produced a collection of writings concerning him in 1917. The Chŏlgang Sŏ descent-group, residing in the same community and associated with the same shrine, notably made no reference at all to connections to Shi Wenyong in their genealogy, clearly in the hope of eliminating any hint of a connection to a famed ally of the purged Chŏng Inhong.

Of course, it is hardly surprising that liberties might be taken with the truth in the construction of an appropriate genealogy. But it is notable that the Chosŏn state itself was actively involved in Shi’s rehabilitation, while completely ignoring the connection to Chŏng Inhong. Surely, Chŏngjo himself could not have been ignorant of the actual history of Shi Wenyong. In fact, one version of Yi Kŭngik’s Yŏllyŏsil Narrative (Yŏllyŏsil kisul), for instance, repeated the tradition of Shi Wenyong’s Ming loyalty in the supplementary volumes, but did not refer to the altar, and moreover, described Shi as a deserter from the Chinese army (ch’ŏnbyŏng). The book, moreover, included clear reference to controversies associated with Shi in its narrative of the reigns of Sŏnjo and Kwanghae-gun. Even O Kyŏngwŏn’s Unofficial History of a Lesser Chunghua, quoted above, referred to Shi’s involvement in the restoration of Kyŏngbok-kung Palace; although the text did not describe Shi’s involvement negatively, an educated reader would surely have recognized the reference to one of the key controversies of Kwanghae-gun’s reign.

In contrast to the Chinese migrants who settled in Chosŏn before the Imjin War, the clan seats of the imperial subjects clearly marked them as foreign by referring specifically to locations in China. The rites in which they participated, and the narratives produced concerning them, all emphasized their foreign status. Yet it must also be noted that, even as the descendants of Ming migrants
pursued a new designation that conferred upon them official foreign status, they did so within the particular context of late Chosŏn identity. In terms of marriage, surviving genealogies suggest that they only very rarely married with other imperial subject lineages. There were notable cases, such as Yi Chŏ, an eighteenth-century military official and member of the Nongsŏ descent group, who married the granddaughter of Tian Haoqian, the Ming migrant who led the foreigners’ brigade along with Weltevree. However, nearly all of the marriage partners of the Chŏlgang Si, the Chŏlgang Sŏ, the Yŏngyang Ch’ŏn, and the descendants of the Nine Righteous Officials, had Korean clan seats, although (hardly surprising, since imperial subjects were not actually of particularly prominent status) none showed any significant sign of marriage to people of high bureaucratic rank. Seunghyun Han’s analysis of imperial subject genealogies has shown that, during the early nineteenth century, there was a growth in intermarriage between imperial subject descent-groups, something that was extremely rare during the seventeenth, eighteenth, and then twentieth centuries. Certainly, Han is correct to understand this as revealing a sense of a collective “Ming” identity among imperial subjects, although it also should be noted that even during the early nineteenth century most marriages were with descent-groups with no Ming connection.

Ultimately, imperial subject status, while an improvement over the status that they had possessed before, clearly marked them as inferiors to the sajok aristocrats who dominated Chosŏn society. U Kyŏngsŏp is correct that many of the surviving texts concerning imperial subjects, including those authored by kings Yŏngjo and Chŏngjo themselves, lament the poor treatment accorded to Ming migrants. One such lament discussed in this chapter was by Sŏng Haeŭng, who asked why officials from the Ming who migrated by Chosŏn should be treated so much less well than those from earlier Chinese dynasties who had migrated to the Three Kingdoms or Koryŏ. Yet, his own work served to rationalize just this discrimination, when, in the “Biographies of the Eight Surnames,” he pointed out how incredibly weak the historical claims of these supposed descendants of Ming officials were. Any sajok official could discover, with only a little research, that the Chŏlgang Si’s ancestor had in fact been executed in 1623, that Kang Shijue, the ancestor of the T’ongju Kang, had married a kisaeng, and that the supposed descendants of Li Rusong had been living obscurely in Kangwŏn Province until they were informed of their identities. These narratives at once confirmed the status of imperial subjects and clearly set boundaries on their social advancement.
MING MIGRANTS AND THEIR DESCENDANTS, as imperial subjects, gained ritualized identities from the Chosŏn court during the late eighteenth century. This identity defined them as permanent foreigners within the Chosŏn state, even as it brought them into the very heart of Chosŏn court ritual during regular Ming loyalist rites at the Taebodan. Through new bureaucratic categories designed to distinguish them from submitting-foreigners of Jurchen and Japanese origin, and through new historical narratives linking them to the eighteenth-century court’s official Ming loyalism, those who could claim ancestry among Ming migrants following the Imjin War could enjoy significantly improved social status compared to the invidious status under which most had suffered during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

This state of ritual “foreignness” did not exclude imperial subjects from the Chosŏn state. Late Chosŏn Chunghwa ideology, although clearly centered in Chosŏn, imagined Chosŏn not in the terms of modern, racialized nationalism but within the broader language and symbolism of the Chunghwa sphere that also encompassed China. As Ming migrants gained identities that identified them with the key struggles that made up the sacred history of the late Chosŏn state, their identities came more closely in line with the official ideology of the Chosŏn court and Chosŏn’s sajok aristocracy. Within a Chosŏn state organized hierarchically according to hereditary status groups, imperial subjects had their identities assimilated into the ruling ideology of the Chosŏn state. Nor was it a unidirectional process. As imperial subjects benefited from their improved social status, they actively produced their own versions of the court-sponsored narratives of their ancestors, often in language that went far beyond the relatively cautious state-supported histories. As the active role of the Chosŏn monarchy in the Ming loyalist rituals in the Taebodan declined, the Ming migrants themselves created their own private centers of Ming loyalist ritual practices, building shrines and altars to the Ming and making them the focus of their emerging imperial subject descent-groups. In ritual terms, they played much the same role as the Jurchens and Japanese who offered obeisance to the Chosŏn monarchy during the early Chosŏn. However, although imperial subject descent-groups were marked as foreign, their acceptance of these new ritualized foreign identities revealed them to be fully part of late Chosŏn society. These new private narratives and rituals thus amounted to a vernacularization of Chosŏn’s ruling ideology among previously marginal people.