


REVIEW ESSAY

Two Millenia of Sinology: The Korean Reception, Curation, and Reinvention of Cultural Knowledge from China

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Abstract

The tale of Korean Sinology is as dramatic as that of Korea itself, which has moved from being a faithful periphery of Chinese civilization to a newly rising economic power in the modern world. This article begins with a survey of some distinctive features of pre-modern Korean scholarly works by the end of the Chosŏn dynasty from the perspective of Sinology. Then it moves on to modern scholarship, focusing mostly on the field of Chinese history, which I think is the most active and innovative among the several different fields in today's Korean Sinology. The history of Korean Sinology is a telling case study that illustrates how humanistic learning is deeply connected to fundamental aspects of a society's politics, economics, and culture at a given moment in time.

Keywords: Korean Sinology; premodern Sinology; Chinese history

The history of Korean Sinology is a telling case study for how humanistic learning is connected to all aspects of a society's politics, economics, and culture. One of China's closest neighbors, Korea has a long tradition of Sinological learning and scholarship, reaching back to the introduction of Chinese characters and texts. Wooden slip manuscripts dated as early as the first century BCE such as the *Analects* were found in Chŏngbaekdong 貞柏洞, Pyŏngyang, which was then Lelang 樂浪 (K. Nangnang) Commandery.¹ It was not until the Japanese colonial period in the early twentieth century that Korean intellectuals began to view Chinese culture and history clearly as “other.” As students and enthusiastic supporters of the Chinese classics, for about two thousand years Koreans participated in producing academic writings which belong both to “Korean” studies and to Sinology in general.²

Even after the powerful colonial impact, the road to modern scholarship was not easy for Korean Sinologists. In addition to economic poverty and dictatorship, anti-communism

¹Kyung-ho Kim, “A Study of Excavated Bamboo and Wooden-strip Analects: The Spread of Confucianism and Chinese Script,” *Sungkyun Journal of East Asian Studies* 11.1 (2011), 61–72.

²Understanding premodern Korean scholarship on Chinese classics as studies on universal civilization, Paek Yŏngsŏ considers it as humanities in general that East Asian intellectuals commonly pursued using Chinese characters (Paek Yŏngsŏ 白永瑞, “Chunggukhak ūi kwejŏk kwa pip'anjŏk kojŏn yŏn'gu” 中國學的軌跡斗批判的古典研究 [The trajectory of Korean Sinology and critical studies of classics], in *Han'gukhak ūi haksulsajŏk chŏnmang* 韓國學的學術史的展望 [Prospective for Korean studies through the lens of scholarly history], vol. 2, edited by Im Hyŏngt'aek 林燮澤 (Seoul: Somyŏng ch'ulp'an, 2014), 164.

as a national policy in South Korea hindered direct contact with Chinese scholarship until the end of the 1980s. Taiwan was the only window to reach the Chinese world, although Japan and the United States were also useful transmitters of knowledge and methodology. It was not until the new diplomatic ties with China in 1992 that Korean scholars officially enjoyed freedom to pursue Sinology without any obstacles.

As a Korean Sinologist working on early Chinese history, I believe that the trajectory of Korean Sinology is as dramatic as that of Korea's own history, from a faithful periphery of Chinese civilization to a newly rising economic power in the modern world. This article begins with a survey of some distinctive features of premodern Korean scholarly works up to the end of the Chosŏn dynasty from the perspective of Sinology. I then move on to modern scholarship, focusing mostly on the field of Chinese history in South Korea, which I think is the most active and innovative among the several different fields in today's Korean Sinology.

Early Stages: Three Kingdoms to Koryŏ

There is no question that in two of the Three Kingdoms, Koguryŏ and Paekje, the literate stratum started to emerge in the beginning of the fourth century CE. Refugees from China and the Lelang and Daifang commanderies influenced this emergence, and in the second half of the same century literate men developed a central bureaucracy, adopting Chinese writing and governance and establishing, especially in the case of Koguryŏ, state universities (*t'ae*hak 太學).³ Although Silla, the ultimate victor among the Three Kingdoms with its unification in 676, was belated in instituting Chinese style civil administration, all three states, led by Koguryŏ, respectfully collected such Chinese texts as the Five Confucian Classics, histories such as the *Shiji* 史記, *Hanshu* 漢書, *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書 and *Sanguozhi* 三國志, dictionaries like the *Yupian* 玉篇, *Zitong* 字統 and *Zilin* 字林, and literary works such as the *Wenxuan* 文選.⁴

But it is interesting to note that the first and probably foremost premodern Korean contribution to Sinology was not from Confucianism but from Buddhism. All three kingdoms had endorsed Buddhism as their state religion by the early sixth century. Many Buddhist pilgrims travelled west to China and even to India as the first international students in Korean history. The first Buddhist monk to be noted is Sŭng Nang 僧朗 (ca. 450–ca. 520) from Koguryŏ who sojourned in southern China to contribute toward reestablishing the Sanlun School 三論學 originating from Kumārajīva (344–413).⁵ Other monks from Koguryŏ and Paekje played

³For the adoption and acculturation of the Chinese writing system in the Three Kingdoms, see Yŏ Hogyu 余昊奎, “Koguryŏ, ūi hanja suyong kwa pyŏnyong” 高句麗의 漢字 受容과 變容 [Acceptance of Chinese characters and its transformation in Koguryŏ], in *Kodae Tong'asia ūi munja koryu wa sotong* 古代 동아시아의 文字 交流와 疏通 [The spread of characters communications in ancient East Asia], edited by Tongbuk'a yŏksa chaedan 東北亞歷史財團 (Seoul: Tongbuk'a yŏksa chaedan, 2011), 87–123; Yun Sŏnt'ae 尹善泰, “Paekje wa Silla ūi hanja, hanmun suyong kwa pyŏnyong” 百濟와 新羅의 漢字, 漢文 受容과 變容 [Acceptance and transformation of Chinese characters and Chinese classics in Paekje and Silla] in *Kodae Tong'asia ūi munja koryu wa sotong*, 127–58.

⁴*Jiu Tangshu* 舊唐書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 5320.

⁵Ko Ikjin 高翊晉, *Han'guk kodae Pulgyo sasangsa* 韓國古代佛教思想史 [The history of Buddhist thought in ancient Korea] (Seoul: Dongkook University Press, 1989), 94–116; John Jorgensen, “Korea as a Source for the Regeneration of Chinese Buddhism: The Evidence of Ch'an and Sŏn Literature,” in *Currents and Countercurrents: Korean Influences on the East Asian Buddhist Traditions*, edited by Robert E. Buswell Jr. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), 81–83.

important roles as transnational Buddhist scholars in China and, especially, in Japan.⁶

It was, however, the so-called “Western fever” of Silla Buddhism in the seventh and eighth century that led to the heyday in Buddhist scholarship.⁷ Many Silla monks such as Ŭisang 義湘 (625–702), Wŏnhyo 元曉 (617–686), Kyŏnghŭng 憬興 (ca. seventh century) produced doctrinal treatises and scriptural commentaries that deeply influenced Chinese Buddhist philosophers including Fazang 法藏 (643–712), the systematizer of the Chinese Huayan school.⁸ Wŏnch’ŭk 圓測 (613–696) and Musang 無相 (684–762) further played crucial roles in the development of Tibetan Buddhist scholasticism and the earliest Chan tradition in the Sichuan area, respectively, through their exegeses and teachings.⁹ Another notable contribution was the translation of Buddhist sutras from India. About eight Silla Buddhist monks are said to have substantially participated in the grand translation projects led by such eminent Buddhist monks as Xuanzang 玄奘.¹⁰

Of all the contributions, the most noteworthy is perhaps the *Book of Adamantine Absorption*, or the *Vajrasamadhi-sutra* (K. *Kŭmgang sammae-kyŏng* 金剛三昧經; C. *Jingang sanmei jing*). Robert E. Buswell Jr. convincingly argues that the apocryphal text, one of the oldest and most crucial works of the nascent Chan (Zen) tradition, was a product of Korean Buddhism in the seventh century, which he believes rivals the Buddhist philosophy of contemporary China.¹¹ The finest commentary to the sutra, *The Exposition of the Vajrasamadhi-sutra* by Wŏnhyo,¹² and his other works such as *Awakening of Faith* (*Kisillon hoebon*), were also admired by Chinese scholars.¹³ The fact that Wŏnhyo never visited China¹⁴ further indicates the domestic capacity of Silla Buddhism.¹⁵

⁶Chŏng Pyŏngsam 鄭炳三, *Han’guk Pulgyosa* 韓國佛教史 [The history of Korean Buddhism] (Seoul: P’urŭn yŏksa, 2020), 248–59.

⁷Chŏng Hwan’guk 鄭煥局, “Pulgyo ŭi tongjŏm kwa Samguk sidae haksulgye ŭi myŏt kukmyŏn” 佛教의 東漸과 三國時代 學術界의 變 局面 [Stages of scholarly development in the Three Kingdoms period following Buddhism’s eastward advance], in *Han’gukhak ŭi haksulsajŏk chŏnmang*, vol 1, edited by Im Hyŏngt’aek (Seoul: Somyŏng ch’ulp’an, 2014), 25.

⁸Robert E. Buswell Jr., “Patterns of Influence in East Asian Buddhism: The Korean Case,” in *Currents and Countercurrents*, 5.

⁹Eunsoo Cho, “Wŏnch’ŭk’s Place in the East Asian Buddhist Tradition,” in *Currents and Countercurrents*, 173–216; Bernard Faure, “Ch’an Master Musang: A Korean Monk in East Asian Context,” in *Currents and Countercurrents*, 153–72.

¹⁰Huang Youfu 黃有福 and Chen Jingfu 陳景富, *Zhong-Chao Fojiao wenhua jiaoliu shi* 中朝佛教文化交流史 (Beijing: Shehui kexue, 1993), translated by Kwŏn Och’ŏl 權五哲 as *Han-Chung Pulgyo munhwa kyoryusa* 韓中佛教文化交流史 [Korea-Sino interaction of Buddhist culture] (Seoul: Kkach’i, 1995), 329–38.

¹¹Robert E. Buswell Jr., *The Formation of Ch’an Ideology in China and Korea: The Vajrasamadhi-Sutra, a Buddhist Apocryphon* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 10–13, 43–60. In his preface to the Korean translation of this book, in 2015, Buswell stresses that in the twenty years since publication, his argument that the text originated in Korea has received almost no criticism (Robert E. Buswell Jr., trans. Kim Chongmyŏng 金鍾明 and Cho Ŭnsu 趙恩秀 *Chungguk kwa Han’guk ŭi Sŏn sasang hyŏngsŏng: Pulgyo wigŏng ūrosŏ ŭi Kŭmgang sammaegyŏng* 中國과 韓國의 禪思想 形成: 佛教 偽經으로서의 金剛三昧經, [Sŏngnam: Han’gukhak chung’angyŏnguwon ch’ulpanbu, 2015], 11).

¹²Robert E. Buswell Jr., *Cultivating Original Enlightenment: Wŏnhyo’s Exposition of the Vajrasamadhi-sutra (Kŭmgang Sammaegyŏng Non)* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2007).

¹³Huang Youfu and Chen Jingfu, translated by Kwŏn Och’ŏl, *Han-Chung Pulgyo munhwa kyoryusa*, 237–238.

¹⁴As for the famous story of Wŏnhyo’s abortive pilgrimage attempts to China and his own enlightenment, see Buswell, *The Formation of Ch’an Ideology in China and Korea*, 65–67.

¹⁵Chŏng Hwan’guk, “Pulgyo ŭi tongjŏm kwa Samguk sidae haksulgye ŭi myŏt kukmyŏn,” 36–37; Chŏng Pyŏngsam, *Han’guk Pulgyosa*, 172.

Considering that the inspiration for the development of Sinitic or East Asian Buddhism came from China rather than India, the early Korean contributions to Buddhist philosophy and exegesis indeed marked the major first Korean impact in Sinology. In later periods, it was rare for Koreans to have as much influence on Sinology. As for the main reason for such impressive contributions, Buswell proposes that the Buddhist monks at that time considered themselves “not so much as Korean Buddhists” but “instead as joint collaborators in a religious tradition that transcended contemporary notions of nation and time.”¹⁶ The transnational achievement motivated by religious fervor could not be realized without the literate foundation built in the Three Kingdoms period. It is still a wonder that such scholarly erudition was achieved within two or three centuries after the adoption of Chinese characters and texts.

In this regard, it is interesting to note that the Koryŏ dynasty (918–1392) seems less significant in its contributions to Sinology. Except for the important role that Koryŏ monks, led by Ch’egwan 諦觀 (d. ca. 971), played in revitalizing Tiantai Buddhism in China,¹⁷ it is difficult to find any noticeable scholarly accomplishments comparable to those of the Silla period. King Kwangjong’s (r. 949–975) introduction of the Chinese civil service examination in 958 must have encouraged Confucian education and studies in Koryŏ. The state libraries of Koryŏ seem to have had sizeable collections, to the extent that in 1091 Emperor Zhezong of the Northern Song presented the envoys of Koryŏ, including Yi Chaüi, with a list of 128 books (about 5,000 volumes), possibly already damaged or lost in China, to copy from the good editions kept in Koryŏ.¹⁸ The request seems to have been fruitful, as Wang Yinglin (1223–1296) notes in the *Yuhai* 玉海 “many books dedicated by Gaoli (in the seventh year of Yuanyou [1092]) were different editions which our libraries did not have.”¹⁹ Although Korean scholars assume a certain level of Confucian scholarship in Koryŏ,²⁰ the general lack of extant textual sources for the period makes it difficult to identify many scholarly works important from the perspective of Sinology. The coexistence with the dominant non-Sinitic northern powers such as Liao (Khitan), Jin (Jurchen) and Yuan (Mongol) might have something to do with this situation.

Instead, two seminal texts for the origins of Korean studies, the *History of the Three Kingdoms* (*Samguk sagi* 三國史記) and the *Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms* (*Samguk yusa* 三國遺事), were published in 1145 and 1281, respectively. Two accounts,

¹⁶Buswell, “Patterns of Influence in East Asian Buddhism,” 8–9. He is skeptical about a premodern Korean national tradition of Buddhism which was distinct from “the broad Sinitic tradition.” See Robert E. Buswell Jr., “Imagining ‘Korean Buddhism’: The Invention of National Religious Tradition,” in *Nationalism and the Construction of Korean Identity*, edited by Hyung Il Pai and Timothy R. Tangherlini (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, 1998), 74.

¹⁷Huang Youfu and Chen Jingfu, trans., *Han-Chung Pulgyo munhwa kyoryusa*, 386–400; Chi-wah Chan, “The Korean Impact on T’ien-t’ai Buddhism in China: A Historical Analysis,” in *Currents and Countercurrents*, 217–41.

¹⁸*Koryŏsa* 高麗史 [History of Koryŏ] (6th month of Xuan 8, the “Seka”) in the Korean History Database (<http://db.history.go.kr>).

¹⁹*Yuhai*, Qinding Siku chuanshu, 52.41a; Ch’ŏn Hyebyŏng 千惠鳳, *Han’guk chŏnjŏk insoesa* 韓國典籍印刷史 [The history of printing in Korean texts] (Seoul: Pŏm’usa, 1990), 119–22. On the collection of the Koryŏ state libraries, see Kang Myŏngkwon 姜明官, *Chosŏn sidae ch’aeak kwa chisik ūi yŏksa* 朝鮮時代 冊과 知識의 歷史 [The history of books and knowledge in the Chosŏn period] (Seoul: Ch’ŏnnyŏn ūi sangsang, 2014), 52–55.

²⁰Cf. Mun Ch’ŏlyŏng 文哲永, *Koryŏ Yuhak sasang ūi saeroun mosaek* 高麗 儒學思想의 새로운 摸索 [A new look into Confucian thought in the Koryŏ period] (Seoul: Kyŏngsewŏn, 2005).

from Wang Kōn (r. 918–943), the founder of the dynasty, and Kim Pusik (1075–1151), the compiler of the *History of the Three Kingdoms*, seem to reflect at least in part the scholarly milieu during the Koryō period. Wang emphasizes the country's independent identity in the fourth of his "Ten Injunctions":

In the past we have always had a deep attachment for the ways of China and all of our institutions have been modeled upon those of T'ang. But our country occupies a different geographical location and our people's character is different from that of the Chinese. Hence, there is no reason to strain ourselves unreasonably to copy the Chinese way.²¹

Kim cites a quotation from King Injong (r. 1122–1146), in the preface to the *History of the Three Kingdoms*, to underscore the importance of attention to indigenous scholarship against the preponderance of Sinology among the Koryō intellectuals: "Of today's scholars and high-ranking officials, there are those who are well versed and can discuss in detail the Five Classics and other philosophical treatises as well as the histories of Ch'in and Han, but to the events of our country, they are utterly ignorant from beginning to end. This is truly lamentable."²²

The interest in Koreanness that emerged in the Koryō period²³ might be another reason for the apparent lack of distinctive contributions to Sinology. But the introduction of Neo-Confucianism in the late Koryō period paved a new road to the Sinological boom in the Chosōn period.

Self-Sufficient Sinology in Chosōn

It is well known that the Neo-Confucian zeal of Chosōn, which was unmatched even in China, inspired contemporary intellectuals to devote themselves to studies of Confucian values, especially those advocated by Zhu Xi (1130–1200). They produced copious academic writings and anthologies. It is natural that Neo-Confucian scholarship is one of the more popular areas in Korean studies during the Chosōn period. But it may also be the case that, internalizing Sinocentrism and perusing the Sinitic texts in their everyday lives, Chosōn intellectuals considered the scholarship and research they engaged in as nothing other than Sinology.

Although generalizations about the abundant secondary works on Chosōn scholarship are impossible, I think one point of convergence might be the search for the "uniqueness" and "localization" of Korean Neo-Confucianism. William Theodore de Bary notes the "assimilation" of Neo-Confucianism in the early Chosōn, but the creative adaptation to Korean needs and conditions²⁴ seems to have been more prominent in studies of the late Chosōn period, especially after the fall of the Ming dynasty in 1644.

Yet it is worth noting Kang Chiün's recent criticism of modern Korean scholarship, especially the obsession with highlighting the creativity and uniqueness of Neo-Confucianism in seventeenth-century Chosōn. Seeing the root of this tendency in reactions against Japanese

²¹Peter H. Lee, ed., *Sourcebook of Korean Civilization, Volume 1: From Early Times to the Sixteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 264.

²²Lee, ed., *Sourcebook of Korean Civilization, Volume 1*, 464.

²³As for the Koryō's pluralistic ideology, see Remco E. Breuker, "Koryo as an Independent Realm: The Emperor's Clothes?" *Korean Studies* 27 (2003), 48–84.

²⁴Wm. Theodore de Bary, "Introduction," in *The Rise of Neo-Confucianism in Korea*, edited by Wm. Theodore de Bary and JaHyun Kim Haboush (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 52–53.

colonial scholarship that emphasized the lack of originality in Chosŏn Neo-Confucian scholarship, Kang is skeptical of the idea that in the late Chosŏn period scholarship could have developed in creative directions critical of Zhu Xi's ideas. Instead, seeing themselves as legitimate successors of the orthodox Way that the school of Zhu Xi pursued, the Chosŏn Confucian scholars had a strong sense of responsibility to take up the tasks as yet unfinished by Zhu Xi. This led them to concentrate on a meticulous analysis of Zhu Xi's teachings that were sometimes self-contradictory. A common methodology they employed was the so-called "to determine the settled discourses" (*chŏngnon hwakjŏng* 定論確定), which involved selecting a better idea from Zhu Xi's instructions. Kang asserts that persuasive power at the time came not from "arguing one's original idea as reasonable" but from "proving that what one wants to propose draws on Zhu Xi's sound arguments."²⁵ There was little room for daring refutation or laying the slightest suspicion on the Neo-Confucian dogma, which after all was closely related with state policies.

After the fall of the Ming, late Chosŏn intellectuals invented a new idea of the "small central efflorescence" or "Little China" (*so chunghwa* 小中華), assuming that Chosŏn was the only legitimate heir of the Ming against the barbaric Manchu conqueror. The so-called "Chosŏn-centricism" (*Chosŏn chunghwa chuŭi* 朝鮮中華主義) based on the "respectful loyalty to the Ming" (*chon Myŏng ŭiri* 尊明義理) must have been an influential keyword to describe the scholarship of late Chosŏn. Surveying the controversies over "Chosŏn-centrism" in Korea, Kim Yŏngmin recently proposed that this ideology was a "fiction" reminiscent of James Scott's "weapons of the weak."²⁶ It might have been an ideological tool used in internal politics. Nonetheless, most late Chosŏn intellectuals recognized the reality of the insurmountable Qing empire and its enviable high civilization. As with the historical situation, there is no question that contemporary Korean scholarship largely assumed an ambivalent position between elevating self-esteem and embracing reality.

Recent attempts to understand late Chosŏn scholarship within the larger East Asian context or the greater Sinographic sphere have produced intriguing arguments about the circulation and variety of books and knowledge transmitted from the Qing. An interesting example in this regard is Suyoung Son's transnational take on the localized reading by Yi Tŏngmu (1741–1793), an eminent writer and erudite scholar of eighteenth century Chosŏn, of the *Liuxi waizhuan* 留溪外傳 (Unofficial Biographies by Liuxi [Chen Ding 陳鼎]), biographies of 354 Ming loyalists compiled in 1698.²⁷ Meticulously analyzing Yi's adapted excerpts from the *Liuxi waizhuan* for his own multivolume records of Ming loyalists, the *Noeroe nangnak sŏ* 磊磊落落書 (Book of Piled Rocks) compiled in 1779, Son convincingly argues that Yi's local reproduction of the text suits the contemporary Chosŏn agenda. However, she further notes Yi Tŏngmu's embrace and praise of Vietnam and Japan—two other states that used Sinitic scripts—to situate himself as a scholar who departed from the exclusive China-centered hierarchy. Instead, he envisioned a greater Sinographic civilization that encompassed not

²⁵Kang Chiŭn 姜智恩, *Chŏsen jugaku shi no sai te'i'i: 17 seiki higashi Asia kara kanggaeru* 朝鮮儒學史の再定位: 十七世紀東アジアから考える (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppan-kai, 2017), translated by Yi Hyein 李惠仁, *Saero ssŭnŭn 17 segi Chosŏn yuhaksa* 새로 쓰는 17世紀 朝鮮 儒學史 [A new history of Chosŏn Confucianism in the seventeenth century] (Seoul: Purŭn yŏksa, 2021), 19–27, 158–59, 162–85.

²⁶Kim Yŏngmin 金英敏, *Chung'guk chŏngch'i sasangsa* 中國政治思想史 [The history of Chinese political thought] (Seoul: Sahoe p'yŏngnon ak'ademi, 2021), 707–53; James Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

²⁷Suyoung Son, "How to Read a Sinographic Text in Eighteenth-Century Chosŏn Korea: *Liuxi Waizhuan* and Yi Tŏngmu's Compilation of *Noeroe Nangnak Sŏ*," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 78.2 (2019), 329–53.

only Chosŏn but also the Qing, Japan, and Vietnam.²⁸ Given that Yi is generally understood as a stubborn loyalist to the Ming,²⁹ it is ironic that Son's analysis portrays Yi as a progressive thinker who embraced the entirety of East Asia.³⁰

Indeed, the contributions that the late Chosŏn scholars including Yi Tŏngmu made with the desire to promote "Chosŏn-centrism" are thought-provoking and valuable sources in their own right for understanding the regionalized intellectual history of the Chosŏn period. However, by putting too much weight on regionality and uniqueness in the history of "scholarship," we may have neglected an important point, which is the search for "truth" and "academic excellence" that I believe is the essence of scholarly pursuits. If we consider late Chosŏn scholarship within the contemporary Sinological context, it is questionable how successful they were in the search for "truth" (as opposed to achieving their political agendas). While approving their great contributions as sources for Korean studies, we need simultaneously to reevaluate the scholarship from the contemporary perspective of Sinology.

In this regard, Suyoung Son, a Sinologist, provides us with an important case. The *Noeroe nangnak sŏ* is a massive biographical compilation of 528 Ming loyalists in ten volumes. With the experience of participating in compiling the biographies of the Song loyalists in the *Songsa Chŏn* 宋史筌 (Selected Excerpts from the *History of the Song*),³¹ Yi Tŏngmu composed the book with excerpts from 176 Chinese books published in the late Ming and early Qing. Yi's ability to gather and reorganize such abundant materials clearly proves his erudition with regard to the contemporary Chinese sources. But a serious problem that Son points out is that most of the books that Yi relied on were far from authentic materials. Yi relied heavily on the *Liuxi waizhuan*, quoting more than seventy-three biographies and even adopting its format, but most contemporary and later scholars in China harshly criticized it, seeing its compiler Chen Ding as using it to promote the reputation of his family and coterie. Son points out that some members of Chen Ding's group, who did not participate in the Ming loyalist movements, are included in the *Noeroe nangnak sŏ*, and euphemistically comments that the *Noeroe nangnak sŏ* is filled "partly with questionable, over-exaggerated, and self-promotional records that at least some Qing literati would not have completely trusted as credible historical materials."³² Although the audience Yi targeted seems to have been entirely Korean, how would serious contemporary Chinese scholars evaluate the book academically if they read it?

In spite of some misreading of Chinese books,³³ the *Noeroe nangnak sŏ* was well-received, and by the mid-nineteenth century renowned Chosŏn intellectuals desired

²⁸Suyoung Son, "How to Read a Sinographic Text in Eighteenth-Century Chosŏn Korea," 346–47.

²⁹Son Hyeri 孫惠莉, "Noeroe Nakrak Sŏ rŭl t'onghae pon Yi Tŏngmu ūi yŏksa insik" 磊磊落落書를 통해 본 李德懋의 歷史認識 [Historical consciousness reflected in the *Noeroe Nakrak Sŏ* by Yi Tŏngmu], *Han'guk sahaksa hakbo* 韓國史學史學報 41 (2020), 5–40.

³⁰As Kim Munsik 金文植 also notes, Yi Tŏngmu's conservative yet flexible attitudes to the scholarships and cultures of the Qing and Japan might be typical among the intellectuals in the late Chosŏn; Kim Munsik, "Ch'ŏngjangwan Yi Tŏngmu ūi taeye insik" 靑莊館 李德懋의 對外認識 [Historical consciousness of Ch'ŏngjangwan Yi Tŏngmu], in *Ch'ŏngjangwan Yi Tŏngmu yŏn'gu* 靑莊館 李德懋 研究 [A Research on Ch'ŏngjangwan Yi Tŏngmu], edited by Silsihaksa 實是學舍 (Seoul: Hakjiwŏn, 2011), 261.

³¹Kim Munsik, "Songsa chŏn e nat'an an Yi Dŏngmu ūi yŏksa insik" 宋史筌에 나타난 李德懋義 歷史認識 [Historical consciousness reflected in the *Songsa Chŏn* by Yi Tŏngmu] *Han'gukhak nonjip* 韓國學論集 33 (1999), 30–51.

³²Suyoung Son, "How to Read a Sinographic Text in Eighteenth Century Chosŏn Korea," 332–38.

³³Suyoung Son, "How to Read a Sinographic Text in Eighteenth Century Chosŏn Korea," 331.

to read it even in its incomplete form.³⁴ Many scholars have paid attention to the tribute mission trips to Beijing, the so-called “*Yonhaeng* 燕行” (trips to Yanjing), in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Yi Töngmu compiled the *Noeroe nangnak* sō a year after his mission trip to Beijing in 1778. Highlighting examples of international friendships and intellectual exchanges between Chosŏn travelers and Qing literati, Korean scholars underscore the mutual scholarly communication to such an extent that Chŏng Min compares it to “the Republic of Letters” in the “great” Sino-Korean intellectual setting.³⁵ The touching stories of international friendship and correspondences³⁶ are fascinating in their own right, while offering a glimpse into an aspect of intellectual history and cultural exchange.

However, the current dominant trend to study the intellectual exchanges simply focusing on the friendships and stressing the distinctive regionalization of Sinology may have neglected another important aspect of late Chosŏn scholarship, the “depreciation” and “lack” of empirical scholarship (*kaozheng* 考證), one of the steppingstones that led to modern Sinology. While Chŏng Min and many other Korean scholars have emphasized the florescence of intellectual exchanges, Kang Myönggwan’s recent study on the considerable intellectual “gap” between Beijing and Seoul exposes a serious “lag” that the late Chosŏn scholarly circle may have faced.³⁷ Unlike China and Japan, the state monopolized printing in Chosŏn so only selected books from China were brought in to late Chosŏn. Pak Chiwŏn (1737–1805), one of the most distinguished scholars of the time, never heard of Gu Yanwu’s (1613–1682) *Rizhilu* 日智錄 until his first tribute mission trip to Beijing in 1780. Chŏng Yagyong (1762–1836), the commonly acknowledged genius of Chosŏn, did not even know about the *Shangshu guwen shuzheng*, 尚書古文疏證, the iconoclastic masterpiece of *kaozheng* scholarship by Yan Ruoju (1636–1704), when he first completed the *Maessi sŏp’yöng* 梅氏書評 during his exile in 1810 and proposed that Mei Ze (fourth century) forged the ancient version of the *Shangshu*.³⁸

³⁴Son Hyeri, “*Noeroe Nakrak Sō rül t’onghae pon Yi Töngmu üi yöksa insik*,” 9–16.

³⁵Chŏng Min 鄭珉, *18segi Hanchung chisigin üi Munye Konghwaguk*, 18世紀韓中知識人の文藝共和國 [The republic of letters of Korea-Sino intellectuals in the eighteenth century] (P’aju: Munhak Tongne, 2014), 5, 712.

³⁶Cf. Chŏng Min, *18segi Hanchung chisigin üi Munye Konghwaguk*, and Kim Myönggho 金明昊, *Hong Taeyong kwa Hangju üi se sŏnbi* 洪大容과 杭州의 세 선비 [Hong Taeyong and the three literati of Hangzhou] (P’aju: Tolbege, 2020).

³⁷Kang Myönggwan, “Pukgyŏn-Sŏul üi chisik yu’ong kwa chisik sahak munje” 北京 서울의 知識流通과 知識史學 問題 [Circulation of knowledge between Beijing and Seoul and the problems of its history], *Taedong munhwa yŏn’gu* 大東文化研究 98 (2017), 164–89.

³⁸Released from exile in 1818, Chŏng Yagyong read Yan Ruoju’s *Shangshu guwen shuzheng* for the first time in 1827. He was fascinated by Yan’s meticulous arguments and was tempted to discard his *Maessi sŏp’yöng*. But recollecting his inadequate situation in exile, where he had only a few references such as the biographies and treatises of the *Shiji*, *Hanshu*, *Houhanshu*, *Jinshu*, and *Suishu*, Chŏng was relieved that he was on the right track in criticizing Mao Qiling’s (1623–1716) *Guwen Shangshu yuanci* 古文尚書冤詞 (in his “Yömssi komun sojüng paekilch’o” 閻氏古文疏證百一抄 [One hundred one excerpts from Yan Ruoju’s *Shangshu guwen shuzheng*], in *Maessi sŏp’yöng*, vol. 4, in the *Yöyudang chŏnsŏ* 興猶堂全書 [The complete works of Chŏng Yagyong]. *Yöyudang chŏnsŏ* is available in the Han’guk kojŏn chonghap database: <https://db.itkc.or.kr>, accessed July 15, 2021; see also Silsi haksa ed., *Tasan Chŏng Yagyong üi Sangsŏ kohun* 茶山 丁若鏞의 尚書古訓 [The *Sangsŏ kohun* by Tasan Chŏng Yagyong], vol. 1 (Seoul: Hakjiwŏn, 2020), 29–30). In 1834, Chŏng relied on Yan’s book to revise the *Maessi sŏp’yöng*, pointing out that Yan’s book is full of complex sets of quotations making it difficult for beginners to follow; see Chŏng Yagyong, “Yöhaegŏ” 與海居 in the *Yöyudang chŏnsŏ poyu* 興猶堂全書補遺 [The complete works of Chŏng Yagyong, supplemented and revised], available in the Han’guk kojŏn chonghap database:

Kang concludes that *kaozheng* scholarship's negative reception from Chosŏn scholars was not based on scholarly analysis and understanding of its achievements, but was engendered by the intensification of Neo-Confucianism with the censorship of King Chŏngjo (1776–1800).³⁹ Fuma Susumu's study of the anachronistic criticism of Hanxue 漢學 or empirical scholarship by Sin Chaesik (b. 1770) during his mission trip to Beijing in 1836 shows how tenaciously the Chosŏn intellectuals were obsessed with Songxue 宋學 or Neo-Confucianism.⁴⁰ There must have been only limited space for philological studies.

Of course, one should not dismiss the influences, though limited, of *kaozheng* scholarship on the rise of Han–Song eclecticism in the late eighteenth century, which led not only to Chŏng Yagyong's massive exegesis on the Confucian classics,⁴¹ but also to the epigraphic studies of Kim Chŏnghŭi (1786–1856), with his academic exchanges with Qing literati.⁴² It is still regrettable, however, that unlike the considerable number of works about Korea ascribed to the so-called Sirhak (practical learning) school, the Sinology of late Chosŏn rarely led directly to modern Korean scholarship. This seems to parallel Hyŏngyu Pak's research on the premodern Korean books circulated in China. The majority of the books by Chosŏn intellectuals printed in China was in the form of literary anthologies rather than classical and philosophical studies.⁴³ Even though Chosŏn intellectuals may have been admired in China for their literary erudition, their pursuit of Sinology was more or less self-contained, lacking universal vitality. This of course had nothing to do with the intellectual capability of the Chosŏn literati but with various internal and external factors, which the Chosŏn state must have confronted. However, an unprecedented impact that originated outside of Chosŏn severed the roots of traditional scholarship and prepared the transition to modern Korean Sinology.

<https://db.itkc.or.kr>, accessed July 15, 2021; see also Kim Munsik, *Chŏng Yagyong ūi Kyŏnghak kwa Kyŏngsehak* 丁若鏞의 經學과 經世學 [Studies of Classical and statecraft by Chŏng Yagyong] (Yong'in: Tan'guk taehakgyo ch'ulp'ansa, 2021), 271–72.

³⁹As for the restricted access and state censorship of books in the late Chosŏn, see Yi Minhŭi 李民熙, “Chosŏn huki sŏjŏk t'ongje, kŭ asŭlhan ūisik ūi ch'ungdol kwa t'ahyŏp” 朝鮮 後期 書籍 統制, 그 아슬한 意識의 衝突과 妥協 [Censorship in the late Chosŏn: The risky conflict and compromise surrounding consciousness], *Han'guk hanmunhak yŏn'gu* 韓國漢文學研究 68 (2017), 115–54.

⁴⁰Fuma Susumu 夫馬進, *Chōsen Enkōshi to Chōsen Tsūshinshi* 朝鮮燕行使と朝鮮通信使 (Nagoya: Nagoya Daikagu Shuppan-kai, 2015), trans. Sin Rosa 辛로사 et al., *Chosŏn Yŏnhaengsa wa Chosŏn Tongsinsa* (Seoul: Sŏnggyun'gwan Taehak Ch'ulp'anbu, 2019), 289–348.

⁴¹Mark Setton, *Chŏng Yagyong: Korea's Challenge to Orthodox Neo-Confucianism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997). But Yŏngsik Kim is critical of the reformative, progressive and even modern images of Chŏng Yagyong prevalent in Korean academia. For Kim, Chŏng is a conservative realist dreaming of realizing the Neo-Confucian ideal rather than overthrowing it. See Kim Yŏngsik 金永植, *Chŏng Yagyong ūi munjedŭl* 丁若鏞의 問題들 [Questioning Chŏng Yagyong] (Seoul: Hyeon, 2014).

⁴²Kanghun Ahn, “A Study of Ch'usa Kim Chŏng-hŭi: The Introduction of Qing Evidential Learning into Chosŏn Korea and a Reassessment of Practical Learning,” *Sungkyun Journal of East Asian Studies* 18.1 (2018), 105–23.

⁴³Pak Hyŏn'gyu 朴現圭, “Chŏnt'ong sigi Chungguk esŏ ch'ulp'andoen Han'gugin p'yŏnjŏ mul e taehan chonghap koch'al” 傳統時期 中國에서 出版된 韓國人 編著物에 對한 綜合考察 [A synthetic study of Korean compilations published in traditional China], in *Hanjung Inmunhak P'orŏm Palp'yo Nonmunjip* 韓中人文學포럼 (forum) 發表論文集, 2015, 38–43. Of twenty-nine books authored by Chosŏn intellectuals that circulated in China, nineteen are literary anthologies. Five are on the history and geography of Chosŏn, three deal with medicine, two are about Kija (C. Jizi 箕子), and one is on Korean epigraphy.

Tōyōshi in the Colonial Period

The last decade of the nineteenth century marks an important turning point in the history of Korean Sinology. China's defeat in the Sino-Japanese war in 1894 must have been a finishing blow for the epistemological transition. A very good example of this comes from the semantic change of the term *hanmun* 漢文, which in the Chosŏn period denoted the true writings, *jinsŏ* 眞書, as opposed to vernacular writings in the Korean alphabet, *ŏnmun* 諺文. There is no question that most Chosŏn intellectuals used only *hanmun* in their writings. But after the Kabo Reforms beginning in 1894, official documents all used the *hanmun* with the Korean alphabet imitating, it would seem, the Japanese way of writing. Labeling the Korean alphabet as the national script, *kungmun* 國文, *hanmun* began to lose its dominant status and became an otherized foreign script.⁴⁴ Likewise, Hanhak (C. Hanxue), originally the Han school of classical philology or *kaozheng* scholarship in contrast to the Songhak (C. Songxue), Neo-Confucianism, was repositioned as foreign studies.⁴⁵ Having lost its official status in the modern academic and educational systems, Hanhak was transformed into a sort of general learning of Confucianism at the nonofficial level.⁴⁶ After liberation from Japanese colonial rule, Hanhak began to regain its elevated status, although this time, it was not as Sinology but as Korean literature written in Chinese characters, “Han’guk hanmunhak 韓國漢文學.”

Instead, two new branches of scholarship emerged in the field of modern Korean Sinology in the twentieth century. The first is Korean national history, led by Sin Ch’aeho, which not only signified separation from the Chinese world order but also indicated that Korea confronted new challenges resulting from Japanese colonialism.⁴⁷ The second is Japanese *Tōyōshi* (lit. Asian history) which without doubt gave birth to modern Korean scholarship on Chinese history. Both Korea and Japan faced similar situations, in that they had to position themselves as modern, sovereign states distinct from China, the foundation of their own civilizations. Yet such rubrics of their respective civilizations were not firmly established by the late nineteenth century. It is well known that Japanese scholars such as Shiratori Kurakichi (1865–1942) invented the new academic field of *Tōyōshi* to provincialize their neighbors, especially China, as their Orient. According to Stefan Tanaka, the symbolic term *Chūgoku* (C. Zhongguo), which had implied the center of the world, was superseded by the term *Shina* (C. Zhina) to indicate that China lagged behind Japan in modernization. Japan, the only modern nation in Asia, had eventually become the center of *Tōyō* and liberated itself from the antiquity of the outdated Chinese world order while nonetheless successfully internalizing the essences of Chinese civilization.⁴⁸

⁴⁴As for the promotion of vernacular literacy and the marginalization of Literary Sinitic, see William Scott Wells, “A Limited Legacy: Reconfiguring Literary Sinitic as Hanmunkwa in Korean, 1876–1910” (PhD diss., The University of British Columbia, 2020).

⁴⁵Kim Chin’gyun 金鎮均, “Hanhak kwa Han’guk hanmunhak ū sai, kŏndae hanmunhak” 漢學과 韓國漢文學의 사이, 近代 漢文學 [In between Sinology and contemporary studies of Chinese literature in Korea: Modern studies of Chinese literature], *Kukje ŏmun* 國際語文 51 (2011), 140–45. Hanhak was also a subject title in the civil service examination selecting Chinese translators in the Chosŏn period.

⁴⁶Paek Yŏngsŏ, “Chunggukhak ū kwejŏk kwa pip’anjŏk kojŏn yŏn’gu,” 170.

⁴⁷Andre Schmid, *Korea Between Empires 1895–1919* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

⁴⁸Stefan Tanaka, *Japan’s Orient: Rendering Past into History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

However politicized Japanese *Tōyōshi* may have been,⁴⁹ its methodologies and new disciplines strongly influenced modern Korean scholarship, especially in Chinese history and history in general. Such academic influences came mostly from two sources: Keijō Imperial University and studying abroad in Japan.

Established as the first university in Korea in 1926, Keijō Imperial University called itself the center for “research on Asian culture (Tōyō bunka kenkyū)” as advocated in the opening address by Hattori Unokichi (1867–1939), the first president of the university and a Sinologist himself. Emphasizing the geopolitical importance of Chosŏn between China and Japan, Hattori stressed the need to establish a special institution focusing research mostly on Chosŏn itself.⁵⁰ Modelled after Western academic disciplines, Korean Sinology was for the first time divided into literature, history, and philosophy at Keijō University.⁵¹ It is interesting, however, to note that students in the Department of Chinese Literature including Kim T’aejun (1905–1949) did not consider Chinese literature a foreign subject of study until their admission to Keijō University.⁵²

The History Department of Keijō University had three different majors: *Kokushi* (National history, Japanese history), *Chōsenshi* (Korean history), and *Tōyōshi* (Chinese or Asian history). Although the scholars in the Tokyo and Kyoto Imperial Universities debated whether *Chōsenshi* was a part of *Kokushi* or *Tōyōshi*, Keijō University for the first time established a Korean history major reflecting the distinct characteristics of colonial *Chōsen*. Pak Kwanghyōn has analyzed the number of Korean students majoring in the three different branches of history from 1929 to 1941.⁵³ While no Korean student majored in *Kokushi* (compared to eighteen Japanese students), fifteen studied *Tōyōshi* (along with thirty-four Japanese students) and another fifteen did *Chōsenshi* (along with twenty-eight Japanese students). It is significant to note that the number of Korean students majoring in *Tōyōshi* decreased sharply after 1937. As for the relative concentration of Korean students studying *Tōyōshi* in the early period, Pak speculates that Korean students chose *Tōyōshi* to overcome the ambivalent position of Korean history fostered by modern Japanese historiography. Recognizing that, unlike their Korean colleagues studying *Chōsenshi*, Korean students majoring in *Tōyōshi* were not enthusiastic in external group activities, he surmises that they found themselves caught between the realistic power of *Kokushi*

⁴⁹However debatable the politicized nature of Japanese *Tōyōshi* may have been, the discussions about Shina may remind Korean scholars of the trajectory of the term Chōsenjin 朝鮮人 that evolved from neutral to derogatory in the colonial period. Of course, the “intellectual or cultural imperialism” that prewar Japanese scholars may have played a role in does not necessarily contradict “the finest achievements of prewar Sinology”; see Joshua Fogel, “New Thoughts on Old Controversy: Shina as a Toponym for China,” *Sino-Platonic Papers* 229 (2012), 1–25, esp. 22.

⁵⁰Pak Kwanghyōn 朴光賢, “Kyōngsōng cheguk taehak an ūi ‘tongyang sahak’: Hangmun chedo, munhwasaŏk ch’ūkmŏn esŏ” 京城帝國大學 안의 東洋史學: 學問制度 文化史의 側面에서 [Asian history in Keijō Imperial University: From the viewpoint of scholarly institution and cultural history], *Han’guk sasang kwa munhwa* 韓國思想과 文化 31 (2005), 285–86.

⁵¹Paek Yōngsŏ, “Chunggukhak ūi kwejōk kwa pip’anjōk kojōn yōn’gu,” 170.

⁵²Ch’ōn Chin 千眞, “Sikminji Chosŏn ūi China munhakgwa ūi unmyōng: Kyōngsōng cheguk taehak ūi China munhakgwa rūl chungsim ūro” 植民地 朝鮮의 支那文學科의 運命: 京城帝國大學의 支那文學科를 中心으로 [The fate of the departments of Chinese literature in colonial Korea: The department of Chinese literature in Keijō Imperial University as a basis], *Chungguk hyōndae munhak* 中國現代文學 54 (2010), 334–35.

⁵³Pak Kwanghyōn, “Kyōngsōng cheguk taehak an ūi ‘tongyang sahak,’” 296–301, 306.

and the potential power of *Chōsenshi* as *Kokushi* (national history; K. Kuksa). The academicism in studies of Chinese history or Sinology that generally continues to this day may be traceable to the birth of modern Korean scholarship.

Table 1, showing the curriculum of *Tōyōshi* from 1931 to 1936 at Keijō University clearly demonstrates the origins of the studies of Chinese or Asian history in Korea.⁵⁴

The variety of courses on *Tōyōshi* that were offered during these six years do not differ much from present-day curricula in history departments of Korea. First, the basic survey courses on Asian or Chinese history and art history were offered almost every year. Second, the history of specific periods such as the Han and Tang dynasties were offered. Third, more topical history courses such as Chinese law, institutions, and interstate relations were offered. Fourth, reading courses on original Chinese texts were offered. Last but not least were courses on border regions and border states, including the Western regions, the Jurchens, Khitans, Manchus, and Parhae. Locating *Shina* as only a part of *Tōyō*, Japanese historians may have been successful in manifesting their own *Tōyōshi* in Keijō University.

The following titles of graduation theses by Korean students majoring in *Tōyōshi* from 1931 to 1939 in Keijō University further indicate how effectively Japanese *Tōyōshi* was adapted to the nascent modern scholarship in colonial Korea⁵⁵:

- Ōm Muhyōn, “The Rise and Fall of the Xiongnu People in Asian History” (1931).
- Kim Chongmu, “Rong and Di in Early China: Focusing on the Zhou and Chunqiu Periods” (1932)
- Yi Wōnhak, “Sima Qian’s View of History in the *Shiji*”* (1932)
- Ch’ae Kyut’aek, “The Land System of the Late (Northern) Wei Dynasty: Focusing on the Equal Field Law” (1933)
- Kim Sōnggyun, “The Relationship between Qing and Chosōn during the Reign of Hong Taiji” (1934)
- O Chinyōng, “The Relationship between Rouran and the Northern Wei” (1934)
- Yi Hūngchong, “On the Regional Commanders of the Tang Period”* (1934)
- Ch’ae Hūisun, “On the Militia of the Northern Song”* (1935)
- Sō Chōngdōk, “On the Canal Transportation of the Tang Period”* (1935)
- Yi Ch’ang’ōp, “Invading and Governing Manchuria in the Early Ming Period” (1935)
- Yi Myōngwōn, “Wang Mang’s Usurpation and His Politics from the Perspective of the Contemporary Thought at the End of the Former Han”* (1936)
- Yun Yōnggu, “The Granary of the Tang Period”* (1937)
- Ch’oe Pyōngmu, “The Policy of Suppressing Militarists in the Early Song Period”* (1937)
- Sin T’aehyōn, “A Study on the Problems of Land in the Jurchen Period” (1937)
- Chōng Chaegak, “Research on the Military System in the Early Ming Period”* (1937)

These fifteen theses must constitute the first studies by Korean students of Chinese history in the modern era. While the eight marked with an asterisk* could be classified

⁵⁴Pak Kwanghyōn, “Kyōngsōng cheguk taehak an ūi ‘tongyang sahak,’” 301–3. I selected the *Tōyōshi* related courses from Pak’s listing which is based on the “Bulletins” of the *Seikyū kakusou* 青丘學叢 published in 1930–1939.

⁵⁵Pak Kwanghyōn, “Kyōngsōng cheguk taehak an ūi ‘tongyang sahak,’” 303–4.

Table 1. *Tōyōshi* Curriculum at Keijō University, 1931–1936

Year	Instructor	Title
1931	Tanaka Toyozō	Art History of Asia
	Ōtani Katsuma	The History of the Western Regions; Reading Texts in Asian History
	Toriyama Kiichi	Survey of Asian History; A Study of the Jurchen Culture
1932	Tanaka Toyozō	Art History of Asia; Seminar in Asian Art history
	Ōtani Katsuma	The History of the Western Regions during the Northern and Southern Dynasties; Seminar in Asian History
	Toriyama Kiichi	Survey of Asian History; The Economic History of Jurchen
	Tamai Zehaku	Research on the History of the Tang Dynasty; Explanations of the Selective Writings in Chinese by Jesuit Missionaries
1933	Tanaka Toyozō	Art History of Asia; Seminar in Asian Art history
	Ōtani Katsuma	Survey of Asian History; The History of the Western Regions
	Toriyama Kiichi	Ethnic Groups in Manchuria; A Study of the Taiping Rebellion
	Tamai Zehaku	Chinese Law; Seminar on Asian History: The <i>Rizhili</i>
1934	Tanaka Toyozō	Art History of Asia; Common Knowledge on Buddhist Arts
	Ōtani Katsuma	Survey of Asian History; Issues in the History of the Western Regions in the Tang Period
	Toriyama Kiichi	Studies on the Parhae State; A Study of the Taiping Rebellion
	Tamai Zehaku	Research on the Six Canons of Tang
1935	Okuhira Takehiko	International History of Manchuria
	Tanaka Toyozō	Art History of Asia
	Ōtani Katsuma	History of the Western and Eastern Han; Seminar in the History of the Western Regions
	Toriyama Kiichi	Survey of Asian History; Manchuria in the Early Jurchen Period
	Tamai Zehaku	Research on the Six Law Codes of Tang; Seminar
1936	Okuhira Takehiko	International History of China
	Tanaka Toyozō	Art History of Asia
	Moritani Katsumi	Society and Economy of Asia
	Ōtani Katsuma	General History of Asia; Seminar in Asian History: The “Account of the Western Regions” of the <i>History of Tang</i> ; Cultural History of Han
	Toriyama Kiichi	History of Wei Jin and Northern and Southern Dynasties; The Foundation of Khitan
	Tamai Zehaku	The Institutions of the Song dynasty; Seminar in Asian History

as belonging to conventional topics in mainstream Chinese history, the remaining seven discuss the peripheral regions newly introduced by the Japanese *Tōyōshi* as indicated in the above curriculum. These talented Korean youngsters seem to have been satisfied with the evidential methodology and the extension of Asian history emphasized by

modern Japanese historiography. According to Pak Kwanghyŏn, four of them (Kim Sŏnggyun, Ch'ae Hŭisun, Sin T'aehyŏn and Chŏng Chaegak) played important roles in South Korean historical circles after liberation from Japanese colonial rule.⁵⁶ Chŏng Chaegak (1913–2000) in particular was a pioneer in Chinese or Asian history at Korea University.

Another important group of scholars went to study abroad in Japan. They received similar influences as their contemporaries majoring in *Tōyōshi* at Keijō University. Among them, Kim Sanggi (1901–1977), a Sinologist who graduated from Waseda University, is noteworthy in that he became the founding father of Chinese or Asian history at Seoul National University (hereafter SNU).⁵⁷ Another important faculty member in Chinese history at SNU, who succeeded Kim Sanggi, Ko Pyŏng'ik (1924–2004), went to Tokyo Imperial University to study *Tōyōshi* at the end of the colonial period. Ko was the first Korean Sinologist to receive his PhD in the West, from Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich in 1956.⁵⁸ Chŏn Haejong (1919–2018) is another important Sinologist to be mentioned, in that he went to Tokyo University to study political science but graduated from Keijō University (SNU from 1948) in Chinese history in 1947. Teaching at SNU from 1952 to 1967, Chŏn joined Sŏgang University, another leading Korean institution for history, as one of the founding members of the academic field of Chinese history. As the first generation of modern Korean scholarship on Chinese history, these three figures played very important roles in the early stage of the modern scholarship in *Tongyangsa* (J. *Tōyōshi*) after liberation.⁵⁹ Like all other academic fields in Korea, Chinese history was shaped by colonial legacies.

A New Branch of Research

Although Japanese *Tōyōshi* paved the way for Korean scholarship in Chinese history in the second half of the twentieth century, another important shift in direction was inevitable as part of further development. The eruption of nationalistic fever following

⁵⁶While four of the remaining eleven defected to North Korea, three transferred to different fields such as law and education; the other four are not identified.

⁵⁷Kim Ilch'ul, who with Kim Sanggi was a founding faculty member of SNU around 1947, studied at Beijing University and graduated from Tōhoku Imperial University in Chinese history. Publishing only an article on the interstate meetings in the Spring and Autumn period possibly based on his BA thesis (Kim Ilch'ul 金日出, "Ch'unch'u hoemaeng nonko" 春秋會盟論考, *Yŏksahak yŏn'gu* 歷史學研究 1 (1949)), Kim, a socialist, eventually defected to North Korea before the Korean War; see Yi Sŏnggyu 李成珪, "Sŏul taehakgyo Tongyangsa hakwa 35 nyŏnsa(1969–2004)" 서울大學校 東洋史學科 35年史 [Thirty-five years of the department of Asian history in Seoul National University], *Sŏuldae Tongyangsa hakwa nonjip* 서울大東洋史學科論集 29 (2005), 2.

⁵⁸Byungik Koh, "Zur Werttheorie in der chinesischen Historiographie auf Grund des Shih-t'ung des Liu Chih-chi." An article with the same title was published in *Oriens Extremus* 4.1 (1957), 5–51.

⁵⁹Cho Chwaho 曹佐鎬 (1917–1991) graduated from the *Tōyōshi* department of Tokyo University in 1943 and led the Chinese history faculty of Dongguk and Sungkyunkwan Universities: see *Encyclopedia of Korean Culture*, <http://encykorea.aks.ac.kr/Contents/Item/E0052619>, accessed August 2, 2021. Kim Chunyŏp 金俊燁 (1920–2011) also went to Keiō University to study *Tōyōshi*. But when he was drafted into the Japanese army in his second year in 1944, he deserted from the barracks in Jiangsu, China to devote himself to the Korean independence movement. After liberation from Japan, Kim stayed in China for several years to study Chinese history at Zhongyang University in Nanjing and became a professor of modern Chinese history at Korea University in 1949 (<https://namu.wiki/w/김준엽>, accessed August 2, 2021). With Chŏng Chaegak mentioned above, Kim established the Chinese history program at Korea University.

liberation from Japanese colonial rule in 1945 inspired a boom in Korean studies, fueled especially by the hope of correcting and revising the historiography of Korea during the colonial period, which was believed to have been distorted by Japanese imperial historians. It is no coincidence that the three pioneers of the *Tongyangsa* mentioned above, who studied in Japan, also participated in this nationalistic trend in the 1960s.

Of more than 30 articles written by Kim Sanggi between the late 1940s and the early 1970s, only two or three could be classified as Chinese history.⁶⁰ Most of the other works are in fact on the interactions between Korea and China. Learning Sinitic texts from a young age, as well as philological methodology at Waseda in his late twenties, Kim was rare at that time for being versed in both old Sinology and new scholarship of Japan. He examined various topics such as the migrations of ancient Korean tribes, the travel of Korean people to China and their trade, Koryŏ's independence movements from China and the Mongols, Koryŏ's cultural exchanges with China and its cultural superiority to the Khitans and Jurchens, foundation myths of Korea, and even the Tonghak Peasant Revolution at the end of the nineteenth century. Using the title "tongbang" 東方 rather than "hanjung" 韓中 in the two collections of his articles,⁶¹ Kim may have wished to establish the independent role Korea played in East Asian history or to understand East Asian culture from the perspective of Korea.⁶²

Like his contemporaries, Ko Pyŏng'ik's study in the field of *Tongyangsa* was disrupted by the Pacific War. Studying in the Department of *Tōyōshi* at Tokyo University for a year or so, he came back to Korea and continued his studies at Keijō University under the tutelage of Kim Sanggi. In spite of being strongly influenced by the meticulous Japanese evidential scholarship, Ko pursued interpretive historiography from a broader perspective. His BA thesis on the role of Muslims in Yuan society was well-received.⁶³ After receiving his PhD with a thesis on the historiography of Liu Zhiji's *Shitong* 史通, Ko tried to break through the borders separating the three East Asian countries, China, Japan, and Korea, and engage in comparative history. The first topic he chose was the closed-door policies of the three countries. He further examined the common emergence of Confucian opposition to Buddhism in the three countries in the early modern age.⁶⁴ Another important aspect of Ko's scholarship includes Korea's cultural and diplomatic exchanges with other countries such as China, Mongolia, India, and Russia.⁶⁵

Chŏn Haejong's study is different from the other two pioneers discussed here in that, focusing on the diplomatic relationships between Korea and China, he tried, for the first time, to systematize the so-called "Han-Chung kwangyesa" 韓中關係史 (history of Korean-Chinese relations). Investigating the institutional changes in the relationships between China and neighboring countries including Korea from the ancient period,

⁶⁰Yi Sŏnggyu, "Kim Sanggi" 金庠基, in *Han'guk ūi yŏksaga wa yŏkshak* 韓國의 歴史家와 歴史學 [Historians and Historiography of Korea], vol. 2, edited by Cho Tonggŏl 趙東杰 et al. (Seoul: Ch'angjak kwa pip'yŏngsa, 1994), 268.

⁶¹Kim Sanggi, *Tongbang muhwa kyoryusa nongŏ* 東方文化交流史論攷 (Seoul: Ŭlyumunhwasa, 1948); Kim Sanggi, *Tongbangsa nonch'ong* 東方史論叢 (Seoul: Sŏul taehakgyo ch'ulp'ansa, 1974).

⁶²Yi Sŏnggyu, "Kim Sanggi," 269.

⁶³Ko Pyŏng'ik 高炳翊, "Isŭlram kyodo wa Wŏndae sahoe" 이슬람教徒와 元代社會 [Muslim and society in the Yuan dynasty], *Yŏksahak yŏn'gu* 1 (1949).

⁶⁴Ko Pyŏng'ik, "Yuksip chasul: Yŏn'gusajŏk chajŏn" 六十自述: 研究史的 自傳, in *Yŏksa wa ingan ūi taeüng* 歴史와 人間の 對應 [Interactions between history and human], edited by Ko Pyŏng'ik sŏnsaeng hoegap kinyŏm nonch'ong kanhaeng wiwŏnhoe 高炳翊先生回甲紀念論叢刊行委員會 (Seoul: Hanul, 1984), 12–23.

⁶⁵Ko Pyŏng'ik, *Tong'a kyosŏpsa ūi yŏn'gu* 東亞交涉史의 研究 (Seoul: Sŏul taehakgyo ch'ulp'ansa, 1970).

Chŏn closely analyzed the *Tongmun hwigo* 同文彙考 (Collection of Documents Exchanged between Korea and China, and Korea and Japan) compiled in 1788 to theorize the Sino-Korean tributary relations in the Qing period.⁶⁶ His contributions to the transnational history of Korea and China provided later scholars with the foundation for the new field.⁶⁷

It is important to note, on the one hand, that this new branch of research motivated by the strong nationalistic milieu enlarged the area of studies to which Korean scholars could contribute. On the other hand, it clearly demonstrates how difficult it was for Korean academia to advance in the realm of modern Sinology.

Min Tugi and Tongsakwa

The trajectory to modern Korean Sinology is to some degree a painful recovery of the collapsed tradition of premodern Sinology, with the important difference that the restoration took a completely different form from that of half a century earlier. The dire economic conditions after the Korean War and, especially, the victory of communism in China further delayed revitalization. There were only four departments of Chinese Language and Literature at the college level by the 1960s: SNU from 1946, Kyunghee University from 1952, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies from 1954, and Sungkyunkwan University from 1955. A few other schools such as Korea University and Yonsei University established similar departments in the 1970s. Likewise, it was not until the 1960s that Korean scholars for the first time organized such academic associations in Sinology as the Han'guk Chungguk hakhoe 韓國中國學會 (The Korea Society for Chinese Studies) in 1962 and the Tongyang sahakhoe 東洋史學會 (The Society for Asian Historical Studies) in 1965. Modern Korean Sinology was only just starting to develop.

However, studies in Chinese history were marked by considerable growth during the 1970s and 1980s. Most history departments at the college level had at least one or two tenure-track Chinese history positions. Several universities, such as Korea, Sŏgang and Yonsei, developed their own graduate programs in Chinese history in their respective history departments.

I will focus here, however on SNU, where the History Department split into three separate departments in 1969: the Kuksa hakwa or Department of Korean history, the Tongyangsa hakwa (hereafter *Tongsakwa*) or Department of Asian history, and the Sŏyangsa hakwa or Department of Western history. Although the division reminds us of the beginning of a similar system at Tokyo Imperial University in 1889, the *Tongsakwa* was the biggest beneficiary of the division.⁶⁸ Only five master's degrees in Chinese history were granted before the division at SNU.⁶⁹ And whereas *tongyangsa*

⁶⁶Hae-jong Chun, "Sino-Korean Tributary Relations in the Ch'ing Period," in *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations*, edited by John King Fairbank (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), 90–111; Chŏn Haejong 全海宗, *Han-Chung kwangyesa yŏn'gu* 韓中關係史研究 [A study of Korea-Sino relations] (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1970).

⁶⁷For a review of Chŏn's book, see Zhang Cunwu 張存武, "'Qingdai Han Zhong chaogong guanxi zongkao' pingjia" "清代韓中朝貢關係綜考"評價, *Si yu yan* 思與言 5.6 (1968), 48–49. Chŏn published a collection of his articles in China: Quan Haizong, translated by Quan Shanji (K. Chŏn Sŏnhŭi 全宣姬), *Zhong Han guanxi shi lunji* 中韓關係史論集 (Beijing: Shehui kexue, 1997).

⁶⁸SNU recently announced that the three history departments will merge into the History Division in 2023.

⁶⁹All the descriptions about the *Tongsakwa* in this article, unless otherwise noted, are based on Yi Sŏnggyu, "Sŏul taehakgyo Tongyangsa hakwa 35 nyŏnsa (1969–2004)," 1–131.

was identified with Chinese history at the time, the trisection has led to a gradual expansion of the scope of the department to the entirety of Asia. Still, Chinese history seems to have remained the core of *Tongsakwa* by the end of the 1980s.

It is no exaggeration to say that the *Tongsakwa* played a critical role in the development of modern Korean Sinology. There is also no question that a single figure, Min Tugi (1932–2000), was at the forefront of the endeavor. He entered into the History Department of SNU around the time of the Korean War to study Chinese history under the tutelage of Kim Sanggi and Ko Pyŏngik. Joining the department at the time of the division in 1969, Min made the greatest contributions as a scholar and pedagogue not only to usher in the heyday of *Tongsakwa* but also for studies of Chinese and Asian history in Korea. The fact that Min's first publication, in 1953, is a book review of Cora Du Bois's *Social Forces in Southeast Asia* (1947)⁷⁰ foretold the diverse approaches in his future scholarship. His first contributions to Chinese history were on Han dynasty topics such as the relocation of the powerful families to the towns of royal mausoleums (*lingyi* 陵邑) and the formation and background of the *Discourses on Salt and Iron* (*Yantielun* 鹽鐵論).⁷¹ There were several more articles on the central bureaucracy and the tax system of the Han empire. But by the end of the 1960s his interest moved to the Qing period, with various topics on the gentry, and later on the reform and revolutionary movements in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, especially the "modern transformation of tradition." Publication of a collection of his articles translated into English,⁷² and the high acclaim that followed its publication in 1989,⁷³ clearly show him to be the first world-class Korean Sinologist in the modern era. Min was proud of reviews by foreign scholars. In his autobiography that covers the period from his birth to retirement in 1997,⁷⁴ Min especially quotes Jonathan K. Ocko's comment: "Thus, although five essays in this volume of translations first appeared in Korea before 1970 and another essay appeared in 1978, they have not been superseded by subsequent scholarship and remain instructive, stimulating reading." The second English collection of his articles was published at the time of his retirement.⁷⁵

⁷⁰Min Tugi 閔斗基, "Tongnama e itösö üi sahoejök chagyongryök" 東南亞에 있어서의 社會的 作用力 [Social forces in action in Southeast Asia], *Yöksa hakbo* 歷史學報 6 (1953), 262–67.

⁷¹Min Tugi, "Chönhan üi nüngüp samin ch'aek: Kanggan yakji ch'aek ürosö kü naeyong e taehan sigo" 前漢의 陵邑徙民策: 強幹弱枝策으로서 그 內容에 對한 試考 [The migration policy to the mausoleum towns in the Former Han: A study of the policy of strengthening the core and weakening the branches], *Yöksa hakbo* 9 (1955), 1–37; Min Tugi, "Yömch'öron yön'gu: kü paegyöng kwa sasang e taehan yakgan üi koch'al (sang)" 鹽鐵論研究: 그 背景과 思想에 對한 若干의 考察(上) [A study of the *Yantielun*: A few issues about its background and thought], *Yöksa hakbo* 10 (1958), 221–70; Min Tugi, "Yömch'öron yön'gu: kü paegyöng kwa sasang e taehan yakgan üi koch'al (ha 下)," *Yöksa hakbo* 11 (1959), 111–53.

⁷²Min Tu-ki [Tugi], edited by Philip Kuhn and Timothy Brook, *National Polity and Local Power: The Transformation of Late Imperial China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989).

⁷³See the following reviews: Prasenjit Duara in *Journal of Asian studies* 50.2 (1991), 395–397; Jonathan K. Ocko in *American Historical Review* 96.4 (1991), 1259; Wei-ying Ku in *Pacific Affairs* 64.2 (1991), 250–252; Huang Gu in *Qingshi yanjiu* 1992.1; Joseph W. Esherick in *Journal of Asian and African Studies* XVIII 1–2 (1993), 123–124.

⁷⁴Min Tugi, "Min Tugi chap'yön yönbo ryak" 閔斗基 雜編 年譜略 (A brief annals, edited by Min Tugi), in *Han songi dülggot kwa mannal ttae: Min Tugi kyosu chasön sup'il sön* 한 송이 들꽃과 만날 때: 閔斗基 教授 自傳 隨筆選 [Coming across wildflowers: Self-selected essays of Professor Min Tugi] (Seoul: Chisik sanöpsa, 1997), 247–248.

⁷⁵Tu-ki [Tugi] Min, *Men and Ideas in Modern Chinese History* (Seoul: Seoul National University Press, 1997).

In addition to producing many articles that have not been translated and are thus largely unknown to the West but deeply influential in Korean studies of Chinese history,⁷⁶ Min was important as a teacher. As the tide of the Cultural Revolution gradually subsided in the late 1970s, China again attracted interest, so that many talented students applied to the *Tongsakwa*. Two more positions for late imperial and ancient Chinese history were filled by O Kūmsōng and Yi Sōnggyu, respectively. Kim Yongdōk in Japanese history and Pak Hanje in medieval Chinese history followed O and Yi in 1985. The number of graduate students increased rapidly totaling about thirty.

The *Tongsakwa* in the 1980s was notorious for the demanding course work designed by Min. In particular, “Introduction to Asian History” for sophomores and “Supervising research (BA paper) on Asian History” for seniors, taught by Min, lived up to their reputation in their strict training and heavy requirements. Other faculty members could not help but follow Min’s example. Another important point Min stressed was foreign language education. There were few books and articles on Chinese history written in Korean by the 1980s. Most of the secondary scholarship that was dealt with in undergraduate classes of the *Tongsakwa* was written in Chinese, Japanese and English. Classical Chinese reading courses were another important part of the curriculum. Most undergraduate students in the department could read foreign languages by their junior year. Graduate seminars were organized even more rigorously. Min also stubbornly opposed his students choosing as their thesis topics the relationship between Korea and China. Instead, he instructed students to focus on China itself, reflecting the fact that the general trend in the first generation of modern scholars mentioned above overlooked the internal characteristics and developments of Chinese history.

It took about three years for the Master’s students of the *Tongsakwa* to pass the high standard Min set for the thesis requirements. Luckily, the Korean government doubled the university quota in the 1980s. More than half of the professor positions opened in Chinese history at that time may have been filled with Master’s degree holders from the *Tongsakwa*. Many young scholars of Chinese history played active roles in the Society for Asian Historical Studies. Among the many scholarly achievements of the graduates from the *Tongsakwa*, the single most important was the publication of the *Kangjiwa Chungguksa* (Chinese history lectures).⁷⁷ Composed of a total of thirty-five thematic articles covering the ancient to modern period in seven volumes,⁷⁸ this huge project with thirty participants commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the *Tongsakwa* provided Korean students in Chinese history (including me) with substantial in-depth guidelines for the study of Chinese history. Without Min’s strong leadership, the project could not have been completed.

All of the junior faculty members of the department followed Min and became leading scholars in their own fields. Yi Sōnggyu (b. 1946) is indeed the father of ancient Chinese history in Korea. He is one of the first Korean scholars working on bamboo

⁷⁶Min authored about ten books, mostly on the reforms and revolutions in modern China. He also translated and edited many other books about Chinese history.

⁷⁷*Sōul taehakgyo Tongyangsahak yōn’gusil* 서울大學校東洋史學研究室 ed., *Kangjiwa Chungguksa* 講座中國史 I–VII (Seoul: Chisik sanōpsa, 1989).

⁷⁸The volume titles are as follows: I. *The Formation of Ancient Civilization and Empire*, II. *The Society of the Powerful Families and the World of Hu (Northern barbarians) and Han (Chinese)*, III. *Literati Society and the Mongol Empire*, IV. *Completion of the Imperial Order*, V. *Unrest in the Chinese Imperial Order*, VI. *Reform and Revolutions*, and VII. *The Search for a New Order*.

slips such as the Qin legal statutes from Yunmeng 雲夢 in the late 1970s to study the ruling system of the Qin state during the Warring States period. Yi further synthesized his own view of “the organization and state control of commoners” or *qimin zhipei tizhi* 齊民支配體制 in the establishment of the Qin empire.⁷⁹ In the 1990s and 2000s, Yi’s studies on the newly excavated bamboo slips of Qin and Han shifted their focus to the administration of state policies. His long-term endeavors finally came to fruition in 2019, as another masterpiece in the Qin and Han history, *Qin and Han, the Empires of Numbers: Rule by Calculation and Measurement*.⁸⁰ Many students have followed and developed Yi’s idea and methodology, which has led me to believe that current Korean scholarship on Qin and Han history deserves more international attention.

Pak Hanje (b. 1946), who specialized in the Northern Dynasties such as the Northern Wei before the unification of the Sui in 589, proposed the theory of the Sino-Barbarian Synthesis or *Hu-Han tizhi* 胡漢體制 that emphasizes the creation of a new culture based on a fusion of the Chinese and northern ethnic groups rather than the simple assumption of Sinicization.⁸¹ His interest further extended to the cities of Luoyang and Chang’an, the capitals of the Northern Wei and the Tang, respectively. Revealing cultural elements of the northern ethnic groups from the structures and city lives of the two capitals, Pak surmises that unlike Chang’an in the Han period, the two cities were also the products of the Sino-Barbarian Synthesis. Recently, Pak published two books of his articles on medieval Chinese cities: *The Construction of Chinese Capitals and Their Positions: On the Eve of the Emergence of Chang’an in the Sui and Tang Periods* and *Medieval Chinese Capitals and the Sino-Barbarian Synthesis*.⁸² Needless to say, Pak played a leading role in the Korean studies of medieval Chinese history.

O Kūmsōng (b. 1941) followed Min Tugi’s studies on the gentry in the Ming and Qing periods, especially focusing on the social changes between the gentry and the state. His first book, *The Socio-Economic History of Early Modern China: The Formation of the Gentry Class in the Ming Period and their Socio-Economic Roles*, was translated into Japanese in 1990.⁸³ Reading local gazetteers and anthologies from the Ming and Qing widely, O meticulously analyzed socio-economic issues such as the movement of population and the expansion of irrigation facilities region by region. He compiled his articles into the following two books in 2007: *The State Law and Social Practice: Studies in the Socio-Economic History of the Ming and Qing Periods*⁸⁴ and *The*

⁷⁹Yi Sōnggyu, *Chungguk kodaе cheguk sōngripsa yōn’gu* 中國古代帝國成立史研究 (Research on the birth of the ancient Chinese empire) (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1984).

⁸⁰Yi Sōnggyu, *Su ūi cheguk Chin-Han: Kyesu wa kyeryang ūi chibae* 數의帝國秦漢: 計數와計量の支配 (Seoul: Taehanminguk haksulwōn, 2019).

⁸¹Pak Hanje 朴漢濟, *Chungguk chungse Ho-Han ch’eye yōn’gu* 中國中世胡漢體制研究 [Medieval Chinese history and Sino-Barbarian synthesis] (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1988).

⁸²Pak Hanje, *Chungguk tosōng kwa ipji: Su-Tang Chang’ansōng ch’ulhyōn chōnya* 中國都城斗立地: 隋唐長安城出現前夜 (Seoul: Sōul taehakgyo ch’ulp’an munhwawōn, 2019); Pak Hanje, *Chungguk chungse tosōng kwa hohan ch’eye* 中國中世都城斗胡漢體制 (Seoul: Sōul taehakgyo ch’ulp’an munhwawōn, 2019).

⁸³O Kūmsōng 吳金成, *Chungguk kūndae sahoe kyōngjesa yōn’gu: Myōngdae sinsach’ūng ūi hyōngsōng kwa sahoe kyōngjejōk yōkkal* 中國近代社會經濟史研究: 明代紳士層의形成斗社會經濟的役割 (Seoul: Iljogak, 1986); *Mindai Shakai Keizaiishi Kenkyū: Shinshisou no Keisei to sono Shyakaikaizaiteki Yakuwari* (Tokyo: Kyūko Shoin, 1990).

⁸⁴O Kūmsōng, *Kukbōp kwa sahoe kwanhaeng: Myōng-Ch’ōng sidae sahoe kyōngjesa yōn’gu* 國法斗社會貫行: 明清時代社會經濟史研究 (Seoul: Chisik sanōpsa, 2007).

Coexistence of Contradiction: Studies of Jiangxi Society in the Ming and Qing Periods.⁸⁵ Both books were translated into Chinese.⁸⁶ O's work also contributed substantially to the next generation of scholars in Ming and Qing history, which I believe is one of the most advanced fields in modern Korean Sinology.

It is regrettable to skip the important roles many other scholars played in the growth of Chinese history in the 1970s and 1980s, but few Korean scholars working on Chinese history would deny the great contributions of *Tongsakwa* and Min Tugi. As mentioned by Yi Sönggyu in the essay on the 35-year history of the *Tongsakwa*,⁸⁷ however, the rigor of the department seems to have been weakened in the 1990s and 2000s, especially after Min's retirement in 1997. The heyday of the department was now in the past, bearing Min's unparalleled footprint, but a new age of Korean scholarship in Chinese history had begun. A good number of Korean students who studied abroad in Europe, the United States, Japan, and China in the last two decades of the twentieth century added an international flavor and raised the level of scholarship in Chinese history.

A New Age

A year before the establishment of diplomatic ties with China in 1992, the Korean Society for Asian Historical Studies (*Tongyang sahakhoe*) held a monumental workshop in Beijing. Organized by Pak Wönho (b. 1944), another leading scholar in the Ming and Qing periods at Korea University who spent his sabbatical at Beijing University at that time, fifty Korean scholars from twenty-two universities visited China mostly for the first time to attend the three-day workshop with Chinese scholars. Eight Korean scholars, including the four at SNU mentioned above,⁸⁸ presented papers and engaged in discussions with their Chinese counterparts.⁸⁹ As Korean scholars shared their own scholarship from the last several decades, Chinese scholars were amazed by the passion of the Korean participants as well as the high level of their scholarship. This first meeting culminated in a book consisting of eight papers and discussions.⁹⁰ Unlike their predecessors in late Chosön who dreamed of visiting Beijing as the center of their civilization, to the Korean participants in 1991, Beijing was a place for sharing their scholarly curiosity. The reopening of scholarly exchange marked the prelude to the subsequent flood of interchanges.

⁸⁵O Kümsöng, *Mosun üi kongjon: Myöng-Ch'öng sidae Kangsö sahoe yön'gu* 矛盾의 共存: 明清時代 江西 社會 研究 (Seoul: Chisik sanöpsa, 2007).

⁸⁶Wu Jincheng, translated by Cui Ronggen 崔榮根, *Guofa yu shuhui guanxing: Ming-Qing shidai shehui jingjishi* (Hangzhou: Zhejiang daxue, 2020); Wu Jincheng, translated by Cui Ronggen and Xue Ge 薛戈, *Mao yu dun de gongcun: Ming-Qing shidai Jiangxi shehui yanjiu* (Nanjing: Jiangsu renmin, 2018).

⁸⁷Yi Sönggyu, "Söul taehakgyo Tongyangsa hakwa 35 nyönsa (1969–2004)," 22.

⁸⁸The other four were Kim Han'gyu 金翰奎 (Sögang University), Sin Ch'aesik 申采湜 (Söngsin Women's University), Pak Wönho 朴元煥 and Yi Pyöngju 李炳柱 (Yöngnam University).

⁸⁹The Chinese discussants were Wu Rongzeng 吳榮曾, Zhang Chuanxi 張傳壘, Deng Guangming 鄧廣銘, Xu Daling 許大齡 (Beijing University), Liu Zhongri 劉重日, Huang Lie 黃烈, Wang Rongsheng 王戎笙 (Chinese Academy of Social Science), and Wang Rufeng 王汝豐 (Renmin University).

⁹⁰Dongyang shixuehui 東洋史學會, ed., *Zhongguo shi yanjiu de chengguo yu zhanwang* 中國史研究的 成果與展望 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue, 1991). Although Pak, the organizer, insisted on using "Hanguo" or even "Nan Chaoxian" in the book title, the publisher did not accept that. Instead, Pak was able to add "Hanguo" in the second edition in 2015: Pak Wönho, "1991nyön Tongyang sahakhoe 'Pukkyöng wök'üshyap kaech'oe simal" 1991年 東洋史學會 '北京위크샵' 開催 始末 [The full account of the Beijing Workshop for the Korean society of the Asian Historical Studies in 1991], *Tongyang sahak yön'gu* 東洋史學研究 133 (2015), 458–60.

Indeed, Chinese history in Korea has rapidly grown both quantitatively and qualitatively since the establishment of diplomatic ties. *Tongyang sahak yŏn'gu* (the *Journal of Asian Historical Studies*) of the Korean Society of the Asian Historical Studies increased its publication from biannual to quarterly in 1992, and several academic branches of the society began to form around the same time. Starting as small research groups for specific periods such as the Pre-Qin and Qin-Han in the 1980s and 1990s, the groups temporally adjacent to each other merged into larger associations covering broader historical periods by the early 2000s. In addition to the Society for Asian Historical Studies as the leading society covering the entire periods in Asian history,⁹¹ the three major branch societies, the Society for Historical Studies of Ancient and Medieval China, the Society for Ming-Qing Historical Studies, and the Korean Association for Studies of Modern Chinese History, have published the following journals: *Chungguk kochungsesa yŏn'gu* 中國古中世史研究 (*Historical Studies of Ancient and Medieval China*), published its sixtieth volume in May 2021 (it has been quarterly since 2014); *Myŏng-Ch'ŏngsa yŏn'gu* 明清史研究 (*Journal of Ming-Qing Historical Studies* published its fifty-fifth volume in April, 2021 (biannual since 1994); and *Chungguk kŭnhyŏndaesa yŏn'gu* 中國近現代史研究 (*Korean Studies of Modern Chinese History*), saw its 90th volume published in May 2021 (quarterly since 2003). Thirty-five articles were published in the latest issues of the four major journals in Chinese history, totaling about 120 papers a year. The *Journal of Asian Historical Studies* has published annual bibliographies of Asian history and Sinology in general in Korea since 1966 mostly in the last volume of each year. Among about 1,600 articles⁹² and 300 books published in 2019, more than 80 percent of the articles and about half of the books are on China. About fifteen PhD dissertations and twenty-seven Masters theses were in Chinese history.⁹³

Celebrating the fiftieth volume of the *Journal of Asian Historical Studies* in 1995 and recollecting the leap forward in the study of Chinese history, Min Tugi appreciated the increase in the number of the monographs, the methodological diversification beyond political and intellectual history in a narrow sense, and the active interactions with foreign scholars. But he still expected to enhance the level of scholarship that focused on economic, socio-economic and cultural history, especially created by Korea's own academic tradition rather than depending on foreign methodologies.⁹⁴

Ten years after Min's overview, Yi Sŏnggyu further reviewed the development of the study of Asian history in Korea for the previous sixty years as follows: expansion from Chinese history to East Asian history, ready access to materials, active international exchanges, multifaceted and complex understanding of China, the diversification in interests and topics, the emphasis on fieldwork, and the escape from excessive influence

⁹¹Another important association based in Taegu and Kyŏngsang Province is the Society for Chinese Historical Research or Chungguk sahakhoe. Established in 1991, the society has published the *Journal of Chinese Historical Research* or *Chungguksa yŏn'gu* 中國史研究 since 1996 (bimonthly since 2003).

⁹²The articles in the annual bibliography are classified as follows: 1. Comprehensive history, 2. Premodern, 3. Modern, 4. Japan and other areas, 5. The history of interactions, 6. Thought and philosophy, 7. Chinese literature, 8. Literature of Japan and other areas, and 9. Languages, art history, bibliography, etc.

⁹³“Kuknae Tongyangsa kwanryŏn nonmun yomok 2019” 近來東洋史關聯論文要目2019, “Sŏkbaksa hakwi nonmun 2019” 碩博士學位論文2019, “Tongyangsa kwankyŏng sangnong mongnok 2019” 東洋史關係新刊目錄, *Tongyang sahak yŏn'gu* 153 (2020), 517–618.

⁹⁴Min Tugi, “Chungguksa yŏn'gu ūi ‘cheko’ wa ‘pogŭp’ 中國史研究 提高斗普及 [Enhancement and distribution of the studies on Chinese history], *Tongyang sahak yŏn'gu* 50 (1995), 1–5.

from Japanese scholarship. Celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the Korean Society for the Asian Historical Studies in 2015, Yi praised the remarkable growth of scholarship and proudly listed the leading Korean contributions to Chinese history as follows: his own study of the “organization and the state control of commoners” for the Qin and Han, the syntheses of Sino-barbarian and immigrants-natives (*qiaojiu* 僑舊) for the Northern and Southern Dynasties, studies of the tributary orders, legal history, cities, the gentry, the merchants of Huizhou 徽州, the reform movements in the late Qing, the 1911 Revolution, the National Revolution in 1924–1928, Chinese warlords, regional studies focusing on specific areas such as Shanghai, and finally notable studies of nomadic empires such as the Turks, the Uyghurs, the Mongols and the Manchus.⁹⁵ Another important achievement Yi stressed is a number of annotated translations of unearthed texts, legal documents, travelogues, and especially, the biographies of foreign peoples in the Twenty-five Official Dynastic Histories.⁹⁶

This dramatic change is well attested in the articles published in the three period journals mentioned above. The following list of titles in the latest volumes of the three journals shows how Korean scholarship in Chinese history has entered a new age:

Historical Studies of Ancient and Medieval China 60 (May 2021)

Special Issue: The “Wuxing zhi” 五行志 in Official Chinese History:

Kwŏn Min’gyun, “The Textual Value and Significance of the ‘Hongfan wuxing zhuan’ 洪範五行傳 in the History of the Five Phase Theory in the Han Period,” 1–35.

Hong Sŏngnyŏn, “The Recognition of Sun Wu (Eastern Wu) as the Beginning of the Southern Dynasties Reflected in the ‘Wuxing zhi’ and the ‘Soushen ji’ 搜神記 of the *Songshu* 宋書,” 37–84.

Kim Hansin, “The Transition in the Theory of Calamity as a Warning Signal in the Tang and Song Periods: Based on the ‘Wuxing zhi’ of the *Jiu Tangshu* 新唐書 and the *Xin Tangshu* 舊唐書,” 85–107.

Articles:

Kŭm Chaewŏn, “The Bamboo Slips Passed on to the Families: A Reconsideration of the Nature of Qin Legal Documents from Shuihudi,” 109–43.

Chŏng Pyŏngjun, “The Rebellions and the Disturbance of the *fanzhen* 藩鎮 in the Jianghui 江淮 Region during the Reign of Tang Emperor Dezong: Focused on the Attitude of Chen Shaoyu 陳少遊, the Military Commissioner at Huainan 淮南,” 145–79.

Yŏm Kyŏng’i, “The Invasion of the Nan Zhao 南詔 State in Chengdu in 829 and Its Influence on the Relationship between Nan Zhao State and the Tibetan State,” 181–204.

⁹⁵Two more associations are noteworthy in this regard. The first is the Korean Association for Central Asian Studies established in 1996 with the journal *Central Asian Studies* or *Chung’ang Asia yŏn’gu* 中央아시아研究, which increased its publication biannually in 2012. The second is the Manchurian Studies Association established in 1998 with the biannual *Journal of Manchurian Studies* or *Manju yŏn’gu* 滿洲研究 since 2003.

⁹⁶Yi Sŏnggyu, “Tongyang sahakoe ospinyŏn kwa tongyang sahak” 東洋史學會五十年斗 東洋史學 [Golden jubilee of the Korean society of the Asian Historical Studies and Asian historical studies], *Tongyang sahak yŏn’gu* 133 (2015), 17, 21–22.

Journal of Ming-Qing Historical Studies 55 (April 2021)

- Ku Pyömjin and Chöng Tonghun, "Re-reading Zhu Yuanzhang's 'Speech of Denunciation' and the Relationship between Koryö and Ming in 1372," 1–41.
- Yi Okja, "Hong Taiji's Reform of the Manchu Banner System and Military Campaigns on the Donghai Jurchen, 1634–1635," 43–75.
- Yim Kyöngjun, "Tobacco Culture and the Prohibition of Smoking in the Early Qing," 77–109.
- Ch'ae Kyöngsu, "The Qing Empire's Decision to Occupy Taiwan from the Maritime Historical Perspective: Focused on the Change in Penghu's 澎湖 Geopolitical Status from the End of the Ming and to the Early Qing," 111–51.
- Yi Miyöng, "Mei Wending's 梅文鼎 Understanding of the *Lü* 律, *Li* 曆 and *Tianwen* 天文 in the Compilation of the 'Li zhi' 曆志 of the *History of the Ming*," 153–205.
- Kim Chunyöng, "The Role of Clan Leaders in the Daily Lives of Manchus in the Mid Qing Period," 207–39.
- Chöng Ünju, "Beijing through the Maps and Paintings of National Ceremonies during the Reign of Qianlong," 241–78.
- An Kwangho, "An Analysis of the Meaning of the *benguan* 本貫 in the *Hongloumeng*," 279–302.
- Kim Hyönmi, "The Influx of Cholera and the Subsequent Endemicity in Hubei and Hunan Provinces during the Nineteenth Century," 303–36.

Korean Studies of Modern Chinese History 90 (June 2021)

- Cho Pyöngsik, "The Judicial Functions of the Tianjin Police, 1902–1911," 1–34.
- Kim, Chönghyön, "Father Vincent Lebbe's Indigenized Mission to China and Devotion to Saving China," 35–62.
- Hwang Yöngwön, "A Pro-Japanese Faction Crossing the Borders: Yi Wanyong and the Discourse about Collaborators in Modern China," 64–94.
- Son Sünghüi, "Changes in the Factors of Marriage Registration in the Republican Period: Focused on Marriage Contracts," 95–132.
- Son Söng'uk, "The Reports on the March First Movement Prior to the May Fourth Movement by English Language Newspapers in Shanghai," 131–56.
- Son Changhun, "Cadres in the Urban Grassroots of the People's Republic of China: Focused on the Neighborhood (*lilong* 里弄) Cadres in Shanghai," 157–90.
- Yi Sangho and Pak Söngjin, "The Changes in the Strategic Evaluations of Taiwan by the United States Before and After the Outbreak of the Korean War," 191–214.
- Yi Wönjun, "Mao Zedong's Perception of the World and the Variation of the 'Intermediate Zone' Theory, 1946–1976," 215–42.

This list of titles show that topics, materials, and methodologies applied in current Korean scholarship in Chinese history leave almost no lacunae. In spite of the remarkable growth over the last three decades, there are still problems generally acknowledged in Korean academia. Yi Sönggyu's following criticism accords well with the situation.⁹⁷ First, the fragmentation of research has something to do with the excessively narrow topics as well as the lack of intellectual networks among scholars. Yi regrets the rarity

⁹⁷Yi Sönggyu, "Tongyang sahakhoe osipnyön kwa tongyang sahak," 18–21.

of approaches crossing periods and regions as well. Second, sensitivity to current issues such as the dispute on history textbooks among the three East Asian countries has led scholars to waste their energy on non-scholarly work. Third, and most important I believe, the dearth of the culture of criticism constitutes the weakest point, something that most Korean scholars in Chinese history recognize. It is lamentable to find not a single book review in the latest volumes of the three journals mentioned above. Nor are many book reviews published in the other journals. Although the Korean review system for college professors does not involve book reviews, I think the lack of criticism largely prevalent in Korean academia is a topic worth examining historically. All the same, there is no question that the academic rigor Korean scholars in Chinese history have pursued since the colonial period has contributed to enhancing scholarship in Korean humanities more generally.

Concluding Remarks

Surveying the long history of Korean Sinology particularly focusing on Chinese history in the modern period brings to mind two important yet unconnected points. The first is the problem of “tradition” in the history of Korean Sinology. One may wonder why scholarship after liberation from Japanese colonial rule developed rapidly even in the underdeveloped economic and political condition of the 1970s and 1980s. In my opinion, the academic achievements in the second half of the twentieth century owe something to the Sinitic studies in the Chosŏn period. Although most of the Sinological works by Chosŏn scholars failed to find direct successors in the modern age, the strong enthusiasm and reverence they bore for studying the Chinese classics could not easily disappear. By the end of the twentieth century and even today, *Hanhak*, the studies of Chinese texts, seems to have maintained an ambivalent status as an outdated but important realm of scholarship and a sign of erudition. No Korean intellectual denies the profound influences from China in the premodern period. The general respect for studying the Chinese classics and culture that still remains strong among Korean intellectuals originated at least in part from the Sinological tradition that flourished in the Chosŏn period.

The second problem is more practical, and is based on the assumption that Korean scholarship in Chinese history over roughly the last three decades is underestimated in the world of Sinology. Only a few studies have been introduced to foreign audiences. Because Korean is not a key language from a scholarly perspective, it is difficult for foreign Sinologists to overcome the significant language barrier. The quality of digital translation is still behind that of human translation especially between Korean and Chinese and Korean and English. But one useful tip in this regard is that digital translation from Korean to Japanese has already attained a dependable level. Korea is one of the most digitized countries in the world, providing most academic articles in digitized format through integrated search sites such as KISS (Korean-studies Information Service System: <https://kiss.kstudy.com/index.asp>), RISS (Research Information Sharing Service: <http://www.riss.kr/index.do>), DBpia (<https://www.dbpia.co.kr/>), and KCI (Korea Citation Index: <https://www.kci.go.kr/>). Putting in keywords in English or Chinese directly leads to related articles with abstracts either in English or Chinese. Another useful tool for searching articles in Chinese history is the annual bibliography generally issued in the last volume of the year in the *Journal of Asian Historical Studies* or *Tongyang sahak yŏn'gu*.

Conflicting interests. The author declares none.