Korean Histories

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Editor's Introduction

Aron van de Pol & Steven Denney, Remco E. Breuker, Boudewijn Walraven

Korean Histories is back, after an almost decade-long absence, and we are delighted to present issue 5.1. The journal has its roots in the "History as Social Practice" project at Leiden University's Centre for Korean Studies, which set out from a conviction that has only become more pressing in the years since, that academic historians are not the only ones who legitimately engage with history. They are players in an uneven social field of meaning-making where diverse actors engage the past in different ways for different purposes. Public debate in Korea is rife with references to historical antecedents. Representations of history abound in popular culture, in political discourse, in school textbooks and exile literature, in monuments and internet forums. It is probably as difficult to imagine a society that does not in some way represent its past as it is to imagine one without any form of religion, even if one may doubt the empirical reality of what is represented. *Korean Histories* was founded to acknowledge this broader landscape, taking seriously all kinds of representations of history irrespective of their producer, and paying particular attention to the unconventional historiographies of Korea produced either outside the realm of traditionally recognized authoritative sources, or by a rereading of those sources. Amateur and other non-professional representations of history should be taken seriously, but it should not pass unnoticed that this journal is a journal edited and filled by professional historians. Methodological rigour, a rootedness in the sources and the critical approaches to them, and the clear distinctions we see between empirically verifiable fact, reasonable supposition, justifiable and enlightening speculation, and hard to prove assumption are part and parcel of this journal. As we relaunch the journal, we are proud to present five articles that show why this approach continues to matter.

Boudewijn Walraven opens with a speculative exercise that flips the usual approach to Pan'gye Yu Hyŏngwŏn's "modernity." Rather than judging Pan'gye through a nineteenth- or twentieth-century lens, Walraven asks what might have happened if seventeenth- and eighteenth-century European intellectuals had actually encountered his ideas. Could they have talked? Would they have found enough common ground for a meaningful exchange? The reversal frees the discussion from familiar teleologies and allows us to consider Pan'gye's thought on its own temporal terms, in the company of contemporaries who might genuinely have had something to say to him.

Vladimír Glomb introduces two rare North Korean history atlases from 1956 and 1961, acquired by a Czechoslovakian diplomat, that provide a window into DPRK history education at the middle school level. Covering Korean history from prehistoric times to liberation in 1945, these materials are all the more valuable because their content has since been officially revised, making it likely that they are no longer preserved in North Korea itself. Glomb's careful reading reveals how the young state went about shaping historical consciousness, producing representations of the Korean past that served specific social and political purposes.

Marion Eggert and Yu Myoungin present a translation and commentary of Kim Chŏng's "Manners and Nature of Cheju Island," one of the earliest detailed accounts of the island written during the Chosŏn period. Kim Chŏng (1486–1521), exiled to Cheju in 1519, spent his final years there, and his observations on climate, architecture, local customs, and shamanism offer a portrait of a place that mainland elites regarded as harsh and impossibly remote. By making this source available with careful commentary, Eggert and Yu fulfill one of the journal's

founding ambitions, bringing into wider circulation sources that are in the public domain but not easily accessible otherwise.

Andrew Logie examines the Pan-East Sea Culture Area (PESCA) discourse, an archaeological and proto-historical framework that traces material connectivity between eastern Korea and regions to the north and northeast from the mid-Neolithic period (around 4500 BCE) through the early centuries of the Common Era. What makes this discourse particularly interesting is the way it restores agency to historically marginalized eastern peoples, among them the Okchŏ, Ye, Yilou, and Mohe, groups that have long been treated as peripheral "others" within west-centered Korean historical narratives. The geography of the past looks very different depending on where you choose to stand.

The issue closes with Remco E. Breuker and Wonkyung Choi's documentation of a brush conversation, or *p'iltam*, between the Dutch Sinologist-diplomat Robert van Gulik and the Korean intellectual Chŏng Inbo during van Gulik's 1949 visit to Seoul. Conducted in Literary Sinitic, this exchange is a fine example of a transnational communication genre that enabled East Asian intellectuals who did not share a spoken language to converse through the written word. It also reminds us that "Korea" as a unit of analysis has always been embedded in wider networks of knowledge and conversation.

Taken together, these five articles ask us to reconsider how we draw the boundaries of Korean history and who gets to represent it. They reflect the journal's conviction that historiography is a social fact, shaped by the positions and purposes of those who practice it, and that the best scholarship remains alert to this condition. We hope this issue provokes the kind of curiosity and conversation that *Korean Histories* has always aspired to foster.

Aron van de Pol *&* Steven Denney, Managing Editors
Remco E. Breuker *&* Boudewijn Walraven, Editors

Articles

Yu Hyŏngwŏn in the Perspective of Early-Modern European Intellectuals

Boudewijn Walraven
Leiden University

Introduction

During his lifetime Pan'gye Yu Hyŏngwŏn (1622-1673) could not have imagined that three centuries later he would turn into a key figure in Korean historiography, the focus of academic conferences devoted to him up to the present day. As a *yangban* scholar affiliated with academic factions that were out of favor, he gave up the thought of qualifying for government office and spent his days studying in the countryside of Chŏlla Province, writing about a variety of topics, and particularly about the best way to govern the country in his *magnum opus* called *Pan'gye surok* ("Pan'gye's Random Records," a rather misleading title for a work based on nineteen years of zealous study and deep reflection). Initially his writings to a certain extent circulated in manuscript form and only in the second half of the eighteenth century *Pan'gye surok* was finally printed, with support from the court.[1] At that time, Pan'gye's ideas were taken as relevant to the actual tasks of government. Nearly two hundred years later, in the 1930s, Pan'gye was seen in a different light. Proponents of *kukhak*, "national studies," or *Chosŏnhak*, "Korean studies," who aimed to assert Korean identity positively, saw Pan'gye in a new light. Chŏng Inbo (1893-1950?) called him the "first ancestor of Shirhak [Practical Studies]," a movement discerned in the late Chosŏn period that showed there was progress, against the Japanese colonial view that Korean history was characterized by stagnation. Similarly, An Chaehong (1891-1965) referred to Pan'gye as "the originator of *Chosŏnhak*."[2] When following liberation in 1945, Shirhak became more prominent in Korean historiography, the reputation of Pan'gye as a champion of early modernity grew correspondingly. In spite of the fact that this prompted James Palais to relativize the modernity of Pan'gye in his massive study *Confucian Statecraft and Korean Institutions*: *Yu Hyŏngwŏn and the Late Chosŏn Dynasty*, in the first quarter of the twenty–first century academic interest in Pan'gye, expressed in a succession of conferences devoted to his thought, has lasted.

In an earlier paper I speculated on the question what Pan'gye might have learned about Western civilization from the Dutchmen he briefly met when they roamed the countryside of Chŏlla-do.[3] At the time I focused on the nature of the organization that employed the Dutch sailors, the United East-India Company (widely known by its Dutch acronym as VOC). The purport of my speculations was that the kind of European civilization this company and its supposed modernity (one of the first joint-stock companies!) represented might not have been very attractive to Pan'gye, had he known more about it. This paper is also speculative, but changes the perspective 180 degrees. Instead of imagining what Pan'gye might have

[1] James B. Palais, *Confucian Statecraft and Korean Institutions*: *Yu Hyŏngwŏn and the Late Chosŏn Dynasty* (Seattle, 1996), pp. 7-8.

[2] Im Hyŏngt'aek, "Shin palgul chŏsŏ rŭl t'onghae pon Pan'gye Yu Hyŏngwŏn ŭi hangmun kwa sasang," *Kukchejŏk shigak esŏ pon Pan'gye Yu Hyŏngwŏn ŭi Shirhak sasang* (Puan-gun. 2016), p. 1.

[3] For the reference to his Western visitors, see Yu Hyŏngwŏn, *Pan'gye surok, kw.* 8:6a. For the earlier paper, see Boudewijn Walraven, "Yu Hyŏngwŏn kwa Tongindo hoesa (VOC): kŭndaesŏng ŭi kaenyŏm e taehan tansang," *Han'guk shirhak yŏn'gu*, vol. 40 (2020), 181-196.

thought of the achievements of the West if his rather poorly educated interlocutors would have been able to furnish him with a fuller, and unadorned, picture, I will attempt to suggest what some European intellectuals of roughly the same era might have thought of Pan'gye's ideas in the entirely unrealistic case that Pan'gye would have had the opportunity to discuss his ideas with them. I fully realize that this is not only a fanciful but also a somewhat foolhardy enterprise. The thought of the European thinkers of this period shows considerable variation, includes discussions of widely different topics, and is often highly complex and abstract. Nevertheless, I am tempted by the subject, as I believe it may provide us with a somewhat different perspective on the question whether Pan'gye was in any sense a modern thinker, the question that has preoccupied both Korean scholars and James Palais (and prompted them of course to provide quite different answers). What was Pan'gye's thought like if seen from a seventeenth-century or eighteenth-century European perspective rather than a nineteenth- or twenty–century perspective, which in my view has too frequently been applied to it? And might this perhaps change our perception of the usefulness of the concept of modernity? In order to simplify my task a little, I will concentrate attention on a number of intellectuals who were active in northwestern Europe and particularly in The Netherlands, France and Germany.

It should be clear from the outset that this paper does not claim to be a systematic comparison of the thought of these European intellectuals and Pan'gye's philosophy and practical proposals. The aim is merely to suggest a reappreciation of Pan'gye by inquiring if he and a limited number of European thinkers shared interests and perspectives to a degree that might with some ease have allowed a measure of mutual understanding and appreciation, a *Horizontverschmelzung* as conceived by Gadamer, thus suggesting the possibility that they could engage in meaningful conversations in spite of obvious crucial differences.

The West-European Intellectual Climate of the Seventeenth Century

If one looks at the European material innovations of the seventeenth century, it is relatively easy to paint a picture that stands in sharp contrast to Korea in that age. In Europe this was a time of fundamental scientific discoveries and inventions that made scientific advancement possible: it was the age of the barometer and the thermometer, of the microscope, and of telescopes and binoculars, while it was also the century in which the pendulum clock was invented, which allowed more exact time measurement. All this stimulated the flourishing of empirical studies and the development of the sciences.[4] This went hand-in-hand with a widespread interest in mathematics, which was used as the basis for investigations in a variety of fields, including philosophy. One of the most notable achievements in this regard was the development of infinitesimal calculus by Isaac Newton (1643–1727) and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716). This interest in mathematics was not limited to pure scholars but common among intellectuals in general. Johan de Witt (1625-1672), one of the most prominent Dutch statesmen of his age, was also a superb mathematician and is regarded as one of the founders of actuarial mathematics, the mathematics that insurance companies need to calculate how much premium should be paid. A serious interest in mathematics was also pronounced among the greatest philosophers of the age, such as René Descartes (1596-1650) and Benedictus de Spinoza (1632-1677). In this age ancient theories, such as those of Aristotle which had been authoritative until then, were increasingly challenged on the basis of new empirical data, although paradoxically for modern thinkers Greek and Roman antiquity

[4]Catherine Wilson, *The Invisible World: Early Modern Philosophy and the Invention of the Microscope* (Princeton, 1995); H. Floris Cohen, *The Scientific Revolution: A Historiographical Inquiry* (Chicago, 1994), and from the same author, *How Modern Science Came into the World* (Amsterdam, 2010), particularly Chapter XI.

[5]Thomas Chaimowicz, *Antiquity as the Source of Modernity: Freedom and Balance in the Thought of Montesquieu and Burke* (New York, 2008).

continued to be a source of inspiration.[5] The latter is something to keep in mind when considering the thought of Pan'gye, who also proposed new policies but at the same time took ancient examples seriously.[6]

The development of new instruments and advances in the way they could be used also facilitated navigation, which allowed European seafarers to travel further and further, circumnavigating the globe. This made Europeans learn of various previously unknown or only very imperfectly known cultures, which in due course facilitated European mercantile expansionism and imperialism. But it also had some consequences of a very different, and less nefarious, nature.

Seventeenth-century European Interest in China

Thanks to the activities in China of Catholic missionaries like Matteo Ricci (1552–1610), and their mastery of the Chinese language, from the sixteenth-century onward Europeans became much better informed about the country than in the days of early travelers to China such as Marco Polo (1254–1324) and Odoric de Pordenone (1286-1331). This information also provided a potential framework for the understanding of other civilizations from the Sinitic sphere like Korea. An early example was *Historia de las cosas mas notables, ritos y costumbres del Gran Reyno de la China* by Gonzáles de Mendoça, which was published in Rome in 1585.[7] By the middle of the seventeenth century, substantial publications started to appear with information on China of superior quality, such as *Novus Atlas Sinensis* ("New Atlas of China," published in Cologne and Amsterdam, which included an account of the war of the Ming dynasty with the Manchus) and *Sinicae Historiae* (Chinese Histories), both by the Jesuit Martino Martini.[8] The latter was printed in München in 1658. Such publications, although the by-product of Catholic missionary work, were avidly read all over Europe, also in Protestant regions. Not a few were published in the Calvinist Dutch Republic, which could boast of a tradition of freedom of expression that made someone like Descartes (1596-1650), live there for more than twenty years. This intellectual climate drew some unexpected visitors. While the Jesuit Philippe Couplet, together with the Chinese convert Shen Fuzong 沈福宗, prepared the introduction to his translation into Latin of the *Analecta* 論語of Confucius (published in 1687 under the title *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus*),[9] he spent two years in the Netherlands.

Many European intellectuals were favorably impressed by what they learned about China and particularly by the knowledge they acquired of Confucianism. Georg Horn (or Hornius, the Latinized form of his name), a professor of the history of philosophy of the no longer extant university of Harderwijk in the east of the Netherlands, claimed in 1655 that "the entire Chinese Empire is ruled by philosophers" and praised Confucians as "surpassing many of the pagans in morals and judgements."[10] He concluded that only in China Plato's ideal of a state governed by

[6]To a certain extent this may have been what Ineke Sluiter has called "anchoring innovation in the past," a maneuver to make innovation acceptable; Sluiter, "Anchoring Innovation: a classical research agenda," *European Review*, 25/1 (2017), p. 23.

[7]Harriet T. Zurndorfer, *China Bibliography* (Leiden, 1991), p. 6.

[8]Federico Masini, "Martino Martini: China in Europe," in L.M. Paternicó ed., *The Generations of Giants: Jesuit missionaries and scientists in China in the footsteps of Matteo Ricci* (Trento, 2011), pp. 39–44. Martini's account of the Manchu invasion of China, *De bello Tartarico historia*, appeared in no less than twenty-eight editions in eight languages between 1654 and 1666; Zurndorfer, *China Bibliography*, p. 7.

[9]This was not the first published translation into a European language. In 1675 a partial Dutch translation, in verse, had appeared in the unlikely place of Batavia (Jakarta), the site of the headquarters of the mercilessly avaricious Dutch East India Company, under the title: *Eenige voorname eygenschappen van de ware deugdt, voorsichtigheydt, wysheydt en volmaecktheydt* (Some principal characteristics of true virtue, prudence, wisdom, and perfection); Trude Dijkstra and Thijs Weststeijn, "Constructing Confucius in the Low Countries," *De Zeventiende Eeuw* 32 (2016) no. 2, pp. 146-154. It is assumed that this partial translation was based on the manuscript of Philippe Couplet's Latin translation. On his way from China to Europe Couplet had spent some time in Batavia.

[10]Quoted in Thijs Weststeijn, "Vossius' Chinese Utopia," in *Isaac Vossius (1618–1689), Between Science and Scholarship*, ed. by E. Jorink and D. van Miert (Leiden, 2012), p. 209.

philosophers had been realized.

The Leiden-born polymath Isaac Vossius (1618-1689), a friend of Spinoza, Descartes and Grotius, who during his lifetime was regarded as one of the foremost scholars in a variety of fields, went so far as to describe China as a kind of utopia in the chapter "De artibus and scientiis Sinarum" (About the arts and science of the Chinese) which is included in a collection of his writings.[11] This was literally a utopia, a realm that did not actually exist (although Vossius firmly believed it did), but it quite accurately reflected characteristics of the *ideal* Confucian order, in which the ruling elite were selected purely on the basis of merit through the examination system, and the literati who had been promoted to office were supposed not to hesitate to express their opinion when they felt the monarch was pursuing improper policies.

Leibniz

In Germany it was no one less than Gottfried Leibniz who joined the chorus of scholars who praised China. In the introductory part of his *Novissima Sinica, historiam nostri temporis illustratura* ("The latest news from China, to illuminate the history of our time,"' published in 1697[12]) Leibniz judged that the two most developed civilizations in the history of the world were those of China and Europe. About the Chinese he said: "Who would have believed in the past that there exist on this globe people who even surpass us —us who in our own opinion are in all respects so polished in our manners-- in their rules for an even more civilized life?"'[13] Leibniz particularly appreciated what he called the "practical philosophy" of the Chinese, their ethics aiming for social harmony and social order. In this respect he judged the Chinese to be vastly superior to the West. These ethics, he averred, did not only promote mutual respect among equals, but also guaranteed that people would obey their social superiors. These superiors from the emperor down earned respect from the hoi polloi by their education in virtue and knowledge.[14] This last point we should keep in mind, because it shows that Leibniz did not have an ideal society in mind where everyone was completely equal; he accepted a hierarchy based on knowledge, and was even ready to accept a society that might accommodate hereditary rulers.

Leibniz's admiration for Chinese social life and customs was balanced by a more negative view of other matters, in particular their logic, metaphysics, and the knowledge of immaterial things (*cognitio rerum incorporearum*). He noted that the Chinese would make use of mathematics to solve practical problems, but not for an understanding of more abstract matters such as metaphysics.[15] Yet, although he aimed to apply mathematical logic to metaphysics, Bertrand Russell dismissed his philosophical hypotheses as fantastic, although precisely expressed.[16] In any case, in the final analysis the importance he assigned to mathematics in his thinking did not stand in the way of his admiration for important aspects of Chinese culture.

Spinoza

Increased knowledge of the countries of the Far East also played a part in the appreciation by other Europeans of the man whom Bertrand Russell called the "noblest and most lovable of the great philosophers,"'[17] Benedictus de Spinoza (1632–1677). Spinoza, whose lifespan largely overlapped with that of Pan'gye (1622-1673), was born in Amsterdam, but,

[11] Weststeijn, "Vossius' Chinese Utopia," pp. 207–242.

[12] For the complete text and the Latin original see Georg [sic] Wilhelm Leibniz, *Das Neueste von China (1697)*; *Novissima Sinica, mit ergänzende Dokumenten herausgegeben, übersetzt, erläutert von Nesselrath und Reinbothe* (Köln, 1997). For an English translation of the introductory part, see Donald F. Lach, *The Preface to Leibniz' Novissima Sinica, Commentary, Translation, Text* (Honolulu, 1957).

[13] Leibniz, *Novissima Sinica,* pp. 10, 11.

[14] Leibniz, *Novissima Sinica,* pp. 12, 13.

[15] Leibniz, *Novissima Sinica,* pp. 8, 9.

[16] Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy.* London, 1967, p. 576.

[17] Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, p. 552.

as is well-known, was excommunicated by the Jewish community to which he belonged because of his unorthodox theories. He believed that all phenomena in the universe are manifestations or modes of one primal and omnipresent substance, which he called God or Nature (*Deus sive Natura*). In his thinking, this God was immanent in everything, and not a personalized deity with particular intentions with regard to humankind, unlike the traditional god of the Jews and Christians. Quite a few critics ferociously attacked Spinoza, accusing him of atheism, but to Spinoza God was not merely nature as we usually think of it nowadays; it was the ultimate and exclusive substance of our universe, which mankind should strive to know as much as possible, to become one with Deus as much as possible, thanks to this knowledge. In its striving for union with the Godhead Spinozism may be regarded as a kind of mysticism. Spinoza in any case rejected materialism and is often characterized as a pantheist. In his *Ethica*: *Ordine Geometrico Demonstrata* (Ethics: demonstrated in geometrical order)[18] Spinoza grounded his ethics in the metaphysics of his philosophy. Moreover, he framed his arguments logically, following mathematical procedures, first stating definitions and axioms, then formulating propositions, and finally presenting proof. It has to be added that although the form was reminiscent of the way Euclid had explained geometry, the mathematics are not really essential to his ethics, which still have the power to inspire even when the supposedly mathematical proof he presented is no longer convincing.[19]

Contemporaries and later commentators remarked that Spinoza's views were very similar to certain East-Asian teachings, in spite of the mathematical framework he used. Thijs Weststeijn has noted that in the entry ''Japan'' in Pierre Bayle's *Dictionnaire historique et critique* (Rotterdam, 1702), Spinoza is linked to the philosophy and religion of certain Japanese religious groups.

> "... those [Japanese sects] that seek internal and insensible reality, reject paradise and hell, and teach things that are very similar to the philosophy of Spinoza . . . they say . . . that knowledge is no different from ignorance; that good and bad are not two entities, but that the one is not separated from the other. . . It is very certain that [Spinoza] has taught together with these Japanese Preachers that the first principle of all things, and all beings that constitute the Universe, are nothing else but one and the same substance."[20]

Bayle clearly links Spinoza's thought to that of Japanese Buddhists, although there is no reason to believe that he was in any way influenced by them. This is not the place to discuss in detail to what extent Spinoza's views actually happened to resemble East-Asian Buddhist teachings,[21] but for the purposes of this paper it is more relevant to consider whether they might in some way be similar to the Confucian convictions of Pan'gye.

In the Confucian debate about the question of what is the ultimate source of all phenomena, Pan'gye eventually chose to follow those who asserted that this was *i* 理, "principle"' or as it is often translated today "pattern."'[22] While Spinoza's philosophy was a one-substance monism, Pan'gye may be said to have subscribed to *i* monism. Heaven with its principle was his metaphysical point of departure. He also thought that for mankind it was imperative to strive to realize

[18]For an English translation, see Benedictus de Spinoza, *Spinoza's Ethics*, ed. and introduced by Clare Carlisle, transl. by George Eliot (Princeton 2020); the original edition of this translation dates back to 1856.

[19]Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, p. 554.

[20]Quoted from Thijs Weststeijn, "Spinoza Sinicus: An Asian Paragraph in the History of the Radical Enlightenment," *Journal of the History of Ideas* vol. 68, no. 4 (October 2007), pp. 538–561.

[21]In some ways it is similar to *Huayan* thought. There is, however, no evidence at all that Spinoza was really influenced by any East-Asian thinkers.

[22]What follows is based on Im Hyŏngt'aek, "Pan'gye Yu Hyŏngwŏn ŭi hangmun kwa sasang," in *Pan'gye yugo* (P'aju, 2017), pp. 700–718.

the heavenly principle through the human way of the cultivation of virtue. Thus, he grounded his ethics in his metaphysics, just like Spinoza. If that was all, it would be rather commonplace and not be really worth remarking, because it is common to most religions. But the fact that for both Pan'gye and Spinoza the fundamental element in their metaphysics was not a personalized deity and was a single entity makes it more significant. And Spinoza also distinguished different grades of human perfection based on the degree of knowledge of a person, as Confucians would do.

Spinoza shared more than this with Confucians. Although he lived a calm and rather secluded life of contemplation and study, he was not content to merely achieve an understanding of the way the universe was constituted; he definitely wanted to contribute to a better society. Hence his interest in social morality, manifested in his *Ethica*, and in the title and contents of two of his other works: *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (TTP), with its combined focus on theology and politics, and the unfinished *Tractatus Politicus* (TP).[23] With his earnest desire to create the conditions for a better society he would have found a kindred soul in Pan'gye.

For Spinoza, the supreme values needed to realize a harmonious community were justice and charity (justitia & charitas): "The worship of God and obedience to him consist only in Justice and Loving- kindness [= charitas], or in love toward one's neighbor."[24] Or, "God's Kingdom [*regnum Dei*] exists wherever justice and loving-kindness have the force of law and of a command. [25] Pan'gye and Spinoza might very well have discussed to what extent the latter's justice and loving-kindness equaled the equally cardinal Confucian social virtues of *ŭi* 義 (righteousness) and *in* 仁 (benevolence/humaneness).

Spinoza can also be said to have been a pragmatic thinker when considering the best ways to organize polities in a manner that would maximize social harmony. "So when I applied my mind to Politics, I didn't intend to advance anything new or unheard of, but only to demonstrate the things which agree best with practices in a certain and indubitable way, and to deduce them from the condition of nature"[26] and "I am fully persuaded that experience has shown all the kinds of State which might conceivably enable men to live in harmony…"[27] One may compare this with Pan'gye's scouring of the past to discover better, more equitable and more practical ways of allotting land to the peasants, going back to a precedent from the Chinese Zhou dynasty.

Spinoza would also have sympathized with Pan'gye's decision to "spend the rest of his life [after some attempts to engage on an official career] in scholarly contemplation and writing."'[28] Spinoza himself chose not to accept a professorship in Heidelberg, in order to be free to develop his thought, earning his keep as a humble manual worker, as a grinder of optical lenses. Yet, for both Pan'gye and Spinoza their contemplation and writing was not an escape from social concerns, but a way to concentrate on the problem of creating a just society.

One may question what would have been the extent of mutual understanding between Pan'gye and Spinoza in light of the fact that Spinoza these days is considered to be a pivotal figure in the development of what Jonathan Israel has characterized as the Radical Enlightenment.[29] It is important, however, not to ascribe to Spinoza all the values of modernity, such as egalitarianism, democracy, and tolerance, as they eventually took form in the twentieth century. He believed, for instance, that everyone was equal only when free men were concerned, not including women

[23]English translation of both works in Spinoza, *Collected Works*. Volume 2. Edited and translated by Edwin Curley (Princeton, 2016).

[24]TTP, Chapter 14, *Collected Works*, Volume 2, p. 269

[25]TTP, Chapter 19, *Collected Works*, Volume 2, p. 333.

[26]TP, Chapter 1, *Collected Works*, Volume 2, p. 505.

[27]TP, Chapter 1, *Collected Works*, Volume 2, p. 504.

[28]Palais, *Confucian Statecraft and Korean Institutions*, pp. 4–5.

[29]Jonathan I. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment* (Oxford, 2001), *Enlightenment Contested*: *Philosophy, Modernity, and the Emancipation of Man, 1670-1752*, Oxford, 2006, and *Spinoza*: *Life and Legacy*, Oxford, 2023.

and slaves. In a book review of Jonathan Israel's *Spinoza: Life and Legacy*, entitled "Was Spinoza's Enlightenment so radical after all?," Carlos Fraenkel went as far as to conclude: "Pluralism and tolerance are grudging concessions in Spinoza's republic, which, frankly, looks less like a blueprint of modernity than something midway between France and Iran.'"[30]

Of course, it will not be difficult to find certain points of divergence between Spinoza and Pan'gye, related to the very different social conditions in which they lived, but if the two would have been able to have a conversation, it is quite likely that Spinoza would have looked quite favorably on Pan'gye's basic convictions and intentions. For his part, Pan'gye certainly would not have joined the chorus of those Europeans who denounced Spinoza as an abominable atheist (provided that someone would have managed to explain the concept to him).

The Persistence of European Sinophilia in the Eighteenth Century

The idea that in certain respects Chinese civilization and Confucianism might be a model for Europe persisted well into the eighteenth century. A prime example is furnished by the *Lettres chinoises* (Chinese letters) by Jean-Baptiste Boyer, marquis d'Argens (1704–1771), published in several editions between 1739 and 1756.[31] It is a fictive exchange of letters by some Chinese intellectuals, based (implausibly) in Paris, Beijing, Isfahan, and Nagasaki, who comment on various aspects of Western civilization and compare these with Chinese civilization. This epistolary form was also chosen by other European writers to comment on their own culture from a novel point of view. The most famous example is of course *Lettres persanes* published in 1721 by Montesquieu (1689–1755). But d'Argens not only used the form as a way to comment on European culture, but also to express admiration for Chinese thought, in particular for the original practical philosophy of Confucius, which he held to be an ethical model for all nations. To one edition of the book he added a dedication to the spirit of Confucius from the supposed "translator" of the letters, the author of which, of course, was no one else than d'Argens himself. In this he addressed Confucius as "the greatest man the universe has produced," to whom the Chinese owed their virtue, their integrity, and their love of good ethics. In spite of his aristocratic origins, d'Argens was quite radical in his ideas, so much so that at a certain moment he thought it wiser to seek voluntary exile in the Dutch Republic, as other Frenchmen with radical ideas, such as Descartes (1596–1650) and Pierre Bayle (1647–1706), had done before him.

In connection with this paper, it is relevant that *Lettres chinoises* explicitly discusses the similarities between Spinozism and Chinese thought, and particularly Neo-Confucianism. In letter no. 14, a fictive Chinese scholar who is named Sioeu-Tcheou counters the arguments of his addressee, a fellow-intellectual named Yn-Che-Chan, that Neo-Confucian views would be unacceptable to Europeans. It is of course important to keep in mind that this is not really written by a Chinese, but by d'Argens, who for the content related to China relied on information supplied by the Jesuit missionaries in China. "Sioeu-Tcheou" writes (in my translation, BW):

> "You claim that the opinions of the new [that is the Neo-Confucian] commentators would appear monstrous to all Europeans, who cannot understand that there are persons so blinded that they recognize no other prime principle than a celestial power, blind and material, that commands the universe; that grants life to all beings, and that always acts in a regular manner, without recognizing that it acts.... I will disabuse you of a misunderstanding of the beliefs of the Europeans. There are many among them who follow a system that is very similar to that of the new Chinese commentators

[30] *Times Literary Supplement*, March 15, 2024.

[31] Boyer d'Argens, *Lettres chinoises: choisies et présentées par Lu Wan Fen* (Paris, 2011).

> [the Neo-Confucians]. Spinoza, a Dutch scholar, is the inventor of it… Spinoza supposes, like the Chinese, that there is but a single and unique substance, which he calls God, of which all other beings are but modifications…. Mankind, plants, the stars etc., in short, all the creatures, whatever they are, …, are only modes of the unique and universal substance, to which it has pleased Spinoza to give the name of God: one only needs to put in its place *li* 理 [principle/pattern], and all the European Spinoza followers think exactly like partisans of the new Chinese interpreters [of the Classics].'"[32]

Therefore, in the eyes of the European thinkers who followed the system elaborated by Spinoza the Neo-Confucian philosophy that was the foundation of Pan'gye's reform plans would have seemed quite plausible.

Another French exponent of admiration for China in the eighteenth century was François Quesnay (1694–1774), whose ideas we will discuss below when we investigate whether Pan'gye's proposals for the economy should be considered to be progressive or conservative. At this point we will just conclude that there are good grounds to assume that European intellectuals might have had a positive appreciation of the intellectual foundation of Pan'gye's ideas, while they also would have applauded his concern for a just society.

Seventeenth-Century European Intellectuals' Views with Regard to Palais' Objections

In the "Epilogue" to his magnum opus, *Confucian Statecraft and Korean Institutions*: *Yu Hyŏngwŏn and the Late Chosŏn Dynasty*, James Palais discussed the institutional changes Pan'gye proposed in the areas of military service, slavery, land distribution, and the economy, and also addressed the basis for his institutional proposals. He found not a few things to praise, but also noted the limitations which, in his view, Pan'gye's plans for a better society suffered from. Here I will just speculate what these plans might have looked like in the eyes of the seventeenth-century or eighteenth-century West-European intellectuals who have been briefly discussed above.

Military service

Conditions in Europe showed considerable differences according to the country, and might be so different from the situation in Chosŏn that in particular cases Europeans would have had difficulty forming an informed opinion on the way Pan'gye proposed to solve certain problems. This applies most clearly in the case of the military system. Before the French Revolution no European country had a system of military duty for a sizable part of its male population, such as Chosŏn possessed. Of course, states did maintain armies or assembled them in times of need, but the soldiers were mostly mercenaries, not a few of them of foreign extraction. In the Dutch Republic their officers were often foreign noblemen, frequently but not only from German-speaking areas. Compulsory military service for conscripts was a consequence of the French Revolution and introduced in France only in 1793 and in The Netherlands in 1810. In this respect, Chosŏn was definitely ahead of the curve.

I surmise that most of the intellectuals mentioned earlier in this paper would have welcomed military duty for all able-bodied males, rather than relying on an army of professional soldiers, many of whom were of foreign origin with a doubtful allegiance to the state they were serving, but that is just guesswork. Except for the case of Spinoza. Spinoza stated without the slightest ambiguity in his *Tractatus Politicus*: "The army must be formed only from the citizens without exception, and not from any others."[33] The reasoning behind this is spelled out in the *Tractatus*

[32]Boyer d'Argens, *Lettres chinoises*, pp. 121–122.

[33]TP, Chapter VI, *Complete Works*, Vol. 2, p. 535.

Theologico-Politicus: "... it's certain that Leaders can oppress the people only with an army to whom they pay a salary, and that they fear nothing more than the freedom of soldiers who are their fellow citizens, who by their excellence, hard work, and readiness to shed their own blood, bring about the freedom and glory of the state."[34] This is related to Spinoza's readiness to accept the overthrowing of tyrants, which Pan'gye perhaps would not have shared, although in a discussion of this he might have been reminded of Mencius's view that the ruler's Mandate of Heaven depends on the will of the people. What might have facilitated mutual understanding of the two in this respect is the fact that Spinoza did not really propagate the overthrowing of tyrants –he viewed it rather as a natural consequence of misrule—and generally advocated that people should obey the laws of their government.

Slavery

Slavery was not institutionalized in Europe itself the way it was in Chosŏn, but in the seventeenth European countries in their expansion to the Americas, Africa, and Asia became heavily involved in the slave trade, while making use of slaves for the exploitation of overseas plantations. The Dutch Republic was no exception. Within the country enslaved persons in principle were emancipated as soon as they set foot on Dutch soil, but in practice this rule was often breached when Dutch citizens brought their black enslaved servants from the colonies. Opinions regarding slavery were mixed. It was fiercely condemned by some Christian spokesmen, such as the Leiden professor of theology Festus Hommius (1576–1642)[35] and a Protestant minister from the Dutch region of Zeeland, Bernardus Smytegelt (1665–1739).[36] Hugo de Groot (1583–1645), better known by the Latinized version of his name as Grotius, and famous as the founder of international law,[37] in his *De iure belli ac pacis* (About the law of war and peace) of 1625 was of the opinion that no man is a slave by nature, thus recognizing the basic humanity of slaves (as Pan'gye did). But he recognized that persons might become enslaved as prisoners of war, because of serious crimes worthy of the death penalty, and because they were the offspring of an enslaved woman.[38] He argued that people in the first two categories might otherwise be killed, and that the children of enslaved women would have no chance of survival if they were not made slaves as well. To his credit he insisted that slavery did not justify maltreatment of the enslaved. Stronger defenses of the institution of slavery were quite common. Elie Luzac (1721–1796), a lawyer, philosopher, and book seller from Leiden, who is generally regarded as an Enlightenment thinker, judged that the Dutch economy could not sustain the abolishing of slavery on the plantations of the colony Surinam and that its abolition thus should be avoided.[39] Jacobus Capitein, a black ex-slave, born in Ghana, who took a degree in theology at Leiden University, even wrote a thesis arguing that slavery was not contrary to Christian principles.[40] In short, it would be difficult to argue that a radical rejection of slavery was characteristic of European thinking in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Ambiguous attitudes toward it were seen even among proponents of the Enlightenment.

If we return to the issue of slavery in Korea and

[34]TTP, Chapter XVII, *Complete Works*, Vol. 2, p. 331.

[35]Gert Oostindie & Karwan Fatah-Black, *Sporen van de slavernij in Leiden* (Traces of slavery in Leiden). (Leiden, 2017), pp. 47–48.

[36]A.N. Paasman, "West-Indian Slavery and Dutch Enlightenment Literature," in Arnold A. James ed., *History of Literature in the Caribbean*, Vol. 2 (Amsterdam, 2001), pp. 481–489.

[37]Grotius also has been seen as a precursor of the Enlightenment; Jonathan Israel, "Grotius and the Rise of the Christian 'Radical Enlightenment,'" *Grotiana* vol. 35, 1 (2014), pp. 19–31.

[38]The description of Dutch attitudes to slavery is based on chapter 3 of Dr. A.N. Paasman, *Reinhart*: *Nederlandse Literatuur en Slavernij ten tijde van de Verlichting* (*Reinhart*: Dutch Literature and Slavery in the Age of Enlightenment). (Leiden, 1984).

[39]M. van Vliet, *Elie Luzac* (*1721–1796*): *Boekverkoper van de Verlichting* (Elie Luzac: Bookseller of the Enlightenment). (Nijmegen, 2005), pp. 324–333.

[40]C. R. Boxer. *The Dutch Seaborne Empire*: *1600–1800* (Harmondsworth, 1973), pp. 170–171, and Oostindie & Fatah-Black, *Sporen van Slavernij*, pp. 52-53.

Pan'gye's ideas concerning it, James Palais evaluated Pan'gye's rejection of slavery on the one hand quite positively: "His contribution to the decline of slavery and Korea as a slave society may be his most outstanding contribution to the improvement of Korean life."'[41] Yet, he also qualified his appreciation, remarking that Pan'gye was willing to prolong slavery to a certain extent to accommodate the needs of *yangban* who were economically dependent on slave labor, while at the same time arguing for wage labor to replace it.[42] This most likely would not have decreased the sincerity of Pan'gye's rejection of slavery in the eyes of progressive Europeans in the seventeenth or eighteenth century. A basic condemnation of slavery in Europe usually went together with practical accommodations to the interests of plantation owners in the Americas. In fact, when slavery was at last outlawed in the south-American Dutch colony of Surinam, as late as 1863, for the same reason the enslaved were obliged to continue working for their former owners as wage laborers for ten years. Such pandering to the interests of European slave holders was so common that Pan'gye's concessions to the interests of the slave-holding *yangban* class do not seem remarkable. Nor do they substantially invalidate his advocacy of the abolition of slavery. Rather they may be seen as evidence that he was not merely advocating an unworkable proposal, but had a realistic trajectory in mind for reaching his goal.

Equality

Another issue on which Palais judged Pan'gye's advocacy to fall somewhat short was his criticism of the rule of the country by the hereditary *yangban* class. Palais judged that he was not a true supporter of equality:

> "One of Yu's overarching themes was the establishment of a truly moral society ruled by moral officials. He denigrated the examination system for its failure to producing [*sic*] honest and dedicated officials, but he saw the answer in adapting ancient institutions, particularly resuscitating the moribund official school system and initiating face-to-face evaluation of candidates for office. Yu's ideal society was as hierarchical as Korean contemporary Korean society, but on an almost completely different basis –demonstrated superiority in Confucian ethical behavior."'[43]

If we remember what scholars such as Leibniz and Vossius, or even the Jesuit missionaries to China thought about the ideals of Confucian culture, and Confucianism's role in creating a governing class of literati, it will be clear that they would have sympathized with Pan'gye's plans to revert to the ancient ideals of Confucianism, rather than reproaching him for a regressive or insufficiently progressive attitude. It would certainly not have bothered them that a hierarchy would remain in social relations, as long as the superiors in these relations earned their position because of their virtue and wisdom. As we have seen earlier, Leibniz in particular was quite specific on this point. Spinoza, in basic agreement with this, did not categorically reject the systems of monarchy and aristocracy, although he preferred democracy (the rule of the largest number).

Economy and Land Policies

With regard to the economy, one of the objections Palais had against Pan'gye's view of it was that he did not have a proper understanding of the role of commerce and the market, although he recognized these were of some use. Palais:

> "[Pan'gye] found that industry and commerce were not evil, as some ideologues believed, but necessary for the production and circulation of items of utility among the population. It was just that

[41] Palais, *Confucian Statecraft*, p. 1015.
[42] Palais, *Confucian Statecraft*, p. 1012.
[43] Palais, *Confucian Statecraft*, p. 1012.

> they were secondary to agricultural production and had to be limited lest the attractiveness of profit lured too many peasants from the primary occupation of agricultural production.'"[44]

Of course, Pan'gye was unaware of the theories of Adam Smith (1723-1790). But there is no reason to think that Pan'gye was much lagging behind European contemporary thinking. In the seventeenth century there was as yet no science of economics to speak of. In the eighteenth century the Frenchman François Quesnay (1694-1774) with his *Tableau économique* ("Chart of the Economy,'" published in 1758) advanced ideas that put the science of economics for the first time on an academic footing, becoming the center of the movement of the Physiocrats, who asserted the primacy of agriculture. In this work Quesnay demonstrated the circulation and recreation of capital, focusing on the crucial role of agriculture. About the *Tableau économique* a fellow Physiocrat and dedicated follower of Quesnay, the successful writer Mirabeau (1715–1789), wrote:[45]

> "The *Tableau économique* is the first mathematical law that has been devised in accordance with fundamental principles and in perpetual fulfillment of God's dictum "you will earn your bread by the sweat of your brow"' and expressed through exact and precise calculations.... Calculation is to the science of economics what bones are to the human body."'

Quesnay claimed that he had discovered certain natural laws, laws that, so he argued in his *Despotisme de la Chine* ("The Despotism of China,"' a prominent example of eighteenth-century European praise of China, in spite of the title[46]), the Chinese had recognized at an early date, before other nations.[47]

The rise of economists who stressed the importance of the market or labor has eclipsed the reputation of the Physiocrats, who held that agricultural land was the crucial factor, but during his lifetime Quesnay's ideas were welcomed by many and he contributed to articles on the economy in the famous *Encyclopédie* of Diderot and d'Alembert, the flagship of the Enlightenment. Adam Smith turned against Quesnay's idea that agriculture is the foundation of the economy, but in other respects took his work quite seriously.[48] In the nineteenth century, Karl Marx still praised Quesnay's early understanding of the role of agricultural laborers as producers of surplus-value.[49] Generally the Physiocrats devoted great attention to the question how taxes from agricultural profits should be made to contribute to the prosperity of the state, a topic of equal interest to Pan'gye and other thinkers about Confucian statecraft. A divergence in their thinking is noticeable where the mathematical approach of Quesnay is concerned, but fundamentally they would agree on many points. The Physiocrats would, however, mainly regard the role of land owners as crucial intermediaries between the government and agricultural workers and were not interested in putting an end to private ownership of land and allotting a plot to work to actual cultivators as Pan'gye proposed. This reflected different conditions and traditions rather than being related to more or less advanced forms of the economy.

[44]Palais, *Confucian Statecraft*, p. 1013.

[45]Liana Vardi, *The Physiocrats and the World of the Enlightenment* (Cambridge 2012), pp. 53–54; the quoted text is her translation from Mirabeau's *Philosophie rurale ou Economie générale de L'agriculture*, pp. xix–xx.

[46]This has been translated in full in Lewis A. Maverick, *China. A Model for Europe* (San Antonio, 1946), pp. 112–304. Quesnay thought that Chinese despotism was guided by "wise and irrevocable laws which the emperor enforces and which he carefully observes himself"' and therefore was to be favorably regarded; Maverick, *China*, pp. 141–42.

[47]Vardi, *The Physiocrats and the World of the Enlightenment*, p. 130.

[48]Toni Vogel Carey, "What Did Adam Smith Learn from François Quesnay?," *Journal of Scottish Philosophy* 18.2 (2020), pp. 175-191. This article concludes with the words "Smith was praising Quesnay's work as methodologically 'the nearest approximation to the truth that has yet been published upon the subject of political economy'."

[49]Vardi, *The Physiocrats and the World of the Enlightenment*, p. 12.

Conclusions

The limited sample of West-European thinkers I have confronted, albeit superficially, with Pan'gye's work suggests that Pan'gye was to a rather unexpected degree in tune with developments in Europe that in their totality have received the label of "Enlightenment," the trend in intellectual history that according to Jonathan Israel in its most radical form was initiated by Benedictus de Spinoza. The limitations of Pan'gye's work pointed out by James Palais seem more to be defined by norms and standards that are characteristic of the nineteenth and twentieth century than by those of Pan'gye's European contemporaries and eighteenth-century thinkers. This is of course not to say that Pan'gye was in all respects in accord with the thinkers we have mentioned. For that the political and social context was too different. Enlightenment thinkers had to contend with powerful church organizations that, often in concert with authoritarian secular power, tried to constrain free thought and tended to be intolerant of criticisms of their orthodoxy. Religiously, European countries were generally divided, which often led to conflicts. Therefore, the advocacy of toleration and free speech was an import element in the thought of Enlightenment thinkers. Another characteristic of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century European intellectuals was that they were not constrained by boundaries between the humanities, including theology, and the natural sciences, which hardened from the nineteenth century onward. Isaac Vossius was a philologist who besides his writing on China also wrote about biblical chronology, on winds and tides, the source of the Nile, and the origin of light, while he made observations with the microscope and telescope, the latter of which enabled him to describe the mountains on the moon.[50] For a similar breadth of learning in Korea we have to look to Tasan rather than to Pan'gye. But this does not distract from the value of Pan'gye's proposals, wide-ranging in their own way, which I have suggested, would quite likely have been regarded positively by the thinkers of the early European Enlightenment. In the final analysis, however, that fact may be thought of as of minor importance. Pan'gye's policy proposals should not be judged by any extraneous, for instance Western, yardstick (including that of "modernity"), but on their merits for improving the conditions of Chosŏn Korea, the aim he had set for himself. An aim, we might add, which Spinoza would have heartily applauded.

[50] Erik Jorink & Dirk van Miert, "Introduction. The Challenger, Isaac Vossius and the European World of Learning," in *Isaac Vossius (1618–1689), Between Science and Scholarship*, p. 2.

North Korean History Education

Vladimir Glomb
Freie Universität Berlin

Introduction

Chosŏn ryŏksa chidoch'ŏp (Atlas of Korean History) (1956) and *Chosŏn ryŏksa chidoch'ŏp: kodae, chungse p'yŏn* (Atlas of Korean History: Ancient and Medieval Times) (1961) are rare materials that provide a glimpse into North Korean history education in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The atlases are a valuable tool to analyze the Korean history curriculum at the middle school (*chunghakkyo*) level. The two books are unlikely to be preserved in public DPRK collections, since many parts of their content (like the location of the Ancient Chosŏn state, etc.) has been revised. The books are also not found in libraries outside of the DPRK due to the general ban on any export of teaching materials and textbooks. The publications were acquired by Jaroslav Bařinka (1931–2020) while he was part of the Czechoslovakian embassy in Pyongyang from 1955 to 1959 and during his research stay at the Academy of Sciences between 1960 and 1961.

1956 Atlas of Korean History

The 1956 *Atlas of Korean History* contains forty-five historical maps chronologically arranged from prehistorical times to the liberation of the Korean Peninsula in 1945. While most maps are full-page pictures, ten pages contain multiple maps or more detailed insets of certain areas (cities, ports, etc.). As the authors of the atlas indicate in their short introduction, the book presents maps showing the "distribution of material relics, territorial changes, wars, uprisings and strikes, administrative divisions, and international relations."

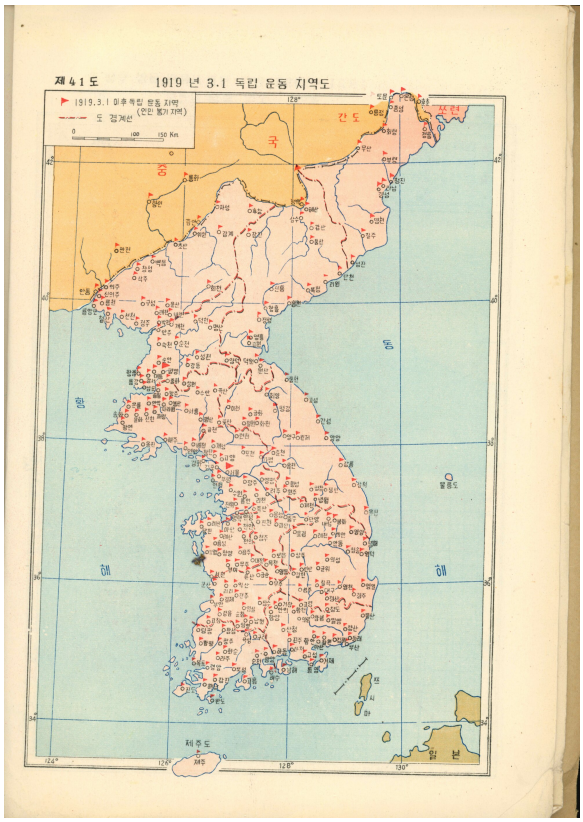

Figure 1: Plate from the 1956 *Chosŏn ryŏksa chidoch'ŏp*, showing the 1919 March First Independence Movement map (*Samil undong chiryŏkto*, 삼일운동 치역도).

Included Maps

1. Locations of primitive communal society material relics

2. Ancient states
3. Development of the Three Kingdoms at the end of the fourth century
4. Fourth and fifth century Three Kingdoms territorial changes
5. Three Kingdoms from the middle of the sixth to the middle of the seventh century
6. Koguryŏ repulsion of Sui and Tang invasions
7. Relics in the Pyongyang area and Ji'an Koguryŏ relics
8. Relics in Puyŏ and Kongju areas
9. Silla unification war
10. Silla administrative division during the eighth century
11. Silla international relations during the eighth and ninth century
12. Ninth century Parhae
13. Peasant uprisings and Koryŏ unification war
14. Relics in the Kyŏngju area
15. Locations of Three Kingdoms and Unified Silla material relics
16. Koryŏ ten provinces and twelve special counties
17. Koryŏ five provinces and two frontier regions
18. Koryŏ repulsion of Khitan invasions
19. Koryŏ, Song, Jin, Liao, Parhae and Western Xia international relations during the eleventh century
20. Peasants' uprisings at the end of the twelfth century
21. Koryŏ territory during the resistance against Yuan invasions
22. Relics in the Kaesŏng and Kanghwa areas
23. Repulsion of Red Turbans and Japanese pirate invasions
24. Administrative division of the later fourteenth and early fifteenth century
25. Establishment of Four Counties and Six Garrisons
26. Administrative division during the sixteenth and seventeenth century
27. 1467 Hamgyŏng peasants' uprising
28. Four Abolished Counties, Three Ports for trade with Japan
29. 1592–1598 Patriotic War (two plates)
30. Relics in the Seoul area
31. Old map of Seoul (around 1861)
32. 1811–1812 Peasant War in Pyŏngan Province
33. Mid-nineteenth-century East Asian international relations
34. 1862 Peasants' uprisings; incursions of foreign ships in the middle of the nineteenth century
35. Attacks of US and French fleets (1866–1871)
36. Areas of peasants' uprisings before the Peasants' War in 1894
37. Peasants' War in 1894
38. Anti-Japanese volunteers' struggle (1905–1907)
39. Anti-Japanese volunteers' struggle (1907–1910)
40. March First Independence Movement
41. 1921–1935 workers' strikes and tenant farmers' struggles
42. Anti-Japanese guerrilla war under the leadership of Marshal Kim Ilsŏng
43. Organisation and branches of the Fatherland Restoration Association (1935–1945)
44. Liberation by the Soviet Army

1961 Atlas of Korean History: Ancient and Medieval Times

The 1961 *Atlas of Korean History*: *Ancient and Medieval Times* covers Korean history from prehistorical times to the 1811–1812 Peasant War in Pyŏngan Province. It contains twenty-six plates with four pages containing multiple maps or detailed insets on particular areas or cities. The list of maps is as follows:

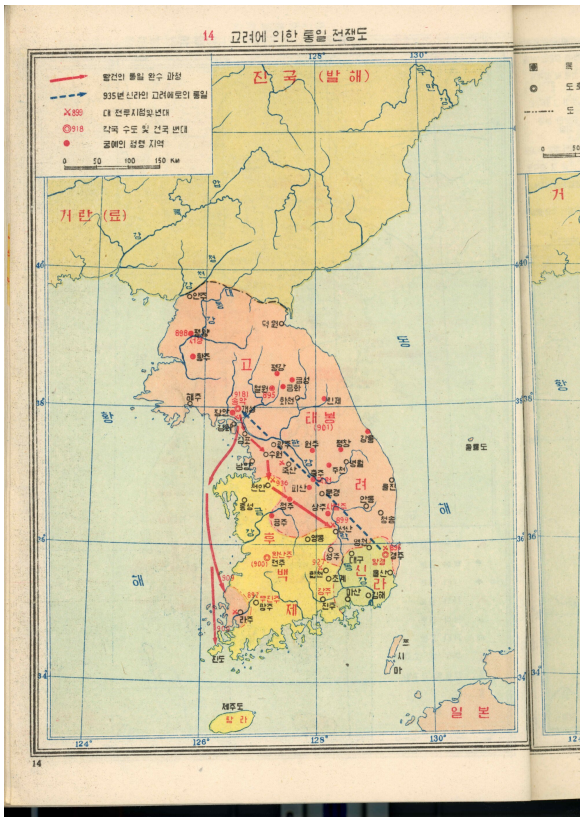

Figure 2: Plate from the 1961 *Chosŏn ryŏksa chidoch'ŏp: kodae, chungse p'yŏn*, depicting unification led by Koryŏ (*Koryŏ ŭihan t'ongil ch'ŏnjangdo*, 고려 의한 통일 천장도).

1. Locations of primitive communal society material relics
2. Ancient tribes (*chongjok*) and states
3. Development of the Three Kingdoms at the end of the fourth century
4. Three Kingdoms from the middle of the sixth to the middle of the seventh century
5. Koguryŏ repulsion of Sui and Tang invasions
6. Relics in the Pyongyang area
7. Relics in the Ji'an, Puyŏ, Kongju areas
8. Silla unification war
9. Silla international relations during the eighth and ninth century
10. Silla administrative division during the eighth century
11. Late ninth and early tenth-century peasants' uprisings
12. Relics in the Kyŏngju area
13. Locations of Three Kingdoms and Unified Silla material relics
14. Koryŏ unification war
15. Koryŏ five provinces and two frontier regions
16. Koryŏ repulsion of Khitan invasions
17. Peasants' uprisings at the end of the twelfth century
18. Thirteenth- and fourteenth-century resistance to Mongol invasions
19. Relics in the Kaesŏng area
20. Fifteenth- and sixteenth-century administrative division
21. 1467 Hamgyŏng peasants' uprising
22. 1592–1598 Patriotic War (1), 1592–1593
23. 1592–1598 Patriotic War (2), Yi Sunsin's fleet battles
24. 1592–1598 Patriotic War (3), 1597–1598
25. Relics in the Seoul area
26. 1811–1812 Peasants' War in Pyŏngan Province

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Bibliographic Entries

- **Chosŏn ryŏksa chidoch'ŏp** (Atlas of Korean History) / Ch'ae Hŭiguk, Ri Yongjung, Kim Saŏk, Kim Kyŏngin. Pyongyang: Kyoyuk tosŏ ch'ulp'ansa, 1956. ii, 45 pages: 45 illustrations; 30×22 cm. No ISBN; DPRK number ㄱ—30353; DPRK wŏn 91.00; 40 000 copies.
- **Chosŏn ryŏksa chidoch'ŏp: kodae, chungse p'yŏn** (Atlas of Korean History: Ancient and Medieval Times) / ??. 2nd edition. Pyongyang: Kyoyuk tosŏ ch'ulp'ansa, 1956. i, 26 pages: ?? illustrations; 25.5×18 cm. No ISBN; DPRK number 교—1215; DPRK wŏn 71.00; 66 000 copies.

Kim Chŏng, 'Manners and Nature of Cheju Island' (Cheju p'ungt'orok', Ch'ungamjip kw. 4)

Marion Eggert & Yu Myoungin
Ruhr-Universität Bochum

Introduction

During the Chosŏn Dynasty, Cheju Island was anything but a vacation spot. For most of the five hundred years of the dynasty, the island was regarded as a harsh, poor, uncultured backwater, its people uncouth followers of strange customs, its climate unpleasant because of the strong winds, and its land infertile. It did not help Cheju's reputation that, due to its remoteness, it also served as a convenient place of exile for disgraced officials. Even being sent to the island as a magistrate was considered a (mild) form of punishment, especially since the passage was dangerous and shipwrecks were not uncommon.[51] Having become part of the Korean territory only in Koryŏ times, Cheju was also devoid of places bearing historical significance for the mainlanders. In short, nothing could bring them there but ill fate. Accordingly, knowledge about the island brought back to the mainland remained sparse during the first half of the dynasty; the large majority of extant travel records on Cheju were written after the turn of the seventeenth century.[52] This makes Kim Chŏng's record especially valuable. His description of Cheju Island, while marked by its title[53] as a "record", is in fact a letter that Kim Chŏng wrote during his exile to Cheju, which lasted from 1519 to his death. The text has interlinear auto-commentaries which we have put in parentheses and printed in a smaller font so that it may be distinguished from the main text at one glance, just like the original does. Our own explanations are given in square brackets.

[51] A famous case of shipwreck on a return trip from Cheju Island to the mainland was Ch'oe Pu's 1487 displacement to southern China which he barely survived; his record of his adventures, *P'yohaerok*, is an important eye-witness account of early Ming China as well as a document of Chinese-Korean relations in the early Chosŏn period. See John Meskill, trl., *Ch'oe Pu's Diary: A Record of Drifting Across the Sea*, Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1965.

[52] Kim Misŏn lists eleven travel diaries with Cheju as subject, eight of which were written in the 18th and 19th century. See Kim Misŏn, "Sŏm yŏhaeng-ŭl kirok-han Chosŏn sidae kihaeng ilgi", *Tosŏ munhwa* 53, 2019, 33-63.

[53] The title was presumably added by Kim Chŏng's great-grandson Kim Sŏngbal who prepared the extant edition of Kim's Collected Works, printed in 1636.

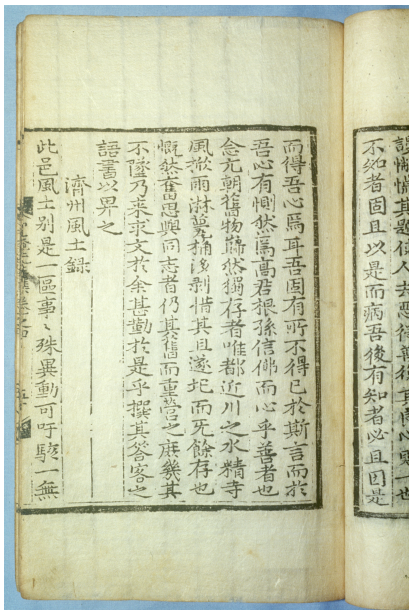

Figure 3: Cheju p'ungt'orok in Ch'ungamjip. photo: Academy of Korean Studies.

Translation

Kim Chŏng (1486-1521)

This municipality (*ŭp*) is by nature and manners a very special place; everything is different, and wherever one goes, one meets with a surprise. There is nothing magnificent to see. The climate is sometimes warm in winter and sometimes cool in summer; it changes all the time without any continuity. The air seems mild but the wind can be piercing. Thus it is difficult to regulate one's food and clothing, and easy to fall ill. Moreover, clouds and fogs create continuous gloom, and the sky seldom clears; violent winds and strange rains spring up at any time, the climate is damp and oppressive. Also, this earth produces a great variety of insects, and especially of flies and mosquitoes. These, as well as all the different worms and bugs like centipedes, ants and earth-worms, don't die in winter, so they are really hard to put up with. I imagine that in the harsh cold of the northern border this nuisance does not exist.[54]

The living quarters are all thatched; the thatch is not interwoven but just heaped on the roof and pressed down with long beams. Tiled roofs are extremely rare. Even the two prefectural offices {of the prefectures Chŏngŭi and Taejŏng} are thatched houses. The villages are built spaciously and provide much seclusion. The different wings of a house are not connected to each other. Nobody except the higher officials has floor heating (*ondol*). They dig holes in the ground and fill them up with stones. Then they cover them with earth in the shape of a heated floor. After it has dried, they sleep on top of it. In my opinion, as this is a windy and moist region, many illnesses like coughs and spitting originate from this.

They abjectly revere shrines and spirits. Male shamans are numerous. They frighten people with disasters and collect riches like dirt. On {annual} holidays, on the first and the fifteenth day of the moon or on the 'seven-seven' days {the seventh, seventeenth and twenty-seventh day[55]} they sacrifice animals for their heretical temples. Such heretical temples, numbering about three hundred, increase by year and month, and the supernatural deceits are steadily on the rise. When people fall ill, they are afraid of taking medicine, saying that it would offend the ghosts, and they are not enlightened till their death. They customarily have a suspicious fear of snakes. They install them as gods and on every encounter offer them wine and prayers; they do not dare to drive them away or kill them. When I only see a snake from afar, I set out to kill it. The locals at first were greatly alarmed by this. After some time they got used to witnessing it, but believed that I as a foreigner could do it {without harm}, and did not at all awaken to the fact that snakes have to be killed. Their delusion is really hilarious. I have heard in the past that this place is rich in snakes,

[54]It seems that Kim Chŏng is pondering here the respective harshness of the two remotest places of banishment, the northern border region and Cheju Island.

[55]This refers to the sacrifices to the goddess Illwe halmang on the seventh, seventeenth and twenty-seventh day of each month. See Boudewijn Walraven, "The Deity of the Seventh Day- and other narrative *muga* from Cheju Island", *Bruno Lewin zu Ehren: Festschrift aus Anlass seines 65. Geburtstages,* Band III, (Bochum, 1992), pp. 309-328. P. 316.

and that when it is about to rain the snakes in unison drill their heads through the crevices in the city wall at every spot. When I came here I tried to verify it and found it to be empty words. Snakes are just more numerous than on the continent. This is probably also due to the exaggerated veneration of the locals.

The sound of the people's speech is high and thin, like the pricking of needles, and much of it is unintelligible. Whoever lives here for a longer while naturally understands it. The ancient saying 'the small boys understand the language of the barbarians' refers to this.[56] They carry things on the back but not on the head; they have {small} mortars but no {big} mills. They beat their clothes but have no stone slab {they beat them with their hands}; they have smelting furnaces but without foot bellows {they pump the bellows by hand}.

Besides the local licentiate Kim Yangp'il, there are very few people with some knowledge of literature. Their hearts are vulgar and unthoughtful. From the higher officials down to the humble, all try to contact the influential people at court {nobody there who has not someone who "prays to Buddha" for him}. The aristocrats among them try to obtain the military position of *chinmu*[57] {since earliest Cheju history[58] the local customs have been like this, so this is not surprising}. The next position in preference is that of officer {*yŏsu*}[59], and last come the clerks[60]. {Below that there are no ranked offices.} The seal-holders and those who studied at the local schools {these are all local clerks from among the commoners} occupy themselves all day with seeking their own profit. From the minutest of disputes they derive bribes, and they lack any idea of honesty and justness. The strong rule over the weak, the violent plunder the righteous. The proclamations of the sovereign do not reach down here; thus it is not surprising that the officials are rapacious like {the former Cheju magistrate} Yuk Han.[61] Those who are honest and just, although being cherished by the common people for their sentiments, are ridiculed by this brand of people as 'off the mark'. If they are not educated with some learning to enlighten their hearts, there is no hope of their ever changing their ways. For their minds are preoccupied with gain and they do not know of anything else. If one talks to them about honesty and justice, they just think it's not profitable and despise it. If a learned monk would use his rhetoric to depict heavens and hells to these people, it might effect something, but the local monks all have wives, live in the village and are dull like trees and stones. Those like the necromancers[62] who frighten the people {into offerings of} cakes and wine also have only their profit in mind.

The three administrative districts {i.e. Cheju-mok, Chŏngŭi-hyŏn and Taejŏng-hyŏn are all placed at the foot of Halla Mountain, and the} ground is uneven and rocky, with not half an acre of flat land. Plowing it is like picking in a fish-belly. The land looks flat but one cannot see far, as it is so undulating. Though there are mounds, they are disordered and hard to keep apart, the features {of the earth} being similar to a net, or to a disorderly burial ground. Although there is much accumulated rock {the highest among the elevations are all such heaps of rock}, none of them are strange or elegant or in good arrangement; all are dull ores, dreary black and a hateful sight. Although there are hills here and there, they stand lonely, discarded, massive and bald {they stand alone but do not rise high, are massive but at the same time bald}. They lack winding and embracing formations. Only one great mountain rises in the very center, shaped like a vault, but it is merely an obstacle. This is a far cry from your words

[56] This "ancient saying" actually is a line from a poem by Du Fu (the fifth of the "Five songs on an autumn plain", *Qiu ye wu shou*).

[57] A local military position of Junior third to Senior sixth rank.

[58] Literally, "since the times of the *sŏngju*", the title of the sovereign of Chejudo in Silla and Koryŏ times. The story to which this is traced back is to be found in *Koryŏsa*, "Chiriji". Only in the early years of the Chosŏn dynasty was Chejudo integrated into the regular administration system, first by changing the titles from aristocratic to administrative ones.

[59] A *yŏsu* led a squad of 125 men.

[60] *sŏwŏn*, a low local office.

[61] Yuk Han was dismissed for dishonesty in 1506.

[62] *mugwi*: those serving the spirits.

that 'much bones and little flesh are the appearance of Kŭmgang Mountain'.[63] When I think back to the earthy mountains which I have looked down upon before, like when I governed Chŏnŭi and Ch'ŏngju,[64] how could I find them {here}? Also, the mountain's summits are always indented like a pot, and floods of mud accrue in this cavity. All the peaks are like this, so that they are called 'headless mountains' (*tumuak*). This is especially strange. However, when one climbs the ultimate peak of Halla Mountain, one sees into the blue distance in all four directions, can look up to the 'Old Man' in the extreme south {the 'old-man-star' is as large as the morning star and is situated on the axis of the sky's extreme south. It does not rise above the earth. To see it is an omen of righteousness and long life. Only when climbing Halla or the Southern Mountain {i.e. Hengshan} on the Central Plains is it possible to see this star}, can point to mountains like Wŏlch'ul {in Kangjin-gun, Chŏlla-namdo} and Mudŭng {near Kwangju, Chŏlla-namdo}, and can stir up one's sense for the extraordinary. Li Bo's words "Clouds lower, and the bird roc overturns;/ waves stir, and the sea-turtle {said to carry the earth} dives under" can be matched with this alone. I regret my confinement and my lack of power. But, having been born as a man to one place, having traversed the great vastness {i.e. the ocean}, being able to tread this alien region and witness these differing manners is also one of the extraordinary and splendid events in life. For there are those who want to come and cannot attain it, those who want to stay and cannot escape {from having to go}; this seems to be preordained by fate, how can one struggle with it?

Figure 4: Yŏngju-san taech'ongdo, a map of Cheju drawn in 1721. The island is represented as seen from the mainland, with the south at the top of the map. Courtesy of the National Palace Museum.

The region of Halla and the province town have very few fountains or wells. Some village people draw their water from a distance of five *li* and still call it 'nearby water'. Other fountains give water only once or twice a day and are salty. To draw water, they always carry a wooden bucket on the back {things are mostly carried on the back by women} to bring home as much water as possible. Moreover, there are very few local specialties. In animals, there are only roe, deer, and pigs in considerable numbers. Besides the badger, which is also numerous, there crows, owls, and sparrows, but no cranes or magpies. Among wild vegetables and herbs, *myŏl* {Houttuynia cordata} and bracken

[63]The addressee might be a nephew of his. See Hŏ Pong (1551–1588), *Haedong yaŏn*, "Chungjong sang". The appellation used for Kŭmgang Mountain here is *kaegol*, literally "all bones". Kim Chŏng had been to Kŭmgang Mountain in 1516, after his release from an earlier exile.

[64]In Ch'ungch'ŏng-namdo and Ch'ungch'ŏng-pukto respectively; Kim Chŏng is revered in the shrine of a private academy (*sŏwŏn*) in Ch'ŏngju.

are the most common, but 'fragrant vegetables' (*ch'wi*) {Aster scaber}, *ch'ul* {Atractylodes japonica}, ginseng, *tanggwi* {Angelica acutiloba}, and *toraji* {Platycodon grandiflorus} do not exist. In sea vegetables they have only seaweeds like *miyŏk* {Undaria pinnatifida}, *umu* {known as agar-agar}, and *ch'ŏnggak* {Codium fragile}, and no laver (*kim* {Porphyra tenera}), *kamt'ae* {brown algae, Ecklonia cava}, or *hwanggak* {brown variety of Codium fragile}. In sweet water fish there are none but those of the 'silver-mouth' {Plecoglossus altivelis} kind. As for ocean fish, they have abalones {Haliotis discus}, squid, red horseheads {Branchiostegus japonicus}, cutlassfish {Trichiurus lepturus}, mackerels and so on; besides these, the various common breeds like octopuses, male rock-oysters, clams, crabs, herring, sailfin sandfish {Arctoscopus japonicus}, and croakers do not exist. They produce neither stone products nor ceramics nor brassware; and they have extremely few rice paddies. The local aristocrats eat what they {get from} trade with the mainland; those who cannot afford this eat grains from dry fields. Thus clear rice wine is very expensive, and summer like winter they drink *soju* {crude liquor}. Cattle is plentiful, and they cost no more than three or four lesser-silver coins,[65] but in taste they are inferior to those of the mainland, because they feed on wild pastures and do not get any grains. The most ridiculous thing is that they produce no salt although their land is surrounded by the ocean {for decocting 'field-salt' like on the west coast, there's not enough salt that could be plowed up {from the fields where} sea water has been left {to evaporate}; for decocting 'sea salt' like on the east coast their sea water contains too little salt - they would have to do hundred times the work and still get very little out of it}. So they have to import it from Chindo {island off Chŏlla-namdo} and Haenam {peninsula east of Chindo}. Thus it is very expensive for ordinary people. Among the local produce, most plentiful is the 'fragrant mushroom' {ordinarily called *p'yogo* {Lentinula edodes}} and the fruits of the *omija* {Maximowiczia chinensis} which are deep black and as large as fully ripe wild grapes, indistinguishable from the latter. They also taste strong and sweet. The Chinese Herbarium (*Bencao*)[66] says about the *omija* that 'those growing in Chosŏn are of good quality', and again 'the sweet-tasting are the best'. Now when seeing that the *omija* fruits growing in our country are purple, small, and sour in taste, and still are prized like this in the Herbarium, then the produce of this place must doubtlessly be the best in the world. Up to now people did not know this and made use of it only to fill their own cups and plates. I was the first to desiccate them; they are extraordinarily rich in flavor. This year, the district magistrate (*ŭpchae*) and I both gathered a lot and dried them. I intend to send you a little to let you know the taste, but so far they have not completely dried up. Further, there is a wild fruit called *mŏl*{*kkul*} {Stauntonia hexaphylla}.[67] The fruit are the size of a quince; the skin is purple black, and if split open it shows the seeds, which resemble those of the clematis {Akebia quinata}, but differ in that they are slightly bigger and of slightly richer taste. For they are just a larger kind of clematis. I have heard that they also grow in places on the sea coast like Haenam, but do not know whether this is true. Besides this there are no valuable strange things. The various kinds of fruits of the mainland like pears, dates, persimmons and chestnuts are all extremely rare. Even when occasionally found, they are not delicious. There are absolutely no Korean pine {Pinus koraiensis} seeds, and pine trees {Pinus densiflora} are also very rare. The pine needles I take {as medicine} I have to get from far away. The valuable things of this place are oranges and pomelos, gardenia nuts {used for a yellow dye}, yew nuts {Torreya nucifera}, soapberry, log-

[65] C*hŏng*{*-ŭn*}, silver coins of mediocre quality (about 70% of silver).

[66] Such a passage is found in the *Bencaojing jizhu* by Tao Hongjing (456–536) (but of course it speaks about Ko{gu}ryŏ, not Chosŏn, thus the place where the high quality *omija* was to be found according to Tao may have been outside Chosŏn or modern Korean territory).

[67] The text gives a Chinese character compound read *marŭng* and glosses it with the Korean syllable *mŏz* (ᄆᆞᅀ). Present Cheju dialect for *mŏlkkul* is *mŏngkkul*.

[68] In *Sinjŭng Tongguk yŏji sŭngnam* (1530), kwŏn 38, "Cheju-mok", the *muhoemok*, which is given as 'No-ash-wood' above, is briefly described as follows: "{This} originates from Udo {a small island near Cheju}. When being on the sea, it is soft as well as brittle, and drifts on the waves; however, immediately upon leaving the water it becomes hard and solid."

woods {Xylosma congestum}, two-years-wood {probably an oak species, Quercus glauca}, no-ash-wood,[68] nautilus shells,[69] and coconuts {the last three things come over the sea. The natives don't know the name of the coconut; they obtain them only when floating fruits are swept onto the shore. The locals make calabash-like wine-utensils from {the nautilus shells}[70] which they call 'apricot kernels'}, the more-time-chestnut and the red chestnut {these two items are similar to the nuts of the chestnut-oak, but not bitter, and they can be used for gruel},[71] and good horses. They have nine kinds of oranges and pomelos: The golden orange {it ripens in the ninth month, earlier than all others}, the milk-tangerine and the Dongting-orange {these two ripen towards the end of the tenth month. These three kinds are of about equal quality. The golden and the milk-orange are both larger and have a rich, sweet taste; the Dongting-orange is slightly smaller and tastes fresh, its sourness being somewhat superior to the others}, the green orange {this kind is too sour to eat in autumn and winter. After going through a whole winter, in the second and third month sourness and sweetness become balanced. In the fifth and sixth month the old fruits are yellowing, and the new fruits are green and small, both together on the same branches, a very strange sight. By this time they are sweet as honey, which harmonizes well with their sourness. By the seventh month, the seeds within the fruits have all turned to water, and the taste is still sweet. Till the eighth and ninth month and by winter, the fruits turn green again and the seeds come again into being. The taste is very sour, no different from the new fruit. As long as they are sour, people look down on them and don't eat them. The first three kinds are wonderful in taste at just that time; thus they are graded this way. But I think that the green orange deserves the top grade}, the mountain orange {the fruits are small like pomelos, and they are sweet in taste}, the tangerine and the pomelo {everybody knows these two kinds}, the Chinese pomelo {the fruits are as large as quinces, able to hold more than one pint, and in taste they reach the pomelos. These being so, the large fruits hanging from the branches, yellow and ripe, are a great treasure}, and the Japanese orange {the fruits are smaller than those of the Chinese pomelo, and in taste they are also inferior; this is the lowest grade}. All nine kinds have quite similar branches and leaves, only the pomelo is very prickly and the peel of the fruits most fragrant; the tangerine has the thickest leaves, and its peel is least fragrant. This must be the reason they are graded so lowly. All the other kinds are not very thorny {nor is the tangerine}, and their leaves are slender; the fruit peel is of strong and not very fragrant odor, but when chewed it has a strong aroma, bitter and hot {this is the same with the Chinese pomelo and the Japanese orange}. One can't bear to eat it, but as medicine it is most effective. This must be the reason that they are graded highly. The trees grow no higher than a little more than ten feet, but the big ones among them look like pillars. They preferably grow in thickets, and their stems and branches are also quite large. As many as ten of them may intertwine like dragons, coiling and lumping together, archaic and tough. The bark of the old trees is yellow and red and covered with moss, that of young ones is dark green, fresh and lovely. The leaves are green throughout all seasons. In this place lacking all worthwhile sights, these groves are really a fascinating attraction.

My living place is half a *li* away from the eastern gate of the island's capital, on the former site of the

[69]We assume that the phrase *aeng mu na ya cha* 鸚鵡螺椰子 should originally have read 鸚鵡螺 螺椰子, *aengmuna* being the nautilus and *nayaja* the coconut. It makes little sense to assume that parrots should have been washed ashore by the sea. On top, the *Sinjŭng Tongguk yŏji sŭngnam*, loc. cit., also mentions *aengmuna* as local produce.

[70]The text we follow (*Han'guk munjip ch'onggan* vol. 23, the photomechanic reprint of the 1636 edition of Kim's works) has a lacuna of about three characters before this sentence. We suspect that the word missing here might be *aengmuna*, perhaps because the editor was bemused by the – in his eyes, incorrect – "na". Nautilus shells were used for luxurious wine cups.

[71]The names of these two chestnuts (*sigayul* and *chŏngnyul*) as well as the Two-years-wood (*inyŏnmok*) are also given in *Sinjŭng Tongguk yŏji sŭngnam*, loc. cit., but without any further information.

[72]Kŭmgangsa ku sa ki 金剛社舊寺基. A temple named Kŭmgangsa 金剛社 existed in Kŭmhae in Kyŏngsang Province. It is not easy to verify the existence of a temple by the same name in Cheju. A later traveller to Cheju, Kim Songgu (1641-1707, Cheju magistrate 1679-1682), also speaks of this site, in the very same phrasing (Namch'ŏn rok sang, *P'arohŏn sŏnsaeng munjip* kw. 5, 27b); it is possible that he references Kim Chŏng. Given that "Kŭmgang Society" was also used for Buddhist gatherings, Kim Chŏng might be speaking

Diamond Society Temple.[72] I have no neighbors in this very secluded spot. A grass hut of several pillars[73] stands there, erected in the style of the north, very bright and spacious. It contains one small room with heating. Outside the living room there's a *maru*, an open veranda, of the size of half a room, so that I can avail myself of sun- as well as moonlight. Under the eaves of the *maru* an old persimmon tree with thick foliage spreads its shade. I often sit there on the *maru*, so close to the tree as to be able to stroke it. The living quarters are enclosed by a stone wall, built of ugly stones which are piled up for more than ten feet; on top of it, wooden railings in the shape of antlers have been attached. The wall is no more than half a *p'il* {roll of cloth} away from the eaves. This high and narrow enclosure is in accordance with the state law {regulating the abode of exiles}. But high and close stone walls are also local custom, serving to ward off violent winds and torrential snows. Moreover, as I am living all alone, I also have to be wary of robbers, so even if I had planned it myself, I would have had to provide this wall; I only wish it were a bit wider. The wall impedes my view and does not allow any aesthetic pleasure. Even to grow plants seems of little interest. Also, I am not in command over the time I spend here; without a sense of a future one has no leisure to concern oneself with gardening. Now that I got your words about having planted a juniper which has grown old by now, my interest has been roused, and I plan to plant, from next spring on, tangerines, oranges, and yews in a row. Straight north from my house, in twenty paces distance from the wall, there is an old pear tree of some ten feet height. It has sparse branches and thin foliage, not a good specimen, but recently it has been trimmed, supplemented with a pavilion, and surrounded by mottled bamboo. As the place is elevated, in the far distance one can see the ocean to the north {the sea is about a *li* away from the pavilion} and the Ch'uja islands {group of islands north of Cheju} line up below one's eyes. In the nearer distance, one can see into the town to the west, taking in the rising smoke, the willows around the office buildings and the fruit orchard in the southern city {south of the inner but inside the outer city wall, in front of the source of a fountain, the government has planted an orange orchard. The outer city wall has been erected because of the fountain, more than one *li* away, so as to have the water within the city wall. This orchard is separated from my pavilion by half a *li*, within hearing distance}. The orange grove is a very pleasant sight. In the closest vicinity, the orchard of the Diamond Society {also a government garden} can be seen, which is full of orange trees. This garden is about fifty to sixty paces removed from my pavilion. It is delimited by a stone wall, but a small bamboo alley leads through. Sometimes I am able to roam beneath those trees among the jade-green leaves and the golden fruit, the green and yellow ripe oranges giving a fragrant feast when cut open. These times are what you have called 'singing long in the woods of oranges and pomelos'. In such times, can I do otherwise but turn my neck in bewilderment and think of you? In this awful place, this pavilion is the one spot where to find some solace.

Also, I luckily live near to a fountain which springs from the eastern corner of the orchard in the southern city. The fountain is very big at its source {more or less like the wells of Pokch'ŏn-dong}[74] and flowing out from under the eastern wall, it provides me with water to draw {the place where I draw water is only forty and some paces removed}. It is cold as ice {in this place there is no ice, and one relies on this well to 'wash away cares'[75] and for cooling meat in summer days}, but the lower reaches are impure and unpleasant {as by then many have drawn their water from it before, it can only be muddled}. When mouthing into the sea, it forms a pool {here the water is clean again, and there is also a cavity in the clear pool too deep for people to tread, where one can row a boat; this produces most silver-lips.

generically of "a former Buddhist temple".

[73]'Pillar' refers to a unit used for describing the size of houses, *ch'ae* in modern Korean.

[74]Pokch'ŏn-dong is a place near (now in) Pusan well-known for its springs. However, the phrase *pok ch'ŏn tong su* 福泉洞水also reminds of the common Daoist appellation for places where the immortals roam, *dong tian fu di* 洞天福地, so it has connotations of "waters for the immortals".

[75]It is unclear what this signifies. We assume it might refer to getting clean water for tea.

Reeds are growing on its sides, and it gives a little bit the feeling of the secluded pleasures one can enjoy among the "rivers and lakes"[76]}. The silver-lips that breed here can be caught with nets or hooks. One can also fish for various small ocean fish while sitting on the seashore. This would seem quite pleasant but is actually not much fun, a far cry from the pleasures of clear streams and softly flowing brooks. For there is no agreeable place to sit, and fishing in the sea is hindered by the rushing on of winds and waves; on very few days can one settle peacefully, so that no refined atmosphere can come up. Also, as company I have either rustics or Mr. Pang {named Sunhyŏn, the brother-in-law of the judge {*p'an'gwan*}; he has some knowledge of the scriptures, has heard a lot about our affairs and has sufficiently formed his own views, so that some conversation with him is possible. But he is influenced by vulgar manners and lacks refinement; among the "rivers and lakes", he would get nowhere. Still, to meet somebody like him overseas is very lucky}. How could these companions suffice to arouse my enthusiasm? As there is nobody dear to me here to share with, I have almost no heartfelt pleasure, just as you have said. Also, the state law must be respected; thus I seldom go out, not more than once or twice a month, or sometimes not at all for a whole month. Not even to the pear-tree pavilion do I go very often, and still less frequently to the orange garden. To walk alone just increases my musings. {When the oranges are ripe, I had also better stay away; the officials oversee them very strictly}. I am separated from my bones and flesh, and anxiously think of my dear ones far away. Of the companions of my roamings in old times, many have already withered away. Forlorn I am in secluded lands, having had to taste the world's inconstancy once more. I am searching for equanimity, and always cheerfully follow the course of things, but when I suddenly think of this, I cannot help being sadly moved.

[76] "Rivers and lakes", *kangho*, is a notoriously polysemic expression that has been used both for nature as a place of reclusion (i.e., abstaining from court politics) and for a place where people meet (derived from the use of rivers and lakes as waterways), i.e. "the world" (often in the sense of a world apart from the court, with its own rules, yet clearly distinct from the solitude of a recluse). Here, the term seems to point to a place in nature, yet one imbued with an air of sophistication. When the term next occurs a few lines below, the emphasis obviously lies on this latter aspect, to a degree that there it almost turns into an equivalent of "polite society". – For an extended analysis of the meaning of *kangho* in 16th century Korean usage, see Marion Eggert, "*Kangho* (*jianghu*) als Raum und als Wassermetapher im koreanischen Langgedicht "Kwandong pyŏlgok" (ca. 1580)", forthcoming in: Clemens v. Haselberg, ed., Die vielen Gesichter der Flüsse und Seen: Untersuchungen zum chinesischen Jianghu, Münster: LIT-Verlag, 2025.

Eastside Story

the Pan-East Sea Culture Area discourse in South Korean archaeology and proto-history

Andrew Logie
University of Helsinki

The Pan-East Sea Culture Area (PESCA) is a South Korean discourse of archaeology that elaborates material connectivity between eastern Korea (Gangwon Province and the Tumen River basin), and continental regions to the north and northeast beyond. The temporal scope stretches from the mid-Neolithic (c.4500 BCE) to early centuries CE. As a discourse, it is representative of current interest by South Korean scholars in regions that extend beyond the conventional boundaries of early Korea. However, PESCA is distinct for its focus on the remote eastern *vectors transecting the Korean Peninsula and continental Manchuria, regions that are underrepresented in traditional and current discourses of the early past. A characteristic and tension within PESCA discourse is that it bridges between a transnational archaeology on the one hand, and concerns of orthodox Korean history on the other.*

This article examines PESCA discourse with attention to both emic and etic perspectives. The emic foregrounds framings and significances of PESCA as articulated by leading authors, Kang Inuk and Kim Chaeyun, and as viewed from a South Korean perspective. The etic highlights additional functions and implications, situated across both Korean and PESCA-centered perspectives. PESCA is not just a framework, but an argument. It evinces a material prehistory of the eastern groups, including Okchŏ, Ye, Yilou (K. Ŭmnu) and Mohe (K. Malgal), named in sources yet treated as a minority other to west-centered trajectories of development. Tracing material developments to the Neolithic, a PESCA-centered perspective interprets these peoples as autonomous actors of their own networked space.

Sea lion or bear? Located at Yangyang, on the east coast of Gangwon Province, the Osalli Neolithic Site Museum makes much of two clay sculptures. One is interpreted to be a human face, making it possibly the earliest sculptured representation of a face in Korea. The other is an animal that lies on its front with short legs and a smiling face (Figure 1). The display labels this figurine as a bear (*kom*). For most visitors this will readily accord with a popular association of bears to early Korean history that derives from the myth of Tan'gun—founder of Old Chosŏn, the much celebrated supposed first state of Korean history—being born to a bear-turned-woman. However, in a 2017 study, Kim Chaeyun, an archaeologist with experience in the Russian far east, argues the figurine is not a bear but a sea lion.[77] This interpretation has less association with Korean tradition but instead aligns Osalli with an East Sea coastal ecology; it is supported by a third clay model of a dugout boat. Through her interpretation, Kim accords the early communities of Osalli an *eastern* identity distinct from conventional Korean associations, such as the Old Chosŏn foundation myth.

[77] Kim, *Chŏpkyŏng ŭi aident'it'i*, 50. Kim in fact uses the term for "seal" (*mulgae*) however, the figurine clearly has external ears, while a seal does not, making it closer in resemblance to a sea lion (*kangch'i*).

Figure 5: Clay figurines from Osalli Neolithic Site Museum (Photo by author, March 2023)

Okchŏ and Yilou. In 2020, prominent archaeologist, Kang Inuk, published a book aimed at popular readership titled after two proto-historical entities located in the far northeast, Okchŏ 沃沮 and Yilou (K. Ŭmnu) 挹婁.[78] While Okchŏ is traditionally viewed as a part of Korean history, the Yilou, who were located further north and beyond current-day Korea, are not. Revising such historical tradition, Kang argues that the Yilou, too, should be treated as a part of Korea's past. However, rather than simply claim Yilou as an expanded part of Korea, he simultaneously groups Okchŏ, Yilou, and other eastern peoples as part of a wider "Pan-East Sea Culture Area" (*hwandonghae munhwagwŏn*).[79] The archaeology of this culture area notably extends into Gangwon Province and wider Central Region (Chungbu) Korea, where for the late-Iron Age period, it is known as the Chungdo Type (Chungdo sik) culture.

Central Korea and maritime Siberia. In a review of South Korean discourses of Central Region archaeology in the Late Iron Age, Hari Blackmore critiques a common interpretation in which Chungdo Type archaeology is equated to one side of a supposed east-west ethnic dichotomy between Yemaek 濊貊 and Han 韓 peoples, respectively.[80] In this context, he cites Kang and other scholars' elaboration of connectivity between central Korea and "maritime Siberia" as exemplifying a model of broader interactional networks within which, Blackmore argues, Central Region archaeology would be better situated.[81]

The "Pan-East Sea Culture Area" (PESCA), that is the subject of this article, is an interpretative label applied to material archaeology found along the *eastern* coastline and interiors of Korea, Russia and northeastern China. Over the past century, this archaeology has been separately investigated by the different countries across which modern borders it occurs. First synthesized by Japanese scholar, Ōnuki Shizuo during the 1990s, in more recent years the totality of this archaeology has become a topic of interest to South Korean scholars. This is for several reasons. Most immediately, the archaeology appears to show a connection between the Gangwon Province region of the central Korean peninsula and continental maritime Siberia. This connection has significance to (South) Korea as it has been interpreted to offer clues to, for example, the origins of the Korean Bronze Age, and for later periods to represent the archaeology of early entities (peoples or polities) named in Korean tradition, such as Ye 濊 and Okchŏ, that are associated with the central east and northern east (Hamgyŏng Province) of the peninsula, respectively.

[78]Kang, *Okchŏ wa ŭmnu*.

[79]The Korean term that I translate here as "culture area" or "culture sphere," *munhwagwŏn* 文化圈, is originally a Sinitic calque of the German term *Kulturkreis* ("culture circle"), that was used in German language anthropology and archaeology from the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth century. See Rebay-Salisbury, "Throughts in Circles." Elaborated below, however, Kang Inuk uses *munhwagwŏn* and close variants as a translation of the English term "culture area" used in North American anthropology, that is conceptually distinct from European *Kulturkreis*. In the context of PESCA discourse, *munhwagwŏn* becomes its own concept defined through Kang and Kim Chaeyun's usage and elaboration.

[80]Blackmore, "Critical Examination," 104.

[81]Blackmore, "Critical Examination," 113–114.

From a South Korean perspective this material connection to archaeology in Russia has further appeal on a pragmatic level as it helps compensate for the inaccessibility of corresponding archaeology in North Korea and China. From the mid-1990s and especially 2000–2010s Russia has provided South Korean scholars opportunities for collaboration at a time when disputes with Beijing over claims to early history began to foreclose prospects of collaboration and caused the curtailment of access to sites in China.

The Russian far east connection, meanwhile, has encouraged and enabled South Korean scholars to conceptualize an 'eastern archaeology' autonomous from predominant west-centric dynamics of history and politics. Geographically, Korea's west has the most direct connectivity (or exposure) to China and the Steppe; it has therefore been understood as the traditional route of civilizational influence. Within the peninsula, the west, and secondarily southeast, have also been the centers of early and all subsequent states and modern conurbations, from the Three Kingdoms Period to the present. The east therefore provides interest as a lesser studied yet integral region, while any significance it can be attributed has the potential to balance China and Steppe-centric hegemonies in the narrative of Korea's early past.

Awareness of eastern archaeology is established within the South Korean archaeology field though is still a minority discourse. Writings that adopt the Pan-East Sea Culture Area (PESCA) framework are a specific sub-discourse of this broader yet minority interest in eastern connectivity. Among several scholars working with data and ideas pertinent to PESCA, two have contributed most to its elaboration: Kang Inuk, who has done most in articulating the theory and popularizing the notion of PESCA, and Kim Chaeyun, who has has contributed significantly to its empirical substantiation.

With the focus on PESCA, this article treats the written analysis of archaeology as discourse. I argue discourse provides us a unit by which to examine from a meta-perspective the practiced understanding of a given topic, namely, eastern connectivity as interpreted through PESCA. Here, we may note that PESCA and the broader interest in eastern archaeology are themselves one part of a wider discourse in South Korean archaeology that examines regions of Asia that either extend or are located beyond the conventional boundaries of early Korea. This discourse I term Korean Early Asia.

As spatially conceived, the Pan-East Sea Culture Area comprises a vast region extending from the mountains and coastline of Gangwon Province, northeastern South Korea, in the south to the Lower Amur River and parallel eastern coastline in the north. The key idea of PESCA is that this region has played host to common modes of life (subsistence patterns) that have given rise to a shared material, and possibly cultural or ethnic, identity for the people who lived there. This cohesion is premised on three factors: (1) common geography and climate, (2) interconnectivity within the zone, and (3) collective autonomy of the zone from regions to the west owing to its geographic remoteness.[82] The chronology of PESCA begins with the first evidence of connectivity in the mid-Neolithic; it continues through the Bronze Age to the emergence in the Iron Age of archaeology associable with early entities named in historical sources; it presumes to end with the subordination of these entities to west-centered states, chiefly Koguryŏ (c. 1 – 668 CE).

In order to elaborate the discourse this article alternates between emic and etic perspectives. The emic perspective presents framings and topics of PESCA fully articulated within the publications of Kang and Kim. The etic perspective is my own outside analysis that highlights additional meta-functions and significances. The sections unfold below beginning with a stronger emic focus and conclude with etic analysis. However, for our purposes, emic and etic are not mutually exclusive. There is overlap in both directions: the emic representation is filtered through my own framing (my framing of their perspective) and elaboration, while most points of the etic analysis are touched on, or alluded to, within Kang and Kim's

[82]Regions west include: western Korea, southern Northeast China (Manchuria) west of the Mudan River basin, Central Plain China, and the Eurasian Steppe.

writing.

The conceptual development of PESCA

Kang and Kim have each authored short overviews of PESCA that start from the Neolithic and survey chronologically forwards in time.[83] As an idea, however, PESCA was initially conceived with a focus on the Iron Age and proto-historical period of transition to early history. Its temporal scope was then expanded back to encompass archaeology of the preceding Bronze Age and Neolithic periods. PESCA thus was first developed in the early 2000s as a framework to explain material similarities observed between the iron-age period archaeology of central Korea (Gangwon Province), namely Chungdo Type archaeology, and the Krounovaka Culture of southern Maritime Province Russia.[84] Another contributor to the discourse, No Hyŏkchin, first termed this model of Iron-Age connectivity an "Eastern Road" (*tongno*) before Kang named it the "Pan-East Sea Prehistoric Culture Area" (*hwandonghae sŏnsa munhwagwŏn*).[85]

Around the early 2000s, Kim Chaeyun had separately been working on "augmented notched-rimmed" (*kangmok toldaemun*) earthenware, a type of pottery connected to the early Bronze Age. In South Korean archaeology, the conventional marker of the peninsular Bronze Age is not bronze itself, but *mumun* ("plain patterned") pottery, for which notched-rimmed pottery is regarded as a precursor. While others have located the origins of notched rimmed—and by implication *mumun*—pottery in the northwest, Kim argued for its origins in the Tumen River basin, in the northeast, thus according the remote northeast region a central role in initiating the Korean Bronze Age.[86] Kang also published on similar archaeology of the Tumen Basin region,[87] before both expanded the temporal limits of PESCA back to the Neolithic with Kim discussing the earliest examples of connectivity between Gangwon Province (South Korea) and the northern limits of PESCA, and Kang the development of Neolithic agriculture.[88] In this way, PESCA discourse emerged as an interpretative framework for eastern archaeology focused on the Iron Age and identification of proto-historical entities, before being expanded backwards through time. More recently Kang has also hinted at expanding the frame further into the early historical period to account for east archaeology and peoples of the early historical Three Kingdoms and Silla periods.[89] Kim also suggests that PESCA reconstitutes under the state of Parhae (698–926).[90]

Part 1: conceptualizing PESCA through the writings of Kang Inuk and Kim Chaeyun

Emic problematization: material connectivity and disconnected data

Aside from the two surveys, most other writing constitutive to PESCA focuses on specific time periods. Across Kang and Kim's work, for all and any given period the broadest problematization of the archaeological data (and consequent rationale for PESCA) is premised on the following two points: 1) there is evidence of mid- to long-range material connectivity between the eastern central Korean Peninsula, specifically the region that falls within South Korea, and the continental northeast; and 2) this evidence is, however, fragmentary (*tanp'yŏnjŏk*)—owing to its paucity—while being more fundamentally fractured, or *disconnected*, due to it having been unearthed in different countries, and during differing periods and conditions of modern archaeological practice.

Discussing archaeology of the mid-Neolithic, the earliest phase of PESCA, Kim (2015) presents the evidence and problem as follows. Two types of earthenware occur along the east coast of Gangwon Province,

[83]Kang, "Hwandonghae sŏnsa munhwagwŏn," 429–450; and Kim, "Hwandonghae munhwagwŏn ŭi yŏksajŏk chomang," 125–142.

[84]No, "Chungdosik," 101–104; Subotina, "Ch'ŏlgi sidae"; and Kang, "Ch'ŏngdonggi sidae ch'ŏlgi sidae."

[85]Kang, "Ch'ŏngdonggi sidae ch'ŏlgi sidae," cited in "Hwandonghae sŏnsa munhwagwŏn," 429.

[86]Kim "Hanbando kangmok t'oldaemun t'ogi" (2003), and "Hanbando kangmok t'oldaemun t'ogi" (2004).

[87]Kang, "Tuman'gang yuyŏk ch'ŏngdonggi."

[88]Kim, "Hwandonghae munhwagwŏn ŭi chŏn'gi sinsŏkki," "P'yŏngjŏ t'ogi munhwagwŏn," and "Hwandonghae munhwagwŏn ŭi yŏksajŏk chomang"

[89]Kang, "Malgal charyo," 159.

[90]Kim, "Hwandonghae munhwagwŏn ŭi yŏksajŏk chomang," 136.

South Korea, that exhibit connectivity to the north: burnished redware, and raised-line patterned earthenware.[91] These pottery types have correlates in the far continental north, redware occurring among sites belonging to the Malyshevo Culture on the Lower Amur, and raised-line earthenware among coastal sites of the Rudnaya Culture. At the site of Osalli (Yangyang, Gangwon Province), redware occurs on the Korean east coast without evidence of preceding pottery tradition. The starting dates of the Malyshevo and Rudnaya cultures, meanwhile, each predate the occurrence of redware and raised-line pottery in Korea. These circumstances alone point to the two earthenware types having each originated in the continental north and thence been introduced to Korea, thus constituting two early cases of long-range connectivity. The problem, according to Kim—and that her work goes on to address—is that the wider respective material cultures (contexts) in which the potsherds occur have not been systematically compared. As a consequence the connectivity has yet to have been analysed at any greater level of material context than the potsherds themselves.[92]

For the period representing the transition to the Bronze Age, the spatial scope of PESCA connectivity narrows from Gangwon Province and the far north, to instead center on three adjoining sub-regions: the Tumen Basin, the Mudan and Muren river basins extending northwards in China, and the southern Russian Maritime Province (Primorye) to the east. Although contracting in distance, the data for this period is more complex because the region involved, and the Tumen Basin alone, transects three current states (North Korea, China and Russia) while from the perspective of South Korean scholars, further needing to be integrated into the analytical context of a fourth, South Korea.

For this period, North Korean sites on the Tumen are an original point of interest to South Korean archaeology but also the biggest challenge. They are important for two reasons. First, as a part of the divided peninsula, northern Korea falls, at least in principal, within the conventional purview of South Korean "Korean" archaeology. Second, documented sites on the North Korean (southern) side of the Tumen region provide some of the earliest known data for this particular period. One site in particular, Sŏp'ohang, is of singular importance for the wider region as it comprises a rare multi-level sequence of layers with differing pottery occurring in different layers.[93] Sŏp'ohang is thus crucial for providing a relative chronology of this period. No equivalent site is yet known in the region outside of North Korea.

However, due to North Korea's inaccessibility to South Korean scholars, knowledge of the sites and artifacts is limited to North Korean authored reports produced in the early 1960s. These reports were based on excavations conducted in the latter 1950s in collaboration with Soviet archaeologists, and represent an early flourishing of archaeological practice in North Korea. However, the quality of the reports are by today's standards rudimentary, and no further known excavations have been conducted in the region for archaeology of this same period since.[94] Sŏp'ohang itself appears to have since been submerged under a reservoir.

Kang and Kim's solution to this challenge is to compare the North Korean data with that of more recently excavated sites in China and Russia, premising that a common archaeology extends throughout the Tumen triangle region.[95] However, a problem then arises in integrating archaeology of differing national practices and units of analysis. This is articulated by Kang as follows. South Korean archaeology has

[91]Kim, "P'yŏngjŏ t'ogi munhwagwŏn." At the site of Osalli (Yangyang), redware was newly discovered at the lowest stratum, followed by Osalli Type pottery, and then raised-line ware. At Jungbyeon (Chungbyŏn, North Gyeongsang Province) redware occurs mixed with Osalli Type.

[92]Kim, "P'yŏngjŏ t'ogi munhwagwŏn," 6.

[93]Kim, "Sŏp'ohang yujŏk."

[94]Kang, "Tuman'gang yuyŏk ch'ŏngdonggi," 52, and "Tongbuk asiajŏk kwanjŏm," 393.

[95]Kang, "Tuman'gang yuyŏk ch'ŏngdonggi," and "Tongbuk asiajŏk kwanjŏm"; and Kim, "Sŏp'ohang yujŏk," "Tongbukhan ch'ŏngdonggi," and *Chŏpkyŏng ŭi aident'it'i*, 123.

failed to develop a framework that could incorporate transnational data. While South Korean archaeology works at a smaller scale of "assemblages" (*yuhyŏng*) and "types" (*sik* – styles and morphologies), both Chinese and Russian archaeology use the larger conceptual unit of "material culture."[96] North Korean data, meanwhile, simply reports on individual sites and thus lacks any integrative frame.

For the ensuing Bronze Age, the focus remains on the Tumen Basin and southern Maritime Province region while the scope of connectivity tentatively re-extends to Gangwon Province. For the Iron Age, the problem of disconnected connectivity reconstitutes between Chungdo Type archaeology in central Korea, and its northern cognates, the Krounovka Culture (southern Maritime Province) and the adjoining Tuanjie Culture in China. While the Tuanjie-Krounovka complex evolves from preceding trajectories of continuity and innovation, Chungdo Type archaeology appears in central Korea without an immediate precursor.

Resolutions through PESCA

Across the periods problematized above, Kang and Kim highlight that the evidence for mid- and long-range connectivity calls for an explanation of material and human movement but that without more systematic analysis, and crucially a framework to enable this, the evidence is left variously unexplored (mid-Neolithic) or neglected (Bronze Age), or where better known, explained through overly simplistic models of ethnic migration (Iron Age).

For the mid-Neolithic, Kim asserts that to propose external northern origins of the burnished redware and raised-line pottery occurring in coastal Korea requires the premise of a "cultural or regional area" (*munhwagwŏn ina chiyŏkkwŏn*).[97] For the early Bronze Age, Kang opines that in order to elaborate exchange between the Korean Peninsula—principally referring to the North Korean sites—and adjacent regions (Mudan Basin and southern Maritime Province), there is a need to discuss the Tumen Basin from the perspective of it being part of a "cultural sphere" (*munhwa kwŏn'yŏk*).[98]

As invoked by Kang and Kim, the rationale for a culture area is thus that it responds to both points of their problematization: material connectivity and disconnected data. Regarding long-range connectivity observed between Gangwon Province and continental regions, PESCA provides a framework enabling explanation of movement *within* its defined limits through its premise of a common geography and spatial connectedness. It further allows for tracing the changing shape of this connectivity over time.[99] Concerning disconnected data, the idea of a culture area functions as a macro-scaled unit of analysis (culture area > culture > assemblage / type > site) enabling South Korean scholars to integrate the varied transnational data in order to model the phenomenon of eastern archaeology as a single complex.[100] What then, is PESCA, and how does it work?

Kang and Kim's invocation of the culture area framework distinguishes PESCA from other areal focused discourses present in South Korean archaeology. However, only Kang has elaborated theoretical understanding of the term. Kang defines a culture area as delineating a region of mutual cultural exchange that effects the spread of a given technology or material innovation, such as agriculture, pottery, dwelling types, or metallurgy.[101] In this aspect he notes the culture area to be similar to the concept of an "interaction sphere" (*sangho chak'yonggwŏn*) with both terms denoting networks of sustained exchange between groups. However, while the latter describes interaction between distinct groups and across regions with potentially differing ecologies and subsistence patterns, the culture area is predicated on a common

[96]Kang, "Hwandonghae sŏnsa munhwagwŏn," 435–436.

[97]Kim, "P'yŏngjŏ t'ogi munhwagwŏn," 9.

[98]Kang, "Tuman'gang yuyŏk ch'ŏngdonggi," 53.

[99]Kim, "Hwandonghae munhwagwŏn ŭi yŏksajŏk chomang," 125.

[100]Kang, "Hwandonghae sŏnsa munhwagwŏn," 435. For definitions of the units of analysis, see Kang, "Tongbuk asiajŏk kwanjŏm," 396–397.

[101]Kang, "Hwandonghae sŏnsa munhwagwŏn," 436.

environment with constituent groups sharing a closer, even "partially genetic relationship."[102]

As utilized in Kang and Kim's writing, PESCA employs two explanatory mechanisms: internal movement and climate change. The shared identity of the vast area that constitutes PESCA is premised on internal material exchange and small group movement. Physical features enabling this movement are the eastern littoral and inland rivers. The latitudinal orientation of the coastline and two major mountain chains (the Changbai-Paektu range in the south, and Sikhote-Alin mountains in the north) are modelled to induce broadly north-south movement with mountain passes and rivers providing lateral connections to the interior.[103] Both mountains and rivers play a role in filtering incoming western technological and stylistic influence.

If geography dictates flows of movement, and by extension material connectivity, climate and climate change are posited as the stimulus for developmental trajectories through time.[104] Kang and Kim narrate PESCA to emerge in the moderate and relatively stable climate of the mid-Neolithic; in the late Neolithic, c.3000 BCE, temporary cooling coincides with the adoption of intensified mixed-grain agriculture while negatively impacting coastal economies; thereafter the climate stabilizes in the Bronze Age before accelerated cooling coincides with socio-technical developments of the Iron Age. This pattern similarly accounts for the shifting spatial limits of PESCA.

PESCA discourse is characterized by coexistence and interplay of inland and coastal based settlement patterns. Inland sites see the adoption of mixed-grain agriculture and consequently favour alluvial river basins. A coastal economy is evidenced through the archaeology of shell-middens.[105] Extracting from later indigenous practice, Kang emphasizes salmon as a core maritime resource, while Kim, through discussion of figurines highlights seal (or sea lion) hunting.[106] Despite this inland-coastal dynamic, the integrity of the culture area is preserved through its common isolation from Steppe, China and west Korean peninsular influences.[107] The culture area framework models eastern archaeology as its own system. This enables Kang and Kim to narrate internal dynamics of PESCA and its autonomous development through time as central forces that act to mediate and supersede incoming western influence, including in cases such as the innovation and adoption of pottery styles, agriculture, metals and proto-historical peoples.

Etic interlude: origins of PESCA

From an etic perspective, we can note the PESCA framework to be constituted from three elements: 1) the work of Ōnuki Shizuo, 2) North American "culture areas" as defined by Sharer and Ashmore (1987),[108] and 3) the Three Age System as an established convention of South Korean archaeology.

Ōnuki's work treats the same data as subsequently utilized in PESCA, as was available up to the 1990s, but situates it in a broader spatial scope encompassing the Liao River basin in the west to Sakhalin Island in the east (Ōnuki 1998:46).[109] For the Neolithic period, Ōnuki defines this larger region as a "far east flat-bottomed earthenware" 極東平底土器 zone characterized by settled gatherer subsistence patterns, and semi-subterranean dwellings entered through the roof. This zone he distinguishes both from Siberia, conversely characterized by tapering earthenware and mobile subsistence patterns, and China.[110] Ōnuki periodizes the duration of the zone into two halves. For

[102]Kang, "Hwandonghae sŏnsa munhwagwŏn," 432. In her discussion of figurines, Kim additionally characterizes PESCA as comprising a shared "identity" (*aident'it'i*) but does not theorize the term further, Kim, Chŏpkyŏng ŭi aident'it'i, 50.

[103]Kang, "Hwandonghae sŏnsa munhwagwŏn," 446.

[104]Kang and Ko, "Okchŏ munhwa," 35–37; and Kim, "Hwandonghae munhwagwŏn sŏnsa munhwa."

[105]Kang, "Yŏnhaeju nambu sinsŏkki," 392.

[106]Kang, "Hwandonghae sŏnsa munhwagwŏn," 436; and Kim, *Chŏpkyŏng ŭi aident'it'i*, 50.

[107]Kang, "Hwandonghae sŏnsa munhwagwŏn," 437.

[108]Sharer and Asmore, *Archaeology*, 497.

[109]Ōnuki, *Tōhoku*, 46.

[110]Ōnuki, *Tōhoku*, 44.

the first half he delineates three subzones, the easternmost of which comprises the Lower Amur River system to the north, and the Maritime Province connecting to the Tumen basin in the south.[111] In the second half the Lower Amur and southern region separate into two less connected regions.[112] The spatial scope of the Korean PESCA discourse similarly begins with the same easternmost of Ōnuki's three zones for the first half of the same periodization but for the latter half it narrows to the southern sub-zone encompassing the southern Maritime Province and Tumen basin.

Ōnuki dates the end of the flat-bottomed earthenware zone to c.2000 BCE.[113] In the north, known sites disappear from across the Lower Amur for which Ōnuki posits climatic cooling as a cause.[114] Hereon through to the emergence of first generation states, Ōnuki treats the southern Maritime Province, and the adjacent Tumen and Mudan basins—the PESCA core—as their own sub-region distinct in material identity from the Liao and Song river basins to the west, as well as from the north.[115] Across this sub-region, Ōnuki synthesizes the archaeological data separately produced in North Korea, Russia and China establishing the methodology adopted for PESCA. In parallel with the other regions, Ōnuki traces the trajectory of this region centered on the Tumen basin to the emergence of Okchŏ[116] and thereafter to the Mohe people. Elaborated further below, PESCA discourse follows this same spatial delineation and trajectory to Okchŏ and Mohe groups.

PESCA discourse combines Ōnuki's synthesizing approach with the "culture area" framework adopted from North American archaeological practice. As a narrative through time, PESCA discourse constitutes a "cultural historical synthesis"—a diachronic tracing of "archaeological variables and their changes through time"—as elaborated by Sharer and Ashmore (1987).[117] We should note that the cultural historical synthesis is distinct from European "culture-historical archaeology," that is often critiqued for conflating material cultures with ethnic groups.

In contrast both to North American culture areas and Ōnuki's work, PESCA discourse employs the Three-Age System (stone/lithic ages—in this case the Neolithic— the Bronze and Iron ages) as a basic periodization.[118] A key subtext to the application of the Three-Age System is that colonial Japanese and Soviet scholarship denied Korea and the Russian Far East distinct or autonomous Bronze and Iron Age periods. For Korean archaeology the elucidation of material and social developments *commensurate* to the metal age divisions—largely using pottery as the index—has been an important task for decolonizing Korean and east Manchurian late prehistory. As the Three-Age system is now conventional to South Korean archaeology, in the context of PESCA it functions as the organizing principle through which to incorporating transnational data into South Korean archaeological understanding.

Situating PESCA in South Korea

In this section we consider the significance of PESCA from the viewpoint of South Korea, the country in which PESCA has arisen as a discourse. In this and the following section, I elaborate three topical points of significance: (1) eastern archaeology in South Korea; (2) inaccessibility of eastern North Korea; and (3) the problem of eastern peoples in early Korean history.

First, PESCA provides a framework through

[111] Ōnuki, *Tōhoku*, 45.
[112] Ōnuki, *Tōhoku*, 91.
[113] Ōnuki, *Tōhoku*, 116.
[114] Ōnuki, *Tōhoku*, 118.
[115] Ōnuki, *Tōhoku*, 138, 164.
[116] Ōnuki, *Tōhoku*, 183.
[117] Sharer and Asmore, *Archaeology*, 502.
[118] Ōnuki initially referred to flat-bottomed earthenware as "Neolithic" and notes its duration to align with this period. However, he subsequently eschews Three Age periodization on the grounds that to use Neolithic requires there to be subsequent Bronze and Iron ages but evidence particularly for a Bronze Age is lacking from the northern and easternmost subzones. See Ōnuki, "Tomankō," 47.

which to better account for eastern archaeology occurring within South Korea but that is *disconnected* from more dominant west-centric trajectories of prehistory and subsequent historical development on the peninsula. As this is a central significance of PESCA let us devote some space to elaborate. The archaeology constituent to PESCA within South Korea occurs principally in Gangwon Province, that occupies the central east of the peninsula. In an article presented at a conference specifically on Gangwon heritage, Kang and coauthor Ko Yŏngmi, begin by alluding to this problem: "Gangwon Province has long been marginalized in [South Korean] archaeological analysis. Rather than a center of civilization, the image of a cold and hazardous borderland region has been stronger, while the basic framework for analyzing [South Korean] sites and artifacts remains beholden to a Three Kingdoms [Koguryŏ, Paekche, Silla]-centrism."[119]

While Kang and Ko here refer to the early historical period, Gangwon Province's isolation extends to prehistory and ultimately owes to geography. The mountainous topography and harsh climate of this region ensure that the east has remained *remote* from larger population centers that have arisen and consolidated across the west, and secondarily southeast, of the peninsula. This is true both for the full peninsula and its history up to the 1945 division, and for the part of Gangwon today situated in South Korea. In developmental terms, the west has had a twofold advantage in its geography relative to the central and northern east: (1) multiple long west-flowing river basins providing fertile plains supporting larger settlement and popular growth, and (2) proximity to Liaodong (as a meeting point of Eurasian Steppe and northern China cultures) and Central Plain China, both via land and sea routes, that has enabled faster adoption of continental technologies and ideas. As a consequence, a greater volume of prehistoric archaeology occurs in the west, both because there is more to be found and because greater intensity of modern urban development has led to more of its discovery. The west further exhibits material and historical trajectories to the early Three Kingdoms Period states of Korean history, thereafter continuing through the Koryŏ (918–1392) and Chosŏn dynasties (1392–1910), to the capitals and urban conurbations of the modern day peninsula. By contrast, the east has only a narrow littoral between the mountains and sea limiting settlement and population growth. Mountainous topography and climate make it remote at once to the political centers of western Korea and, in turn, to continental regions of China and the Steppe beyond.

The remoteness of the east and its peripherality to west-centered trajectories is at once reflected and further compounded by historiography (the writing of history). The polities of the west and southeast were the dominant forces and wrote histories from their perspective that have become Korea's historical tradition. In these histories, the extant compilations being the *Samguk sagi* (1145) and *Samguk yusa* (c.1280), the peoples of the east are effectively othered and described in a disjointed fashion. They are recorded variously as having constituted minor polities, such as (East) Ye and Okchŏ, that are early on subjugated by expanding west and southeast centered Three-Kingdoms period states of Koguryŏ, Paekche and Silla, and thereafter and in greater predominance as non-state groups, including the Ye, Maek and peninsular Malgal (discussed further below).

Despite the two problems of remoteness and historiographical underrepresentation, Gangwon Province is nevertheless a fully constituent part of (South) Korea, both historically and today. South Korean scholars maintain an active interest in its pre- and proto-historic archaeology understanding it as an integral part of Korea's heritage. If they could detail more of its early past, they would. To the extent that this archaeology is neglected, it is at once because of the greater volume of data for other regions but more fundamentally because it appears *disconnected* in three main ways. (1) For the prehistoric periods, the archaeology seemingly occurs in discontinuous waves without developmental continuity between them. For example, initially there are the mid-Neolithic pottery types (impressed patterned pottery, raised-line and redware) such as occur at Osalli; in the Bronze Age

[119] Kang and Ko, "Okchŏ munhwa," 33.

these disappear before earthenware connecting in form to west Korean pottery types occurs instead; however, with the transition to the Iron Age there then appears Chungdo Type pottery that is again distinct. (2) None of the prehistoric eastern pottery types or their broader material contexts show connection or convergence with archaeology of the peninsular west. Although the distribution of Chungdo Type pottery extends significantly west, it has been regarded as distinct from west-centered material trajectories.[120] (3) Late prehistoric eastern archaeology is disconnected from subsequent trajectories of state formation in the early historical period. While late prehistoric archaeology of western and southeastern Korea anticipates the emergence of first-generation (Three Kingdoms) states, Chungdo Type becomes associated with non-state peoples of the Gangwon Province region.

As a consequence of this disconnection there has been a limit to the significance that South Korean archaeologists can accord eastern archaeology. Against this context, PESCA provides significance by offering a model of connectivity. According to PESCA, what appears in Gangwon Province as isolated and disconnected cultures are oscillations of internal PESCA dynamics; the material trajectories to which they pertain are out of sight of South Korea, but are more continuous in the PESCA core of the Tumen region.

The second significance of PESCA to South Korean archaeology demonstrated in Kang and Kim's work is that it helps compensate for the inaccessibility and consequent blank of eastern North Korea. It does this principally in the two ways that have been discussed already above, through: (1) reexamining data produced in North Korea, and (2) incorporating data of adjacent regions in China and Russia. A third significance, and a larger topic to which we will now turn, is that later periods of PESCA corresponding to proto- and early history provide coherence and a common identity to the minor and non-state eastern peoples who are underrepresented and denied agency in orthodox Korean history.

Part 2: PESCA at the transition to history

The problem of eastern peoples

As in the case of eastern archaeology, the question of proto-historical eastern peoples, when viewed from the perspective of South Korean scholarship has two scales of concern: (1) regions falling within South Korea, namely Gangwon Province, and (2) the full Korean Peninsula inclusive of current day North Korea, and southern Manchuria. A difference is that while investigation of archaeology has in practice been restricted to South Korea, the discipline of early history, being based on the study of written sources, has continued to treat the fuller spatial scope of eastern Korea and southern Manchuria.

Early peoples within South Korea: *Ye, Yemaek and Malgal.* For Gangwon Province, the non-state peoples described in sources include groups referred to as Ye or Yemaek, and separately Malgal. The Ye are first attested in Chinese sources from the first century BCE onwards. The Dongyi treatises of the Chinese history, *Sanguozhi* (third century CE), contains a section on the Ye that locates them on the central east of the peninsula. The historicity of the Ye as a locally used designator has been confirmed through a seal discovered with "Ye Lord" inscribed. "Ye," however, also occurs in the compound form Yemaek that has been used in both Chinese and Korean sources as a vaguer designation for peoples of the central and northwestern regions of the peninsula. A conventional understanding that has emerged in modern scholarship is that: (1) Yemaek is a general ethnonym for peoples of northern Korea, contrasting with the Han of southern Korea; and (2) those that formed states became known by the polity names (Old Chosŏn, Puyŏ, and Koguryŏ), while the peripheral non-state peoples remained labelled as Ye and Yemaek. Generally the Ye remain associated with the east coast region, while the Yemaek are located more centrally. As a consequence the *Samguk sagi* records the early Three Kingdoms polities subjugating Yemaek peoples as they consolidate and expand. Paekche, that arose on the Han basin, modern Seoul, battled Yemaek peoples to its north and northeast, that would partially correspond

[120] Blackmore, "Critical Examination."

[121] Blackmore, "Critical Examination," 101.

to Gangwon Province (Blackmore 2019:101).[121] A later tradition distinguished the Ye of the eastern side of the Taebaek mountains with the supposed Maek of the western side. During the Chosŏn dynasty period (1392-1910) this idea became reified with the region of Gangneung (eastern Gangwon) being associated with Ye, and Chuncheon (western Gangwon) with Maek. This tradition has informed regional identity and popular heritage discourse in Gangwon Province today. The broader point is that in mainstream history Gangwon is associated with Ye and Yemaek from early centuries CE. This association notably overlaps with the distribution and date of Chungdo Type archaeology. During the Three Kingdoms Period, the Gangwon region was partially occupied by Koguryŏ, Paekche and Silla but for each it remained a frontier region so the association of Gangwon with Yemaek pertains throughout the Three Kingdoms Period until post-expansion Unified Silla (668–936) brought the region under fuller administrative integration.

Aside from Yemaek, Korean sources (*Samguk sagi* and *Samguk yusa*) also refer to non-state peoples of the central and northern east of the peninsula as Malgal (Ch. Mohe). Mohe is an ethnonym originally designating peoples of far eastern Manchuria—Jilin and the Maritime Province—used from around the late Jin period (266–420) and during the Tang dynasty. They are understood as descendents of the earlier Yilou people, discussed below. In *Samguk sagi*, the usage of Malgal occurs in entries dating both contemporary to the historical Mohe, but also to earlier centuries. Critical scholars therefore interpret the Malgal in *Samguk sagi* to reflect two usages: (1) for later centuries it may denote actual Mohe tribes of the northeast Tumen region who were employed by Koguryŏ in its peninsular wars against Paekche and Silla, (2) for earlier centuries it is understood to be an alternative label for non-state peninsular groups of central Korea used interchangeably with Yemaek. The fact of historical Mohe/Malgal on the peninsula in later centuries may have encouraged the anachronistic usage of Malgal for the earlier entries. However, recent excavations at Chungdo, western Gangwon, have uncovered pottery and grave types resembling fifth to sixth-century Mohe archaeology of eastern Manchuria.[122]

Early peoples of the northeast: Okchŏ and Yilou. Beyond the limits of South Korea, two further entities are associated with the northeast. Okchŏ is attested in name from the late second century BCE as a people occupying the narrow northeastern coast of the peninsula north of the Ye. *Sanguozhi* distinguishes "southern" and "northern" Okchŏ. Southern Okchŏ was located fully on the peninsula, being first incorporated into the eastern section of the Han dynasty commanderies 109 BCE, and later subjugated by Koguryŏ. *Sanguozhi* records Southern Okchŏ being laid waste by the Chinese Wei armies in a 245 CE campaign against Koguryŏ. Northern Okchŏ is usually located in the lower Tumen region, but it is unclear how far north or east into the Maritime Province it continued. It is associated with the region in which Koguryŏ would establish its easternmost outpost, Ch'aeksŏng fortress, following its fourth-century expansion. The Yilou (K. Ŭmnu), meanwhile, are attested in *Sanguozhi* as located north of Northern Okchŏ. They are recorded as having been belligerent to Northern Okchŏ conducting raids by boat against them in the summertime.[123] Later Chinese histories identify the Yilou as ancestral to the Mohe who, in turn, were ancestral to the Jurchen.[124] By the fifth century, the presumed region of Koguryŏ's Ch'aeksŏng fortress was largely occupied by Mohe (recorded as Wuji) groups. It seems that Northern Okchŏ was unable to recover from the earlier Wei campaign (that also passed through Northern Okchŏ), and that Yilou (future Mohe) subsequently expanded south into its former territory.

All these minor and non-state *eastern* peoples—Ye(maek), Okchŏ, Yilou, and Mohe/Malgal—are thus separately named and appear variously disparate from one another, or muddled within the sources. Notably, however, their recorded loci collectively map onto the spatial distribution of eastern archaeology, that from

[122]Kang, "Malgal charyo," 156. This Chungdo is the same site as occurs in the name of the earlier dating Chungdo Type culture.

[123]These are usually assumed to have been coastal raids, but Kang argues them to have been inland riverine raids.

[124]Two intermediary ethnonyms are Sushen 肅愼 and Wuji 勿吉. Byington, *Ancient State*, 36, 249.

the South Korean perspective appears disconnected but that through PESCA can be understood to have its own coherency. The third significance of PESCA to South Korea, then, is to transpose this coherency onto historical interpretation of the eastern peoples.

Connecting eastern peoples to archaeology

The Ye(maek) peoples have been associated with the Chungdo Type archaeology while Northern Okchŏ has been equated with the Tuanjie and Krounovka cultures of Jilin and the southern Maritime provinces, respectively. These equations of material culture to named entities have been present in interpretations of eastern archaeology prior to and beyond PESCA discourse. Both Chinese and Russia scholars, for example have treated Tuanjie-Krounovka as corresponding to Okchŏ. Thus, from the outset of PESCA, the correspondence of Chungdo Type and Tuanjie-Krounovka archaeology to named peoples was thus a known premise and point of interest. The problem is that such correlations are overly reductionist. Early on, No Hyŏkchin drew attention to this problem cautioning that in cases where sources and material data are insufficient to allow for the matching of named entities with archaeological cultures, one should not be substituted for the other.[125] He highlights the paradox that, if the Krounovka culture corresponds to Okchŏ but is materially the same as Chungdo Type archaeology, then how can the peoples of Gangwon Province—named as Ye(maek)—be separately defined or distinguished? No's solution is to foreground the archaeology, and to the extent that the archaeology constitutes a single complex (Eastern Road / PESCA), he asserts that the groups should be treated as a single people (*chongjok*).

Hereafter, it is, again, Kang, who has contributed most to addressing the relationship between the named eastern groups and archaeology. Kang elaborates the internal dynamics of this single people. For the Iron Age and transition to early history he foregrounds two problems: (1) the spread of Tuanjie-Krounovka culture, and (2) the question of the Mohe (K. Malgal). We will see that he resolves these through application of the culture area framework.

Tuanjie-Krounovka and Poltze cultures. The Tuanjie-Krounovka culture first arose on inland river basins. Relative to preceding archaeology, it is characterized by intensification of mixed-grain agriculture enabled through the adoption of iron tools and consequent growth in the size and number of settlements. The culture is additionally characterized by three innovations: hardened pottery; an entrance section on semi-subterranean dwellings presumed to insulate against the cold[126]; and quasi-hypocaust tunnel hearths constructed within. Kang reasons that these latter features were developed in what proved to be a successful response to climatic cooling, that occurred from the 4th century BCE onwards.

We can synthesize Kang's problematization as follows. The Tuanjie-Krounovka culture disappears from the Tuman-southern Maritime Province region around the time that Chungdo Type archaeology appears in central Korea, a period that coincides with climatic cooling. In the Tuman-southern Maritime Province region, meanwhile, Tuanjie-Krounovka culture is understood to have been displaced by the southward spread of the Poltze culture to its north. As a consequence, researchers have typically premised *climate change* as the primary cause for a chain of presumed southward migrations; according to this scheme, the peoples of the Poltze culture displace the Tuanjie-Krounovka culture, whose peoples migrate south to constitute Okchŏ and Ye. However, this model, Kang argues, is overly simplistic. It has overlooked archaeology of the far north, occurring in the Sanjiang Plain region of the Lower Amur, that is materially similar to Tuanjie-Krounovka and appears at a similar time to Chungdo Type. This indicates that at the same time as the Tuanjie-Krounovka culture spread south, it also expanded *north*, via the inland Mudan Basin, to the Lower Amur. The fact of this northward spread consequently undermines the idea of climatic cooling having been the sole cause for the southward spread of Tuanjie-Krounovka into the central peninsula.

[125] No, "Tongno (East Road)," 35.

[126] Causing the plans to be described as *ch'ŏl* 凸 or *yŏ* 呂 shaped.

Consequently, rather than the people of the Tuanjie-Krounovka culture being passive victims forced south in a chain of climate induced migrations, Kang argues the culture to have expanded both north and south owing to it having evolved attributes best adapted to sustain itself—even thrive—within a wider cooling climate.[127] The simultaneous spread of the Tuanjie-Krounovka culture to the Han river basin of western Gangwon Province, and to the Lower Amur basin of the far north is because these two basins provided equivalent environmental conditions to the Tuman-southern Maritime Province region, namely, rich alluvial soils supporting mixed-grain agriculture. Climate change was thus a *contextual* cause for the spread of Tuanjie-Krounovka culture both north and south rather than a singular catastrophe displacing peoples southwards. In contrast to wholesale migration, Kang models the spread of Tuanjie-Krounovka elements north and south as having involved small scale migrations and adoption by local inhabitants as a strategy to thrive in the face of deteriorating climate.[128] Kang's problematization of the spread of Tuanjie-Krounovka culture, and the explanatory model through which he resolves it utilize PESCA framework.

Poltze and Olga cultures. The Poltze culture first arose on the Lower Amur River region before spreading south via the Ussuri River. Dwellings are semi-subterranean, deeper than Tuanjie-Krounovka dwellings, with an entrance through the roof, and without hypocaust hearths. Similar to Tuanjie-Krounovka, the people practiced agriculture along rivers and lakes. However, many settlements exhibit evidence of having been destroyed by fire, while assemblages include armour and iron weapons that are absent from Tuanjie-Krounovka culture.[129] Researchers have previously understood the appearance of the Poltze culture in the southern Maritime Province region, there constituting the Olga culture, to have caused the Tuanjie-Krounovka culture to have shifted its locus to northeastern Korea. Under this spatial configuration they have matched the Tuanjie-Krounovka (northeastern Korea) and Poltze (Tumen-southern Maritime Province) cultures to the Okchŏ and Yilou peoples, respectively. Kang challanges this model as overly simplified by highlighting that although the Poltze culture spread south into the Tumen–southern Maritime Province region during the first centuries BCE–CE, rather than fully replacing the Tuanjie-Krounovka culture, there was an extended period of *coexistence*. More recently Kang has further deemphasized the idea of the Poltze culture having fully replaced Tuanjie-Krounovka culture, instead characterizing the Olga culture as having constituted a *hybrid* between the two (Kang and Ko 2019:41).[130] In this configuration, Kang equates the Olga culture—previously viewed as corresponding to Yilou—to Northern Okchŏ[131] (Kang and Ko 2019:45). This is possible through the premise of both belonging to a commom culture area. By suggesting a closer relationship between the two cultures, this interpretation functions to de-reify the traditional Okchŏ-Yilou dichotomy and has implications for Kang's second topical focus, the question of the Mohe.

The question of the Mohe. Kang's overarching problematization of the Mohe is as follows. There are clear cases in which the Mohe have been active agents on the Korean peninsula and adjacent regions of the northeast, and there is Mohe-type archaeology associable with them. However, the Korean perception of Mohe history and archaeology at once suffers the same problems of remoteness and disconnection as for other eastern peoples and archaeology, such as Okchŏ or Ye(maek), but the problem is exacerbated because orthodox Korean historiography has viewed the Mohe not just as a non-state other *within* Korean history, but

[127]Kang, "Tong'asia kogohak," 70.

[128]Kang, "Yŏnhaeju ch'ogi ch'ŏlgi," 547–548.

[129]Kang, "Tong'asia kogohak," 45–46.

[130]Kang and Ko, "Okchŏ munhwa," 41. This contrasts to Kang, "Kogo charyo," 58, that deemphasizes the Tuanjie-Krounovka element.

[131]Kang and Ko, "Okchŏ munhwa," 45. Doing so gives privileges the name of Okchŏ over Yilou, thus supporting the name of the "Okchŏ culture area".

as a non-"Korean" element, i.e. as a group external to Korean history and identity. As long as the Mohe are viewed as non-Korean, it is difficult to account for their role in Korean history and archaeology.

Kang highlights two examples in which Mohe archaeology is better attested than Koguryŏ. First is the case of Koguryŏ's Ch'aeksŏng fortress, recorded as having been Koguryŏ's easternmost outpost and understood to have been located in the lower Tumen region. The problem is that despite continued investigation and excavations in the Hunchun (eastern Jilin) and southern Maritime Province regions, no archaeology associable with Koguryŏ sites occurs; rather, there occurs earlier Northern Okchŏ (Olga culture) archaeology followed by Mohe archaeology.[132] If the Mohe are regarded as non-Korean, then in terms of national history, this undermines the northeast being a part of Korea's early past by way of Koguryŏ. Second is the question of Koguryŏ's recorded southern expansion into the central peninsula. The archaeological footprint for Koguryŏ in Central Region Korea remains limited, while Mohe archaeology also occurs, such as at Chungdo.[133]

Alluded to by Kang, one of the reasons for viewing the Mohe as non-"Korean"—not a part of Korean history proper—is their position in a genealogy of peoples that has been reified as both ethnically and politically non-Korean. In this linear projection, the Mohe are situated as ancestral to the later Jurchen and Manchu who, having founded dynasties associated with Chinese and Manchurian history, have from the viewpoint of Korean history been viewed as outside of Korean history. Preceding the Mohe, this genealogy begins with the proto-historical Yilou. While the Mohe have been treated as a non-Korean other but attested *within* Korean history—through their entanglements with Koguryŏ and references to peninsular Malgal—the earlier Yilou, having been beyond the reach of "Korean" states, have not been treated as a part of Korean history at all. That the Yilou are absent from transmitted Korean history reinforces current day presumption of their non-Koreanness. This presumed "non-Koreanness" has been reified in the Okchŏ-Yilou dichotomy as projected onto eastern archaeology, treating the Tuanjie-Krounovka culture as Okchŏ and the Poltze culture as Yilou. These reifications of historiography and archaeology that treat Yilou as non-Korean, circularly reinforce the ambiguity of the Mohe, as the Mohe are seen to be both preceded and followed by non-Korean entities, the Yilou and Jurchen, respectively.

Kang's answer to the problem—the reification of Yilou and Mohe as non-Korean—is twofold. First, as seen above, Kang dereifies the Okchŏ-Yilou dichotomy as projected onto archaeology by interpreting the Olga (Poltze) culture as itself having formed over the Tuanjie-Krounovka culture, and corresponding to Northern Okchŏ rather than Yilou. He then argues that the specific Mohe groups who arose in the Tumen basin area, known as the Baishan Mohe (K. Paeksan Malgal), were descendents of the people of the Olga culture, that were themselves a hybrid of Okchŏ and Yilou elements. In effect, Kang replaces the non-"Korean" genealogy (Yilou → Mohe) for a hybrid genealogy (Northern Okchŏ → Baishan Mohe). Here we can note that historiographical association of Okchŏ functions to signify "Koreanness" that is then bequeathed to Baishan Mohe independent to the question of evidence for Koguryŏ's control of the region.

Second, Kang further dereifies both the "Okchŏ-Yilou dichotomy" and the "Yilou-Mohe genealogy" by situating them in the larger common context of PESCA. In his earlier work Kang (2008) distinguishes "Okchŏ" and "Yilou" culture areas, yet highlights that the respective preceding cultures from which they developed—the Uril and Yankovsky cultures—shared closer material similarity than the subsequent Tuanjie-Krounovka and Potze cultures, thus implying the distinction of Okchŏ and Yilou to have been the result of divergence rather than absolute difference.[134] More recently (2022) he has emphasized commonality between Okchŏ and subsequent Mohe, stating, "In ac-

[132]Kang, "Kogo charyo," 44, "Malgal charyo," 154; and Kang and Ko, "Okchŏ munhwa," 43.

[133]Kang, "Malgal charyo," 150, 156–157.

[134]Kang, "Tong'asia kogohak," 65.

tuality the Mohe and Okchŏ cultures were not groups of entirely separate genealogies. The difference [between them] emerged through their differing subsistence strategies according to geographical environments within the Pan-East Sea region."[135] In this way he alludes to their shared PESCA context.

Finally, PESCA context also contributes to Kang's interpretation of Mohe (Malgal) archaeology that occurs in central Korea. Here two problems pertain: (1) the question of the peninsular Malgal attested in *Samguk sagi*, and (2) the fact of actual Mohe archaeology occurring across Gangwon Province and west along the Han River basin into current day eastern Seoul. Based on the evidence for a weak Koguryŏ presence in the Ch'aeksŏng region, Kang characterizes the Baishan Mohe (Paeksan Malgal) as having themselves been a long "Koguryŏ-ized" yet autonomous component of eastern Koguryŏ that, while politically constituent to Koguryŏ, maintained a Malgal identity.[136] He then reasons that they were mobilized or otherwise participated in Koguryŏ's late-fifth-century southward expansion into central Korea because they were best adapted to the geography of the Gangwon region.[137] Based on material differences in the peninsular Malgal archaeology, Kang traces two points of origin: Tumen Basin groups traveling via the east coast, and more northern groups of the Songhua Basin and Lake Khanka regions being represented by distinct Mohe graves and pottery recently uncovered at the Chungdo Legoland site.[138] Kang suggests the former to have localized across Gangwon, while the latter were a new Mohe group. In both cases, the routes they travelled, and their adaptability to the environment of Gangwon and the Han basin are two facets explained by the PESCA framework, and echo the earlier material connectivity between Tuanjie-Krounovka and Chungdo Type archaeology.

Part 3: Etic significance and functions of PESCA

We will now consider functions and significance of PESCA discourse viewed from an etic perspective. Here we can first distinguish some of the functions between modalities of archaeology and historiography. We will finish by considering those that derive and apply to the PESCA discourse in its totality, bridging both archaeology and historiography. Across these foci, we can also distinguish functions and significance as they apply to two perspectives: South Korea, and a wider global past (international) perspective.

As archaeology. PESCA discourse is universally significant for providing the most complete synthesis of transnational data for the geographical regions of eastern central and northeast Korea, and eastern Manchuria in any language to date. Its synthesizing methodology builds on the work of Ōnuki. PESCA, however, is distinguished both from Ōnuki and other syntheses, such as Aikens et al. (2009) by going beyond descriptive enumeration of the data.[139] While Ōnuki delimits a similar spatial configuration to PESCA, and Aikens et al. invoke the concept of a "cultural zone" as their starting premise, at the discursive level of their writing these principally function as outline frameworks. By contrast, Kang and Kim not only elaborate their framework in greater systematic detail, but actively employ the culture area framework as an *explanatory* mechanism. Consequently, PESCA functions not merely as an organizing premise for descriptive synthesis, but is itself a central argument that is continuously invoked and substantiated throughout production of the discourse.

By interfacing South Korean archaeology with data of eastern Manchuria, meanwhile, PESCA equally functions to situate eastern South Korean archaeology in broader northeast Asian regional context. From a South Korean perspective, PESCA provides not only a transnational synthesis on South Korean

[135]"실제로 말갈계의 문화는 옥저계의 문화와 아예 계통을 달리하는 다른 집단이 아니다. 그들은 환동해 지역에서 지리적 환경에 따라 생계 전략을 달리하는 과정에서 생긴 문화차이이다." Kang, "Malgal charyo," 154. See also Kang and Ko, "Okchŏ munhwa," 46.

[136]Kang, "Malgal charyo," 159.

[137]Kang, "Malgal charyo," 157.

[138]Kang, "Malgal charyo," 159.

[139]Aikens, Zhushchikhovskaya, and Rhee, "Environment, ecology."

terms—through it being authored by South Korean scholars—but *transnationalizes* a part of South Korean archaeology. In so doing PESCA contributes to decoupling Korean archaeological interpretation from modern (presentist) concerns of national identity. This is reflective of moves within Korean archaeology towards situating Korea in wider regional perspective.

As historiography. PESCA discourse notably increases the significance of Okchŏ as a proto-historical entity. It does so by maintaining Okchŏ's association as a part of "Korean" history while according it an autonomous east-rooted aspect. Orthodox historiography associates Okchŏ as "Korean" in part through its association with the northeast of the peninsula, but principally through understanding of it having been subordinated to the west-centered stated of Koguryŏ. PESCA by contrast identifies Okchŏ with other eastern groups and archaeology including those beyond the conventional scope of Korea's early past, namely, the Yilou. As a consequence, within the transnational space of PESCA discourse, Okchŏ functions as the clearest signifying label of "Koreanness." From the perspective of South Korean historiography, and especially when framing PESCA discourse for wider public engagement, it is principally Okchŏ that enables the projection of early Korean identity onto late iron-age archaeology extending northeast beyond the Tumen. This projection is necessary for justifying relevance of PESCA in Korean context and communicating significance to a South Korean readership.

Conclusion: complicating west-centrism, and PESCA as its own space

In its totality, PESCA discourse has two main functions. First, through foregrounding *eastern* archaeology and peoples, PESCA discourse complicates *west*-centric biases entrenched within both traditional and modern discourses of the early Korean past. West-centered discourse constitutes an epistemological hegemony that foregrounds the emergence of early states across the west, and secondarily southeast of the Korean peninsula and traces their preceding development and supposed "Yemaek" ethnic origins to the Liaodong and Liaoxi regions of China. Historiographically, western bias is centered on the early polity of Old Chosŏn (trad. 2333–108 BCE), that in both orthodox and current day tradition is viewed as the "first state in Korean history" from which all other "Korean" polities and peoples are understood to derive. In archaeological discourse, the northwest is separately privileged through its linkage to technological trajectories of China and the Eurasian Steppe. The Korean people's own ethno-material origins, meanwhile, are located in the early Bronze-Age cultures of Liaodong and Liaoxi—interpreted as either prefiguring or constituting Old Chosŏn—while preceding impulses for the Neolithic are similarly sought in the enigmatic Hongshan culture of Liaoxi and its immediate predecessors.

PESCA discourse functions to de-privilege these western biases by evincing a *material prehistory* of the eastern groups named in sources but treated as a minority other in mainstream orthodox history. In the usage of Okchŏ as a label for a wider complex of eastern archaeology, I submit that Okchŏ's continued signification of "Koreanness" combined with its newly defined eastern-rooted autonomy and PESCA identity all enable Okchŏ, or what Kang also labels the "Okchŏ culture area," to function in the discourse as a counterpart to Old Chosŏn. By explaining technological developments—understood to be commensurate with evolving social configurations—as processes of small-scale adoption, local spread and innovation, meanwhile, PESCA discourse distinguishes the east from west-centric trajectories of development; the east is no longer just a periphery to the west but its own cultural area. Through tracing earliest common material connections to the mid-Neolithic, PESCA matches, and thus balances, the deep temporal scope of northwest archaeology.

The second significance of PESCA discourse in its totality is its spatial conceptualization. From a South Korean perspective, PESCA functions to foreground the role of the Tumen River basin in the pre- and early history of the Korean Peninsula. As the only major eastward flowing river on the Korean peninsula, the Tumen has clear significance to the early past of the

[140] Park, *Sovereignty Experiments*, 23.

region, however, its long-standing status as a "borderland and prohibited zone"[140] and current day international border has led to the Tumen being viewed in both pre-twentieth-century and current (South) Korean discourses as a frontier rather than its own center. The Tumen has previously been accorded significance within archaeological discourses of Japan, North Korea and Russia on which PESCA builds. In South Korea, it is only with PESCA discourse that the Tumen has received fuller attention, but PESCA then goes further than earlier Japanese, North Korean and Russian discourse in conceptualizing the Tumen not merely as a periphery, but as its own nexus. In PESCA discourse the Tumen functions in two main ways: (1) as part of an integrated region straddling North Korea, eastern Jilin and the Maritime Province (comprised of the Mudan and Suifen-Razdolnaya basins), that from the late-Neolithic onwards functions as the core of PESCA, on which, for example, the Tuanjie-Krounovka culture arises; and (2) as a nodal point through and from which material extensions pass and project.

Foregrounding of the Tumen has significance for current English language scholarship in which the region has also been neglected. Aikens et al. (2009) synthesize eastern archaeology of Russia and South Korea but fully omit corresponding data from China and North Korea and consequently overlook the role of the Tumen. In English language Korean Studies, meanwhile, the Tumen region has only recently received attention by way of Alyssa Park (2019) on settler migration into the southern Maritime Province, and Adam Bohnet (2020) on foreigners in the Chosŏn dynasty (1392–1910), that discusses the Jurchen of the northeast. As a prehistory of the same region, PESCA offers points of *longue durée* intersection with both. The geography of Korean migration from northern Hamgyŏng Province into the southern Maritime Province (Ussuri) from the 1860s onwards, that saw "cross-border networks" and settlement extend also into Jirin, for example, notably maps onto the same core region of PESCA.[141] Although this migration was shaped by modern contingencies, the success of Hamgyŏng natives in settling these regions and opening them to cultivation can be explained by viewing their migrations as following the logic of, in fact, *internal* movement within a common area and ecology, to which, Kang would argue, the patterns of eastern Korean life were long pre-adapted. In the early Chosŏn period, meanwhile, the route Bohnet describes Jurchen envoys taking to the Chosŏn capital at Seoul, "proceeding down the eastern coast… turning inland at Yangyang," similarly follows the pattern of connectivity modelled in PESCA between the Tumen region and central Korea, Yangyang being the town in which the Neolithic site of Osalli is located.[142] Indeed, ancestry of the later Koreans of Hamgyŏng, including those who migrated north, would have included a component from Jurchen communities that in early Chosŏn resided across both sides of the Tumen; those Jurchen in turn inhabited the same region as the earlier Baishan Mohe and, according to Kang, of Northern Okchŏ before them.

In this way, we can highlight one further significance, namely, that PESCA provides a framework to conceptualize a common eastern people and space. Several aspects of this have already been addressed. We have noted that the identification of eastern groups as a common people sharing a common material prehistory enables the projection of eastern Korean identity onto groups and archaeology that have lain beyond the conventional boundaries of Korea's early past, whether the Yilou and Mohe or earlier material connectivity extending to the Lower Amur. In this South Korean-centered framing, PESCA essentially bolsters the eastern component of Korea (i.e. giving significance to the eastern archaeology and peoples within Korea). The non-Korean-centered equivalent is to recognise PESCA as its own spatial network (i.e. culture area), inhabited by its own peoples. This *PESCA-centered* perspective is also present in PESCA discourse as authored by Kang and Kim and is, I contend, its core argument. Within the discourse it is clearest for the earlier periods, particularly the

[141] Park, *Sovereignty Experiments*, 172–182.

[142] Bohnet, *Turning toward Edification*, 40.

mid-to-late Neolithic, but from the proto-historical period when the discourse addresses the problem of named entities, the PESCA-centered perspective becomes obscured—though never negated—by Korea-centered framings.

A PESCA-centered perspective provides two functions. First, maintained into early history, PESCA space and peoples partially prefigure the later state of Parhae (698–926). In west-centered histories, Parhae is understood as a successor state to Koguryŏ owing to it having been established by remnant groups. However, geographically Parhae had a stronger eastern orientation, being more centered on eastern Jilin (originally the center of Puyŏ), with territory extending into the southern Maritime Province and eastern Korea. Further, while Parhae also possessed a Koguryŏ component, its core population, particularly of the eastern region, was largely comprised of Mohe groups. Its material identity was also distinct from Koguryŏ. Parhae's eastern capital was located in the lower Tumen (former Ch'aeksŏng).[143] Parhae more fully embraced the logic of PESCA than the west-centered state of Koguryŏ before it. This significance can support South Korean claims to Parhae, or it can support a Parhae-centered perspective.

Second, and more broadly, the PESCA-centered perspective enables a space (or network) and people to be attended to as their own dynamic across pre- and early regional history. Here, we should be conscious of, and go beyond using these concepts of a PESCA space and people only as a challenge to non-PESCA-centered norms, that might derive from presentist interpretations or west-centric perspectives. For example, in according significance to PESCA as its own space, we can highlight most immediately that the concept of PESCA functions to deborder a region that (from our presentist perspective) has previously only been viewed as a frontier to west-centered forces. Here the concern of borders is not limited to modern national borders but extends to pre-twentieth century configurations; it may even trace to the early historical period that overlaps with PESCA—for example, when the Lower Tumen was an eastern frontier of Koguryŏ. However, it is still a *longue durée* presentist concern, while the greater part of PESCA temporality pertains to the prehistoric period, prior to borders. I argue, a view of PESCA centered on its own temporality and space functions not only to defamiliarize modern and historical era space (*longue durée* presentist concerns), but does so by evincing—effectively *refamiliarizing* us with—a "forgotten" *actual* alternative pattern of the past, that pattern being the PESCA complex.

We have noted, meanwhile, that the notion of a PESCA people provides a common identity for the communities that emerge in sources as disparate, non-state "others." However, to define PESCA identity only as the sum of these negatives would be to remain hostage to historiographical bias. The PESCA-centered perspective not only de-others these proto-historical peoples but foregrounds the communities constituting PESCA from the mid-Neolithic onwards as autonomous subjects of their own networked space. Their identity need not be ethnic or political, but derives from the "PESCA argument" for common environmental adaptions and shared technologies. PESCA identity is manifest in materiality; to the extent there is material connectivity, there is a networked identity.

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[143]Kang has noted that Parhae sites excavated in Russia invariably contain earlier Okchŏ layers (Kang 2020:48).

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Conversing by Brush

A Partial *P'iltam* 筆談 Conversation between Robert van Gulik and Chŏng Inbo 鄭寅普 in the Collection of Leiden University Libraries

Remco E. Breuker & Wonkyung Choi
Leiden University

Introduction

Legendary Dutch Sinologist, diplomat, and writer of international bestsellers Robert H. van Gulik (*1910-1967*) visited Korea a number of times during his service in Japan, both before and after the Pacific War.[2] While stationed as a diplomat in Japan in the thirties, van Gulik had studied Korean according to his

[1]We owe a debt of gratitude to: the van Gulik family for allowing us access to Robert van Gulik's diaries; to Marc Gilbert, Leiden University Library reference librarian for Chinese, for making that access possible; to Kim Yongt'ae for his help in reading the manuscripts; to Vincent Chang for figuring out the identities of now rather obscure Republic of China diplomats; and to the Leiden University Library, in particular its Special Collections Department for providing us with digital copies of the van Gulik sources almost faster than the speed of light.

[2]The *Tongnip shinmun* (Chongqing edition, 1943) limits its count to five actual visits made during his seven-year posting in Japan, whereas a set of South Korean newspapers published on 21 October 1949, including *Chosŏn ilbo*, *Chayu shinmun*, and *Hansŏng ilbo*, drawing on a jointly conducted interview, reported—citing van Gulik's own interview—that he had visited Korea "seven times" during the colonial period. The *Tongnip shinmun* reports that through several visits he developed a sustained interest in Korean affairs. On this basis, the newspaper further reports that van Gulik was invited by a Korean youth association to deliver a lecture. While this report does not in itself determine the location of the event, the wartime context, the fact that the Dutch were at war with Japan, van Gulik's posting in Chongqing at the time, and the appearance of the report in the Chongqing edition together make it clear that the lecture was delivered in Chongqing rather than on the Korean peninsula. See *Tongnip shinmun* (Chongqing edition), June 1, 1943, "Han'guk Ch'ŏngnyŏnhoe tonch'ŏng Hwaran taesagwan pisŏ Ko Rap'ae-sshi yŏn'gang" [韓國青年會敦請荷蘭大使館祕書高羅佩氏演講], Independence Hall of Korea, Korean Independence Movement Information System, `https://search.i815.or.kr/contents/newsPaper/detail.do?newsPaperId=DR194306010201`; *Chosŏn ilbo*, October 21, 1949, "Hwaran ŭi chin'gaek naehan" [和蘭의 珍客來韓], `https://newslibrary.naver.com/viewer/index.naver?articleId=1949102100239102021&editNo=1&printCount=1&publishDate=1949-10-21&officeId=00023&pageNo=2&printNo=8141&publishType=00010`. The news of van Gulik's visit was reported on the same day by five South Korean newspapers. Comparison of the texts shows that the content of the *Hansŏng ilbo* is identical to that of the *Chosŏn ilbo*, while the *Chayu shinmun* follows the same text with minor omissions; the *Kyŏnghyang shinmun* and *Chayu minbo* present increasingly condensed versions. Taking the *Chosŏn ilbo* article as a point of reference, this shared wording suggests that the reports were based either on a jointly held press conference on 20 October or on an article written by a *Chosŏn ilbo* reporter and subsequently circulated. In this paper, for terms that could be read according to either Chinese or Korean pronunciation, the latter is given.

diaries.[3] He also seems to have taken an interest in – presumably – classical Korean history and culture.[4] After the war, van Gulik was appointed as political advisor to the ambassador to Japan – and to South Korea.[5] In 1949, he made another trip to Seoul, formally as a private trip ("vakantietocht"), but, as he told his official Korean counterparts, in reality as a diplomat under orders from The Hague to scout out a possible location for the Dutch embassy in Seoul.[6] At that moment, the Dutch diplomat responsible for South Korea was the Dutch ambassador stationed in Tokyo, which the Dutch embassy in Japan knew to be a potentially very sensitive point for Korea.[7] The situation in Korea was deemed too unstable and dangerous for the Netherlands to establish a physical presence in Seoul.

[3]In his diary, van Gulik jotted down the appointments he had – including those with his language teachers. It is not known who the person in the diary called Kim was, merely that he met van Gulik regularly and was paid for whatever service he rendered him. Given van Gulik's own insistence that he had taken Korean lessons, and given the fact that "Kim" is a typically Korean family name, it seems reasonable to surmise that "Kim" was his Korean language teacher. The writers of his biography concur: see C.D. Barkman & H. de Vries-van der Hoeven, *Dutch Mandarin: The Life and Work of Robert Hans van Gulik* (Orchid Press: Bangkok, 2018), p. 48. Also see Leiden University Library, Robert Hans van Gulik archive, Or. 28.385: 3.63-64, on the following dates: June 13, June 23, June 27, June 30, September 29, October 3, October 6, October 10, October 13, October 17, October 21, October 27 (with the note "Kim paid for 8 times"), October 25, October 28, November 1, November 4, and November 8. Further lessons took place on November 10 (on which date is further said: "Kim paid for 4 [times]"), November 14, November 17, November 24, November 28, December 5 (when Kim had been "too late"), December 8, December 16, December 19, December 22 (after which he visited Hawley "with Kim" and dined together in "Prunier"), and December 26 (Kim was paid). Hawley refers to Frank Hawley (1901-1961), an English teacher in Japan and later special correspondent for *The Times*, who possessed a very large collection of books on Japan and China (approximately 16,000 volumes). Van Gulik wrote his obituary, "lest an outstanding scholar who greatly contributed to Japanese studies be forgotten through lack of documentary evidence." See Leiden University Library, Robert Hans van Gulik archive, Or. 28.385: 56, on the following dates: February 16, March 2, May 11, May 22, May 29, June 8, June 15, and June 22. The meeting on June 12 was cancelled. Also see R.H. van Gulik, "In Memoriam: Frank Hawley (1906-1961)," in *Monumenta Nipponica* 16.3-4(1960): 214-227. In the following year, the pattern was continued with less frequency. In the months before his visit in October 1949 he noted in his diary every Korean class he took, but he did not specify who taught him. See Leiden University Library, Robert Hans van Gulik archive, Or. 28.385: 14.57 and later.

[4]The earliest interest van Gulik expressed in Korea can be found in his diary for the year of 1937 (no further date). There, van Gulik had jotted down the name and address of a publisher in Keijō (present-day Seoul): Chōsen kōbunsha 朝鮮弘文社, as well as the name of a book, *Chōsen kokon meikenden* 朝鮮古今明賢傳 (*Biographies of Korean sages, past and present*). Copies of this book (published in 1923) can be found in the libraries of Tokyo Keizai University and Seoul National University.) The next page in the 1937 diary mentions the *Seikyū gakusō* 靑坵學叢, the quarterly journey of the Seikyū gakkai 靑坵學會 (Azure Hills Academic Association – Azure Hills is a historical designation of the Korean peninsula). The Seikyū gakkai had been established in 1930 at the Imperial University of Keijō (now Seoul) by Japanese historians working on Korean history. Later members would also include Korean intellectual giants such as Yi Nŭnghwa 李能和 (1869-1943). The association played an important role in the professionalisation and colonisation of the field of Korean history. The note in his otherwise conspicuously uncluttered diary seems to suggest that Van Gulik was a reader of the journal. See Leiden University Library, Robert Hans van Gulik archive, Or. 28.385: 3.63-64. Also see Cho Pŏmsŏng, "1930년대 靑丘學會의 설립과 활동." 한국민족운동사연구, 107, 81-126.

[5]The Netherlands had recognized the Republic of Korea just before van Gulik's visit, on July 25, 1949, although full diplomatic relations only started from April 1, 1960.

[6]See Karwin Cheung, "A portrait of the scholar as intelligence operative: Robert van Gulik in Seoul 1949," in *Provenance* 5 (2024): 85-94. This is a good reconstruction of van Gulik's visit, even though I wonder whether what Karwin Cheung describes as the duties of an intelligence operative, wasn't part and parcel of the – admittedly less advertised but nonetheless expected - duties of the diplomat, especially in what was shaping to be the Cold War.

[7]The report bears this out, as well as the appreciation from Syngman Rhee himself for the delicacy the Dutch diplomats showed here. See van Gulik, "Rapport," p. 29.

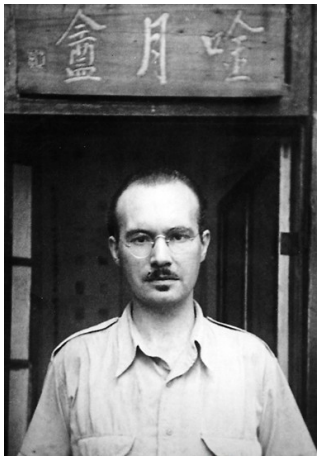


Figure 6: Robert van Gulik at the Yinyue'an 吟月庵. Photograph by Luo Jimei 羅寄梅, July 30, 1945. Source: Central News Agency, Republic of China. Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

Building on the network he had acquired during his previous trips and during his stay in the war in Chongqing, the Chinese nationalist capital,[8] van Gulik was able to get mentioned in the *Chayu shinmun*, make an appearance on Korean radio, meet the president and high-ranking officials, and meet a number of leading Korean intellectuals, such as Chŏng Inbo 鄭寅普 and O Sech'ang 吳世昌. In preparation for these meetings (and perhaps also for a future ambassadorship to South Korea; van Gulik was appointed as ambassador plenipotentiary to South Korea in 1965 and would remain in that position until his death in 1967), van Gulik seems to have taken lessons in spoken Korean,[9] but despite his fluency in Chinese and Japanese, obtaining fluency in Korean in a matter of months was not possible (even though he impressively read out aloud a speech on the Korean radio in Korean during his 1949 visit).

During the 1949 visit, van Gulik communicated by brush in Literary Sinitic with Korean cultural and intellectual giants such as the calligraphers An Chongwŏn 安鍾元 and O Sech'ang, and historian and public intellectual Chŏng Inbo. This structured these conversations along time-honored parameters, but conceivably would have led to a more restricted conversation. Yet, the genre of *p'iltam* 筆談, conversation in Literary Sinitic by brush, was a genre with a long, transnational history. *P'iltam* is a form of communication through written exchanges conducted when two parties did not share a spoken language but could both communicate by writing in Literary Sinitic, the classical *lingua franca* in East Asia.[10]

This was not merely an auxiliary linguistic de-

[8]Van Gulik stated in the report he wrote that he had told President Syngman Rhee that he had visited Korea many times after 1935, the year in which he had been sent to Tokyo as a diplomat. However, his diaries do not contain mentions of these visits. Since van Gulik wrote about his many visits in the context of his conversation with the president of South Korea, he may well have exaggerated his connection with Korea in that conversation in order to be polite, but his diaries contain preparations for a trip to Korea in the second half of the 1930s and he repeated this claim in the interviews he did in Korea. Also, his official report of the trip that landed on the desk of the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs supports this: he had been able to use the network he had built "during my pre-war visits to the country and during my stay in Chongqing." Van Gulik had taken the trouble to learn spoken Korean, he seems to have ordered books by famous classical Korean intellectuals, and in the section meant for notes in his 1939 diary, he had written down the names of Korean dishes (such as *kimch'iguk, kuk, t'ang, yakpap* etc.) The authors of his biography also write that van Gulik had visited Korea several times while he was stationed in Japan in the thirties, but no source for this statement is given. See Barkman *&* de Vries-van der Hoeven, *Dutch Mandarin* p. 48; van Gulik, "Rapport van de politiek adviseur van de Nederlandse Missie in Japan over zijn dienstreis naar Korea, met geleidebrief," Nationaal Archief. Inventaris van het archief van de Commandant Zeemacht in Nederlands-Indië, (1942-) 1945-1950, 2.13.72, Inventarisnummer 1441, p. 2; Leiden University Library, Robert Hans van Gulik archive, Or. 28.385: 14.76; Leiden University Library, Robert Hans van Gulik archive, Or. 28.385: 5.63-64.

[9]Van Gulik had taken tens of conversation classes in Korean in the months before his 1949 trip to Seoul, but it seems he had already learnt a fair amount of Korean judging by the many lessons he had taken from a certain "Kim" while he had been stationed as a diplomat in Japan before war broke out. See note 3 for details.

[10]One of the earliest extant records of *p'iltam* is said to be an exchange conducted in 607 between envoys dispatched by Japan to the Sui dynasty and a Chinese Buddhist monk. This case demonstrates that, already by the early seventh century, written communication mediated by *munŏn* was being practically employed across East Asia. One of the principal objectives behind the dispatch of students from Greater Shilla, Parhae, and Japan to Tang China was likewise the training of civil officials proficient in the composition of diplomatic documents and refined prose. Given this institutional background, it is reasonable to assume that exchanges conducted through *p'iltam* were fairly frequent in Tang Chang'an, an international metropolis of the period.

vice; rather, it constituted a transnational mode of communication that emerged among intellectual communities sharing a common set of civilizational conventions. Heavy diplomatic traffic between states on the Korean peninsula and the Ming and Qing states in China, the Kamakura, Muromachi, Azuchi-Momoyama and Tokugawa states in Japan, and smaller entities such as Jurchen communities and Ryukyu meant that for centuries on end, there was ample opportunity for talented and quick-thinking scholars to engage in written exchanges in Literary Sinitic. Such exchanges often took the format of poetry and parallel prose. International reputations could be made in this way and there are records as far back as the Koryŏ period (918-1392) about Korean envoys who impressed their foreign hosts with the eloquence, wit, erudition, and insight displayed in *p'iltam* exchanges. Such exchanges were often recorded, in particular the celebrated ones, so they were well-known among later generations of scholars and diplomats.

It is from the seventeenth century onward that *p'iltam* begins to be preserved in especially rich documentary form. Practices of literati sociability and the evaluation of poetry and prose that had taken shape during the Ming dynasty were reconfigured within the new international order established after the founding of the Qing dynasty. Through tributary diplomacy with the Ming, Chosŏn had already internalized norms of diplomatic documentation and literary exchange centred on *munŏn* 文言, Literary Sinitic, and recognition by renowned Ming literati constituted an important cultural aspiration for Chosŏn intellectuals. These internalized norms continued to remain operative in Chosŏn's engagements with Qing China and Japan, and the *p'iltam* by envoys to Qing China (such as those by Pak Chiwŏn 朴趾源) and those between Chosŏn envoys and Japanese scholars during Chosŏn embassies to Japan became celebrated examples of the international aspects of Sinitic learning.[11] The viability of *p'iltam* as a method of international communication was predicated on the existence of a written cosmopolis in classical East Asia, so the decline and then the collapse of the classical way of performing international relations towards the end of the 19th century brought with it the disuse of *p'iltam* as a practical way of communication across language barriers. No longer was Literary Sinitic the *lingua franca* among diplomats and scholars alike. Entering the 20th century, *p'iltam* was rapidly becoming a stilted literary genre. Van Gulik and his counterparts in Korea, then, resurrected a historically well-attested genre by communicating through *p'iltam*. It should be mentioned here, by the way, that the Leiden University library only holds the responses van Gulik received from his counterparts. His own part in these brush conversations remained with their recipients in Korea. The *p'iltam* that will be examined in this article is not a simple written conversation, but a form of oral interaction that included handwritten calligraphy of the name of this study and poetic lines.

[11] In the wake of the Imjin War, *p'iltam* and poetic exchanges (*shi* and *mun* compositions) were conducted most actively between Chosŏn literati and their Japanese counterparts, particularly in connection with the Chosŏn diplomatic missions (*t'ongshinsa*) dispatched to Japan. Within Japanese literati society of this period, receiving poetry from Chosŏn scholars or engaging in *p'iltam* with them even became something of a cultural vogue. Accordingly, in relations with Japan, Chosŏn was strongly conscious of displaying its status as the "civilized country of Chosŏn" through *mun* (文, literary cultivation). The scene depicted in Hanabusa Itchō's 花房一朝 *Bajō Kigō Zu* 馬上揮毫圖, in which a mere page attending a mounted Chosŏn envoy writes characters on the spot for passersby along the roadside, symbolically illustrates both the popularity and the prestige of communication through writing. By communicating across borders in *munŏn*, the most authoritative written medium of the time, participants affirmed their belonging to a shared cultural–civilizational sphere. On this topic, see Kim Mun'gyŏng (Kim Munkyung), Chin Chaegyo (Jin Jaegyo), Ch'oe Wŏn'gyŏng (Choi Wonkyung,) *et al.*, trans., *Shipp'al segi Ilbon chishigin-dŭl, Chosŏn-ŭl yŏtpoda*: P'yŏngurok 18세기 일본 지식인, 조선을 엿보다: 평우록 (Seoul: Sungkyunkwan University Press, 2013); and Chang Chinyŏp (Jhang Jinyoup), *Chosŏn-gwa Ilbon, sot'ong-ŭl kkum kkuda* 조선과 일본, 소통을 꿈꾸다 (Seoul: Minsogwŏn, 2022).

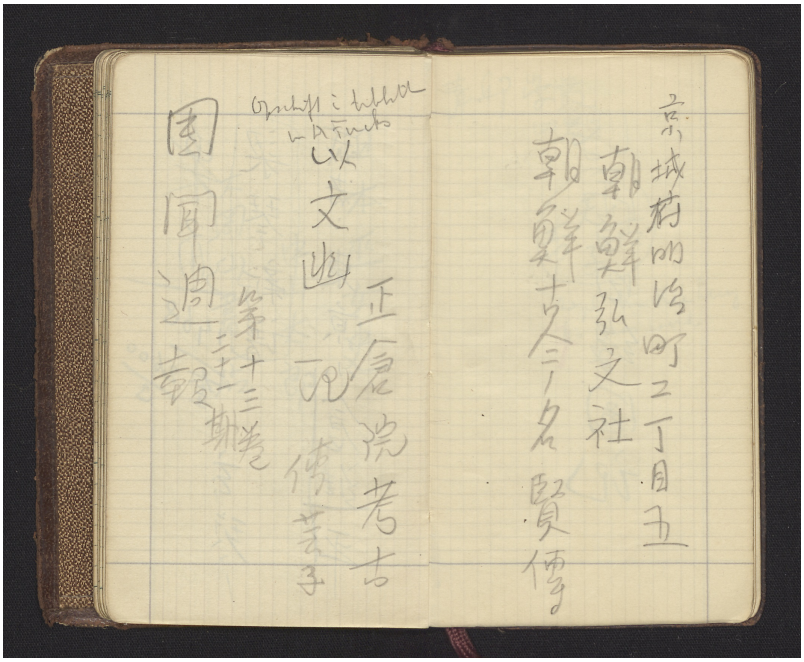


Figure 7: Page from van Gulik's diary for 1937 with notes relating to his interest in Korea. See Leiden University Library, Robert Hans van Gulik archive, Or. 28.385: 3.63-64.

The scholar visits

Below are reproduced the excerpts from van Gulik's diary that deal with his 1949 visit to Seoul. An English translation follows the Dutch. In the English translation, we have amended obvious mistakes and added to van Gulik's Chinese transliteration of the names of the Koreans he met the appropriate Korean transliteration.[12]

Oktober 11, 1949 dinsdag
5 uur van huis, 7 uur in N. Western vliegtuig van Haneda vertrokken. In plane McNair ontmoet. 12 uur in Seoel aangekomen, late lunch alleen in Chosen hotel. 2 uur in taxi naar Pak, niet thuis, daarna naar Chün-shu-t'ang, waar boeken gezien en met Choi gepraat tot 4 uur. Via Hotel naar

October 11, 1949, Tuesday
Left home at 5 o'clock, departed at 7 o'clock from Haneda in a N. Western airplane. Met McNair in the plane. Arrived in Seoul at 12 o'clock, late lunch alone in the Chosen Hotel. At 2 o'clock by taxi to Pak, not at home, then to Chün-shu-t'ang [Kunsŏdang[13]], *where I looked at books and talked with Choi*

[12]Some of the names of Korean officials and others van Gulik met are given in a transliteration method appropriate to Korean. It is our assumption that the bearers of these names had devised a way to transliterate their names in Latin characters due to their knowledge of English or due to frequent contacts with (English-speaking) foreigners. In the absence of an established transcription, van Gulik resorted to the Wade-Giles method of transcribing Chinese.

[13]The Kunsŏdang 群書堂 was an antiquarian bookshop in central Seoul in the 1930s and 1940s which primarily dealt in books and documents written in Literary Sinitic. It was exceedingly popular among intellectuals, and it would have a monopoly on the distribution of some books by Chosŏn and Korean intellectuals, probably the books it published itself – it was also a publishing house. Its manager was Ch'oe Sŏnggi 崔成基, presumably the Mr Choi van Gulik mentions in his diary. The Kunsŏdang had a distinctly political flavor – it had published a book dedicated to Lyuh Woon-hyung (Yŏ Unhyŏng 呂運亨, 1886-1947), ultimately a Korean independence activist positioned to the left of the political centre who had proclaimed the People's Republic of Korea on September 6, 1945. The PRK was declared illegal in the South by the American military government, while in the North it was incorporated into the DPRK.

Amerikaansche ambassade, waar met Drumright, amb. Muccio, Stewart gesproken. 6 uur thuis, diner alleen. 8-9 Pak + vrouw en broer komen praten. 9.30 – 11 in bar gepraat met McNair, Angles An en Col. Frazer.

Oktober 12

9 uur met boekhandelaar Choi naar moderne boekwinkel, waar boeken gekocht, en daarna met hem naar tentoonstelling in National Library. 10.30 jonge Pak[13] komt, met hem gepraat, 12 uur oude Pak komt, met hun geluncht, daarna samen naar oude geleerde An Chung-yüan gewandeld, waar gepraat. 4 uur in hotel in jacquet verkleed, en naar Min. B.Z., waar gesproken met Min. Lin, vice-Minister Cho, en Min. v. Ed. An Ho-sang. 6-7 Kim Man-soo komt over paspoort spreken.

[Ch'oe Sŏnggi] *until 4 o'clock. Via the hotel to the American Embassy, where I spoke with Drumright, Amb. Muccio, and Stewart.*[14] *Home at 6 o'clock, dinner alone. 8–9 Pak + wife and brother*[15] *come to talk. 9:30–11 talked in the bar with McNair,*[16] *Angles An,*[17] *and Col. Frazer.*[18]

October 12

At 9 o'clock went with the bookseller Choi to a modern bookshop. Bought books there, and afterward went with him to an exhibition in the National Library. At 10:30 young Pak arrives, talked with him; at 12 o'clock old Pak arrives, lunched with them, then together walked to the old scholar An Chung-yüan [An Chongwŏn[19]], *where we talked. At 4 o'clock changed into a morning coat in the hotel, and went to Min. of Foreign Affairs. There I spoke with Min. Lin,*[20]

[14]John J. Muccio was the first ambassador to the ROK from 1949 to 1952. From 1948 to 1949 he had been Special Representative of the President in Seoul. Everett F. Drumright was Counsellor of the Embassy from 1948 to 1951. J. Stewart was Public Affairs Officer at the Embassy around this time. See Howard E. French, *New York Times*, May 22, 1989, http://www.nytimes.com/1989/05/22/obituaries/john-j-muccio-89-was-us-diplomat-in-several-countries.html.

[15]This family is impossible to further identify in the absence of more information than their family name.

[16]This may refer to Robert Wendell "Buck" McNair (1919-1971), a Canadian flying ace in WWII. He was stationed as an Air Advisor and Attaché of the Military Mission to the Canadian embassy in Japan in 1949 and fought as a fighter pilot in the Korean War. See Norman Franks, *Buck McNair: The Story of Group Captain R W McNair DSO, DFC & 2 Bars, Ld'H, CdG, RCAF*. Grub Street, 2001. I am not certain about this identification, but McNair's status as diplomat in Japan and his documented action in the Korean War make him at least a viable candidate, even though Canada only established full diplomatic relations with South Korea and opened an embassy in 1963. Alternatively this refers to an otherwise unknown R.P. McNair, for on an otherwise empty page at the back of van Gulik's diary for 1949, we find the following note: "R.P. McNair, 812 Rose Lane, Falls Church, Va." See Leiden University Library, Robert Hans van Gulik archive, Or. 28.385: 14.97.

[17]I have not been able to decipher this name. The family name of "An" seems clear, but the preceding name is not – given the fact that here the Korean or Chinese family name comes last, while van Gulik elsewhere always respects the original East-Asian order of family name – personal name, this name probably refers to someone who lived in the United States or Europe for a significant period. It remains a matter of speculation, however, whether van Gulik's handwriting here can be deciphered as reading "Angles An" or whether another reading should be preferred.

[18]"Frazer" refers to Colonel J.W. Fraser, who served as US Military Attaché in 1949. In his report, van Gulik also misspells his name as "Frazer"; van Gulik, "Rapport," p. 24. Bruce Cumings' *The Origins of the Korean War* refers to some of Fraser's activities. See Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, Part 2, p. 828n.59: "895.00 file, box 7127, Embassy to State, March 25, 1949» transmitting a report on the guerrillas by Col. J. W. Fraser." After the war Fraser was described as a former military attaché: see Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, Part 2, p. 814n.77: "Liem and Col. J. W. Fraser, a former military attaché in Seoul, sought again to utilize Jaisohn's services, this time in a propaganda and public affairs capacity. See 795.00 file, box 4267, Fraser to Weckerling, July 26, 1950, attached to 795.00/8-250."

[13]I have not been able to identify either young Pak or old Pak.

[19]An Chongwŏn 安鍾元 (1874-1951) was one of the foremost calligraphers of colonial Korea – in South Korea, he was one of the jury members of the annual national calligraphy competition. Given van Gulik's passion for calligraphy, he was an obvious person to meet. An was 77 years old when van Gulik met him.

[20]Presumably, Im Pyŏngjik 林炳稷 – Lin is the Chinese reading of the Korean Im-, Minister of Foreign Affairs between 1949 and 1951. Im was a confidant of President Yi Sŭngman, with whom he had spent 36 years in exile in the United States.

Vice-Minister Cho,[21] and Min. of Ed. An Ho-sang.[22] 6–7 Kim Man-soo[23] comes to talk about passport.

Oktober 13
9 uur naar Mungyobu, met Minister An Ho-sang gesproken, daarna naar National Museum, Kim Che-wen niet getroffen. Naar Am. ambassade, McNair, Lt. Fairchild gesproken. Lunch alleen in hotel. Na lunch half uur op kamer gerust. Naar Chin. ambassade, Shao Yü-lin ziek, 3de secretaris Chen Heng-li gesproken. Rond gewandeld, antiquair Kim binnengelopen, waar Ri ontmoet. Naar Am. ambassade, waar gesproken met McNair, Frazer en Stewart. 4-5 gepraat bij Kol. David, Nat. Police H.Q. 5 uur sandwich in bar en op kamer gerust. 6-7 Kim Che-wen + vrouw komen praten. 7 uur naar huis Drumright, waar buffet-dinner met Amb. Shao, counsel Hsü, Min. Holt, Min. Yung, Secr. Gen. Ch'ŏn + vrouw, Steward, e.a.

October 13
At 9 o'clock to the Mun'gyobu [Ministry of Education], spoke with Minister An Ho-sang, then to the National Museum, did not meet Kim Che-wen [Kim Chaewŏn[24]]. Went to the American Embassy, spoke with McNair and Lt. Fairchild.[25] Lunch alone in hotel. Rested half an hour in room after lunch. To the Chinese Embassy, Shao Yü-lin ill,[26] spoke with 3rd secretary Chen Heng-li.[27] Walked around, dropped by at antiquary Kim,[28] where I met Ri.[29] Visited the American Embassy, where I spoke with McNair,[30] Frazer, and Stewart.

[21]Cho Chŏnghwan, the Fourth Minister of Foreign Affairs between 1956 and 1959, who had previously served as Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs between 1949 and 1951.

[22]An Hosang was the first Minister of Education of the ROK and a faithful adherent of the kind of pseudo-historical theories that claim a truly grandiose past for the Korean nation. In his long interview with Dutch journalist Hans Olink in 1999, George Blake reminisced that An had a portrait of Hitler in his office. See Hans Olink, "George Blake, meesterspion." An was known for his explicit fascist sympathies before the liberation of Korea and his "One-People Principle" smacks of Nazism. He was also the founder of an extreme-right student corps, the Taehan Youth Corps (Taehan Ch'ŏngnyŏndan 大韓青年團), which – somewhat improbably –boasted of having a membership of around two million members. For a description of An's study abroad in Germany in the 1920s and his contacts with German fascists, see Frank Hoffmann's impressively researched monograph-length article: Frank Hoffmann, "Berlin Koreans and Pictured Koreans," in *Koreans and Central Europeans*: *Informal Contacts up to 1950*, Vol. 1 edited by Andreas Schirmer (Vienna: Praesens, 2015). Pp.. xi, 241 pp. ISBN: 9783706908733 (paper, also available as e-book). It is altogether credible that Blake saw a portrait of Hitler in An's office.

[23]I find it impossible to determine who Kim Man-soo (Kim Mansu) was. I have found two persons with that name that were active in 1949, but both in Chŏlla-do Province, one as a policeman, the other as the regional branch manager of a bank in Mokp'o. Neither seems a logical candidate for the Kim Mansu van Gulik met.

[24]Kim Chaewŏn (1909-1990), generally seen as the founding father of modern South Korean archeology and the first director of the National Museum of Korea. He was a towering figure in postwar cultural and academic circles.

[25]Ik heb Lt. Fairchild niet kunnen identificeren.

[26]Shao Yulin 邵毓麟 (1909-1984) was the first ambassador of the Republic of China to South Korea, representing the Nationalist Party. Charles Kraus has written an interesting footnote on Shao in: Charles Kraus, "Bridging East Asia's Revolutions: The Overseas Chinese in North Korea, 1945-1950," *Journal of Northeast Asian History* 11.2 (2014): 37-70. Shao wrote a book on his period in South Korea, his memoirs as ambassador: Shao Yulin, *Shi Han huiyilu* : *Jindai Zhong Han guanxi shihua* 使 韩 回忆录 : 近代 中 韩 关系 史话 (Taibei 台北: Zhuanji wenxue chubanshe 传记文学出版社, 1980).

[27]Thanks to Vincent Chang, Cheng Heng-li can be identified. He is mentioned in Shao's memoirs om p. 111. He was Third Secretary and Vice-Consul Ch'en Heng-li 三等祕書兼副領事 陳蘅力 (Hanyu Pinyin: Chen Hengli). For more details, see https://gpost.lib.nccu.edu.tw/view_career.php?name=陳衡力. It should be noted that this government source uses the character 衡 for "heng" instead of the character Shao uses: 蘅 .

[28]Perhaps this was Kim Chŏnghwan 김정환, the founder and owner of the Tongin kage, a famous historic art gallery and antique shop, founded in 1924 in Seoul. In 1949 it was still located in Tongin-dong. It later relocated to Insa-dong, where it still exists to this day.

[29]It is impossible to establish the identity of "Ri" only on the basis of his (her?) family name.

[30]This may either mean that McNair was an American whom I cannot identify, or that the Canadian diplomat McNair (cf. note 16) either also visited the American embassy like van Gulik, or, what seems more plausible given the context, perhaps had an office there as an ally of the United States.

4–5 talked with Col. David[31] *at the National Police H.Q. At 5 o'clock a sandwich in the bar and rested in room. 6–7 Kim Che-wen + wife come to talk. At 7 to Drumright's house, where buffet dinner with Amb. Shao, counsel Hsü,*[32] *Min. Holt,*[33] *Min. Yung,*[34] *Secr. Gen. Ch'ŏn*[35] *+ wife, Steward, and others.*

Oktober 14

Aan ontbijt kennis gemaakt met Kodaki, daarna naar Britsche Legatie gewandeld, Blake, Faithful en Holt gesproken. via Jung-Ch'ang boekhandel naar hotel terug gewandeld. 12-3 Col. Frazer en McNair komen lunchen in hotel, daarna samen naar P. Ex. Daarna naar antiquair Kim, shêng gehaald. In hotel brief voor E geschreven, daarna op kamer gerust. 6.30 in taxi naar huis Dr. Kim achter Museum, waar Koreaansch diner, en na diner met mounter Kwak gepraat.

October 14

Made acquaintance with Kodaki[36] *at breakfast, afterwards walked to British Legation, spoke with Blake,*[37] *Faithful,*[38] *and Holt. Walked back to the hotel via Jung-Ch'ang bookshop.*[39] *12–3 Col. Frazer and McNair come to lunch in the hotel, afterward together to PX. Then to antiquary Kim, fetched a* shêng.[40] *Wrote a letter for E*[41] *in hotel, then rested in room. At 6:30 by taxi to the house of Dr. Kim behind the Museum, where we had a Korean dinner, and after dinner*

[31]I have not been able to identify Colonel David. The South Korean police had become independent with the establishment of the Republic of Korea, but it still used American advisors and had largely retained its colonial structure and employees. Its reputation was extremely bad for the violence and torture it was associated with. It should not be forgotten that when van Gulik was in Seoul, not only was the political situation extremely unstable and was travel outside of Seoul potentially dangerous due to the activities of Communist guerrillas, but the Jeju Uprising had only just been quashed – during which tens of thousands of people had been killed, among others by members of the national police. The national police in 1949 in other words was the kind of police force one expected in a dictatorship. For a more detailed overview of the early years of the Korean police see Jeremy Kuzmarov's article (which is useful, but has some weak points in that it was not written by someone with extensive Korean Studies training): Jeremy Kuzmarov, "Police Training, 'Nation-Building,' and Political Repression in Postcolonial South Korea," *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 10: 27.3 (2012).

[32]It almost proved impossible to establish the identity of "Counsel Hsü" only on the basis of his family name and diplomatic rank, but again Vincent Chang came to the rescue. Counsellor and Vice-Consul Hsu Shao-ch'ang 參事兼總領事 許紹昌 (Hanyu Pinyin: Xu Shaochang) appears in a group photo in Shao's memoirs. For more details, see https://gpost.lib.nccu.edu.tw/view_career.php?name=許紹昌.

[33]Captain Sir Vyvyan Holt (1896-1960) had been appointed British Consul-General to South Korea in 1948 and Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in 1949. He was taken prisoner by the North Koreans in 1950 and spent three years in captivity, like Holt. The infamous Soviet spy George Blake (1922-2020) was one of his subordinates and was turned during his captivity.

[34]I wonder whether "Min. Yung" might be Yun Posŏn 尹潽善 (1897-1990), who served as Minister of Commerce and Industry between 1948 and 1950. Yun briefly served as South Korea's second president between 1960 and 1962 and as the only president of South Korea's Second Republic.

[35]I have not been able to identify this person.

[36]I have not been able to identify this person.

[37]George Blake (1922-2020), the famous mole in the British Secret Intelligence Services, who became a communist during his three-year captivity in North Korea. He was sent to Seoul in his capacity as intelligence officer of the SIS. After returning to Great Brittain in 1953, he spied for the Soviet Union until his capture in 1961. Sentenced to 42 years in prison, he escaped in 1966 and fled to Moscow, where he stayed until his death in 2020. Born and raised in Rotterdam to an Egyptian-British father and Dutch mother, he spoke Dutch as his native language. See George Blake, *No Other Choice* (Simon & Schuster, 1990); Simon Kuper, *Spies, Lies, and Exile*: *The Extraordinary Story of Russian Double Agent George Blake* (The New Press, 2021); E.H. Cookridge, *The Many Sides of George Blake, Esq.*; *the Complete Dossier* (Vertex Books, 1970).

[38]Faithful was the Counsellor at the British Legation. Alternatively, again according to Blake, he was the first secretary. See Blake, *No Other Choice,* p. 5.

[39]I have not been able to find information on this bookshop.

[40]A *shēng* is a traditional Chinese instrument. It consists of several pipes and is mouth-blown.

[41]Teruyama Etsuko, often mentioned in the diaries as "E", a good friend in Japan of van Gulik. See Barkman & de Vries-van der Hoeven, *Dutch Mandarin,* pp. 174, 184-85, 281-82.

Oktober 15
9 uur Rechter Pak + vriend Pak komen praten tot 10 uur, daarna met Pak naar boekhandelaar, en samen naar Fransch consulaat gewandeld. Daar tot 12.30 met Costello bier gedronken, en 1.20 Costello brengt mij in jeep terug naar hotel. Alleen lunch, daarna gerust. 2.30 Kim Man-soo komt over paspoort praten. 4 uur Dr. Kim komt met journalist Cheng, samen naar huis van den yangban Cheng, waar op papier geconverseerd over luit en mounting. 6-7 Rechter Pak + Pak komen in hotel, over geld gesproken. 7 uur in jeep Fransch consulaat naar Castilhes, waar diner met Martel en Monseigneur. 鄭寅普, 薝園山房.

talked with the mounter Kwak.[42]

October 15
At 9 o'clock Judge Pak + friend Pak come to talk until 10 o'clock, afterwards with Pak to the bookseller, and together walked to the French consulate. There I drank beer with Costello[43] *until 12:30, and at 1:20 Costello brings me back to the hotel in a jeep. Lunch alone, then rested. 2:30 Kim Man-soo comes to talk about the passport. At 4 o'clock Dr. Kim comes with the journalist Cheng,*[44] *together to the house of the* yangban *Cheng,*[45] *where we conversed on paper about the lute and mounting. 6–7 Judge Pak + Pak come to the hotel, spoke about money. At 7 o'clock in a jeep to the French consulate to Castilhes, where I had dinner with Martel*[46] *and Monseigneur.*[47] 鄭寅普, 薝園山房.[48]

[42]Mounter Kwak will unfortunately remain unidentified. Van Gulik's diary includes a reference to a certain Kwak Kiun 郭紀云 (if one reads the name according to Korean pronunciation), but this person seems to refer to the Chinese scholar Zhang Chunyi (1871-1955).

[43]This seems to refer to William "Bill" Costello (1904-1969), a journalist who served as the Far East News Director of CBS in Tokyo from 1946 to 1951.

[44]I do not know who this is.

[45]Chŏng Inbo 鄭寅普 (1893-1950) was one of colonial Korea's most influential intellectuals, independence activists, and historians. A proponent of the Chosŏnhak (Korean Studies) movement, Chŏng was an indefatigable advocate of traditional Korean culture and of Korea's history, a proper awareness of which he thought would be the key to Korean independence. He spent significant time in China in exile engaged in independence activities, with the likes of Shin Ch'aeho and Pak Ŭnshik, published articles, books, and newspaper articles, and wrote the epitaph for ex-Emperor Sunjong's tomb when he died in 1926. He was kidnapped to the north in 1950 with the outbreak of the Korean War and is presumed to have been killed there in November of the same year. See the chapter on Chŏng in Cho Tonggŏl 조동걸, Han Yongu 한영우 & Pak Ch'ansŭng 박찬승, *Han'gug-ŭi yŏksaga-wa yŏksahak* 한국의 역사가와 역사학, vol. 2 (Ch'angbi 창비, 1994), pp. 172-181.

[46]Martel, the French Vice-Consul, who lived in Seoul together with his aged mother and sister. See Blake, *No Other Choice*, p. 128, 136.

[47]Presumably one of the religious officeholders van Gulik met while in Seoul.

[48]These are the Chinese characters for "Chŏng Inbo" and for "Tamwŏn", his literary pseudonym, followed by "sanbang," which means something like "mountain retreat" and is perhaps a reference to Chŏng's mountain retreat.

Oktober 16
Na ontbijt naar antiquair Kim, *shêng* betaald. Daarna naar Choi en boekhandel, met hem naar huis, en gepraat tot 12 uur. Terug naar hotel. Dr. Kim komt, samen in hotel geluncht, dan naar boekhandel gewandeld, en bezoek gebracht bij Wu Shih-ch'ang 吳世昌. Via Pagoda Park naar huis, in hotel bier en sandwiches, daarna Chineesch diner in Ga-jo-en. 's Avonds op kamer boeken doorgekeken.

October 16
After breakfast to antiquary Kim, paid for the shêng. *Then to Choi and the bookshop, with him to his house, and talked until 12 o'clock. Back to the hotel. Dr. Kim comes, lunched together in the hotel, then walked to the bookshop, and visited Wu Shih-ch'ang* 吳世昌 *[O Sech'ang].*[49] *Via Pagoda Park*[50] *back home, in hotel beer and sandwiches, then Chinese dinner in Ga-jo-en.*[51] *In the evening looked through books in the room.*

Oktober 17 Maandag
9 uur ontbijt, daarna boeken ingepakt. 10 uur naar Am. ambassade, met Drumright, Henderson en Col. Frazer gesproken, en S.F. in Tokyo opgebeld. Maag medicijn in dispensary gehaald. 1-3 lunch bij ambass. Muccio, met Drumright. Alleen naar boekhandels in Chong-no gewandeld, 5 uur thuis omgekleed.

5.30 Kim Man-soo komt met vrouw in hotel, geeft kiseng dinner in Koreaansch restaurant Ch'ing-hiang-yüan. 's Avonds 9 uur thuis, boeken uitgezocht.

October 17 (Monday)
9 o'clock breakfast, then packed books. At 10 o'clock to the American Embassy, spoke with Drumright, Henderson,[52] *and Col. Frazer, and phoned S.F. in Tokyo. Got stomach medicine at the dispensary. 1–3 lunch at Ambassador Muccio's, with Drumright. Walked alone to the bookshops in Chong-no, at 5 o'clock home to change.*
5:30 Kim Man-soo comes to hotel with wife, gives a kisaeng *dinner in the Korean restaurant Ch'ing-hiang-yüan [Ch'ŏnhyangwŏn].*[53] *Home at 9 in the evening, sorted books.*

Oktober 18
9.30 naar museum, met Dr. Kim naar plechtigheid in Confucius tempel. Daarna naar Koreaansche dokter met

October 18
9:30 to the museum, with Dr. Kim to the ceremony in the Confucius temple.[54] *Then to a Korean doctor with a German*

[49]Born into a wealthy family of interpreters, O Sech'ang (1864-1953) was a painter, calligrapher, progressive politician and independence activist. He was involved in progressive politics before the turn of the century, fleeing the country to Japan several times to avoid prosecution. He was one of the leaders of the March First-movement in 1919, a signee of its declaration, and an influential leader in the field of cultural and artistic production. When van Gulik met him, he was already 85 years old, but still a very respected figure at the right of the political spectrum.

[50]The park in Central Seoul where the Declaration of Independence had been read on March 1, 1919.

[51]This seems to be the Japanese reading of Asawŏn (雅叙園), a Chinese restaurant popular with van Gulik and other foreigners. He calls it "Asawŏn" in his notes for October 20 below (see there for more information on this restaurant). Asawŏn predates, by the way, the famous Japanese hotel and restaurant with the same name: Gajoen in Tokyo. Asawŏn was founded in 1907, Gajoen in 1931. The presence of a famous hotel/restaurant with the same name in Tokyo may have led van Gulik to referring to the restaurant in Seoul both as Ga-jo-en and Asawŏn.

[52]Gregory Henderson (1922-1988), US diplomat and influential Korea expert. Author of the classic study of South Korean politics: *Korea: The Politics of the Vortex* (Harvard University Press, 1968).

[53]Ch'ŏnhyangwŏn (天香園, or Tenkō'en in Japanese) was one of the three most famous traditional Korean restaurants in Seoul during and right after the colonial period. See Katarzyna J. Cwiertka, *Cuisine, Colonialism and Cold War*: food in twentieth-century Korea (London: Reaktion Books, 2013) <doi:10.5040/9781780230733>.

[54]The ritual that is referred to here was for the birthday of Confucius. In 1949, October 18 corresponds with the 27th day of the eighth month, which traditionally has been regarded as Confucius' birthday. The term "Confucius temple" may be understood as referring to the Sungkyunkwan Munmyo 文廟, the officially recognized shrine for the veneration of Confucius in Seoul. The principal ritual traditionally performed at the Munmyo was the Sŏkchŏn 釋奠 ritual, a Confucian state ritual honoring Confucius and other major sages. Sŏkchŏn was conventionally conducted twice a year, in spring and autumn, on the first *chŏng* (丁) day of the second and eighth lunar months. From 1937, during the Japanese colonial period, the dates of the rite were altered to fixed solar dates—15 April and 15 October. Following liberation, and in conjunction with the reorganization of the Munmyo pantheon in 1949, during which Korean Confucian worthies were relocated to the main shrine hall, the traditional spring and autumn Sŏkchŏn were suspended, and a commemorative Sŏkchŏn was instead performed on Confucius's birthday. Eventually Sŏkchŏn was again performed on the traditional lunar dates. Korean Sŏkchŏn is regarded as having preserved the original form of ancient Confucian ritual with unusual fidelity, including the performance of classical ritual music. See Sungkyunkwan, http://www.skk.or.kr/, and the Korea Heritage Service.

Duitsche vrouw, en naar Seoul Universiteit, waar Chin. prof. Kim ontmoet. Lunch met Dr. Kim in hotel, daarna naar museum, met Li naar A-Lakpu, en naar antiquairs. 5 uur in hotel, waar G. Henderson mij komt halen, thee bij hem thuis. 7 uur naar ga jo en, waar diner van ambassadeur Shao, met Drumright, beide Costello's, Koreaan Li Chung-hwang, en leden Chin. ambassade. 9.30 thuis.

woman,[55] *and to Seoul [National] University,*[56] *where we met the Chinese prof. Kim.*[57] *Lunch with Dr. Kim in the hotel, then to the museum, with Li*[58] *to A-Lakpu,*[59] *and to antiquaries. 5 o'clock back in the hotel, where G. Henderson comes to fetch me, tea at his home. At 7 to Ga-jo-en, where dinner of Ambassador Shao, with Drumright, both Costellos, the Korean Li Chung-hwang,*[60] *and members of the Chinese Embassy. Home at 9:30.*

[55]Too little information to determine who these persons were.

[56]South Korea's leading university, the post-colonial reincarnation of Keijō teikoku daigaku, then still located at Taehangno 大學路.

[57]I wonder whether this could be Kim Kugyŏng 金九經 (1899-1950), a then famous pioneer in the study of the historical relations between China, Japan, and Korea, in the study of Chinese and Buddhist philosophy, and someone with excellent networks as well as research and teaching experience in all three countries. He taught the famous Chinese linguist and educator Wei Jiangong 魏建功 (1901–1980) Korean, had studied under the grand man of Japanese sinology Naitō Konan (內藤湖南, 1866-1934) and legendary Buddhist scholar Suzuki Daitetsu (鈴木大拙, 1870-1966), leading Suzuki to ask Kim for his critical view on his work on Sŏn/Zen. His publications on Manchu texts and on Buddhism, in particular his pioneering correction and collation of partial manuscripts, were very influential. After the liberation, he returned to Korea and become one of the first professors at the Department of Chinese Literature at Seoul National University. Van Gulik may have met him during his period in Japan or during his frequent visits to Beijing and will probably have known of him and his work. Kim disappeared in 1950 when the North Korean army took over Seoul. His activities in Japan during the colonial period and his close collaboration with Japanese scholars have given him the reputation of having been pro-Japanese, which has led to his present-day obscurity. See Yi Yongbŏm, "Sŏul-dae Chungmun'gwa ch'odae kyosu, Kim Kugyŏng 서울대 중문과 초대(初代)교수, 김구경," *Wŏn'gwang-dae Hanjungil kwan'gye pŭrip'ing* 원광대 한중관계브리핑. February 7, 2022 https://kcri.wku.ac.kr/?p=6185. Accessed on December 14, 2025; also see Kim Cheonhak, "Kim Kugyŏng's Liminal Life: Between Nationalism and Scholarship," in *New Perspectives in Modern Korean Buddhism: Institution, Gender, and Secular Societ*y (State University of New York Press, 2022), edited by H.I. Kim *&* J.Y. Park, https://doi.org/10.1515/9781438491332.

[58]It is impossible to identify this person merely on the basis of a (very popular) family name.

[59]This was the successor to the Yiwangjik aakpu 李王職雅樂部, the Chosŏn Royal Institute of Music. This was a colonial institution that dealt with the affairs of the royal family after the annexation by Japan. The musicians who had performed court music at the Chosŏn court were more or less organically transferred to this institution, which in order to remain relevant and survive in a world where there was no longer a ruling royal family, changed itself into a teaching institution. When in 1945 the Yiwangjik (Institute of Royal Affairs) was dissolved, the Aakpu survived as the Kuwanggung aakbu 舊王宮雅樂部 (Old Royal Court Music Institute), the forerunner of what would eventually become the Kungnip kugagwŏn 國立國樂院 (National Gugak Centre). It goes without saying that van Gulik would have been extremely interested in such an institute and its musicians.

[60]I have not been able to determine who Li Chung-hwang was.

Oktober 19
9 uur 6 pakken Koreaansche boeken naar Tokyo gestuurd. 10 uur bij antiquair Kim om koopen Buddha gepraat. 11-12 in hotel gerust, en verkleed. 12-1 met journalist Tei geluncht, 1.30-2 bezoek gebracht bij de President. Daarna naar museum gewandeld, met Dr. Kim en journalist + schilder naar Cheng Yin-pu, waar calligraphie; in hotel allen samen bier en sandwiches. 6 uur Pak van de rechter komt in hotel afspraak YMCA maken. 7 uur naar Britsche Legatie, waar diner met Ch. Hunt, 2 Danes, en Stewards (ECA) en Drew.

October 19
At 9 o'clock sent 6 parcels of Korean books to Tokyo. 10 o'clock at antiquary Kim talked about buying Buddha. 11–12 rested in the hotel and changed. 12–1 lunched with the journalist Tei,[61] *1:30–2 paid a visit to the President. Afterwards walked to the museum, with Dr. Kim and the journalist + painter to Cheng Yin-pu [Chŏng Inbo], where calligraphy; in the hotel all together beer and sandwiches. At 6 o'clock Pak the judge comes to the hotel to arrange appointment at the YMCA. At 7 to the British Legation and dinner with Ch. Hunt,*[62] *2 Danes, and the Stewards (ECA)*[63] *and Drew.*[64]

Oktober 20
10 uur Pak komt, samen naar YMCA, waar Mr. Hyon gesproken. Daarna samen naar Tung-wu-kuan, waar boeken gekocht. 12 uur Drumright, Frazer en Henderson komen in hotel + Dr. Kim, ik geef hun lunch in Asawen. Daarna met Dr. Kim naar mounter, aanteekeningen gemaakt, en Min. v. B.Z. waar exit-permit, en met Min. Lin, Huang en Dr. Kim science tentoonstelling in museum gezien. 5 uur in hotel terug. 6 uur Kim Man-soo komt, samen met Kon naar huis Pak van Hwa-hsin, waar Koreaansch diner. 8.30 thuis. Vroeg naar bed.

October 20
10 o'clock Pak comes, together to the YMCA, spoke with Mr. Hyon.[65] *Then together to Tung-wu-kuan,*[66] *bought books. At 12 Drumright, Frazer, and Henderson come to the hotel + Dr. Kim, I give them lunch in Asawen.*[67] *Afterwards with Dr. Kim to the mounter, took notes, and to the Foreign Affairs Min., received exit permit, and with Min. Lin, Huang,*[68] *and Dr. Kim to the science exhibition in the museum. 5 o'clock back in the hotel. 6 o'clock Kim Man-soo comes, together with Kon*[69] *to the house of Pak of Hwa-hsin [Hwashin],*[70] *Korean dinner there. Home 8:30. Early to bed.*

Oktober 21
9 uur Kim en 2 Pak's komen, allen samen naar Hwa-hsin. Daarna met beide Pak's naar Mr. An, waar calligraphie. 11.30 in hotel terug, naar antiquair Kim waar Buddha

October 21
9 o'clock Kim and 2 Paks come, all together to Hwa-hsin. Afterwards with both Paks to Mr. An, did some calligraphy there. 11:30 back in hotel, to antiquary Kim where fetched

[61] I do not know who this person is, but "Tei" may simply be the Japanese reading of the Korean family name "Chŏng." Van Gulik wrote about meeting a journalist called Chŏng earlier in his diary, so this would be a reasonable assumption. Unfortunately, this does not get us anything closer to the identity of this person.

[62] Father Charles Hunt (1889-1950), an Anglican missionary in Seoul who was sent by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (S. P. G.). He arrived in Korea in 1915, served during WWII in the British navy as chaplain and returned to Korea in 1946. He was taken captive by the North Korea army in 1950 and taken north. There he died during a particularly gruesome nine-day march ("Death March") of over 80 kilometers which claimed the lives of 500 out of 800 prisoners. See Brother Anthony, "Charles Hunt: Missionary and Martyr," in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society Korea Branch*, 96 (2023):23-36.

[63] Economic Cooperation Administration, a US office through which Marshall Plan help was implemented in South Korea.

[64] I have not been able to identify this person.

[65] Mr Hyon was Hyŏn Tongwan 玄東完 (D.W. Hyun, 1899-1963), who was connected to the YMCA almost from birth to death. He was a basketball player for the YMCA's famous colonial period sports team, later a coach, then moved on into YMCA management. He was appointed general secretary of the YMCA in 1948 and founder of the YMCA's Boy's Town in Seoul, which took care of war orphans.

[66] Is this a corrupted transliteration of T'ongmungwan 通文館, the famous antiquarian book shop in Insa-dong? But the transcription is not correct in that case. Still, this would be a book shop van Gulik would go to.

[67] Chinese restaurant founded in 1907. Asawŏn (full name: Chunghwa yorijŏm Asawŏn 中華料理店 雅叙園), which closed its doors in 1970, was a large and popular restaurant, with four stories that could hold over 900 guests, which after liberation was sought out by the American army and other foreigners. The restaurant also drew a clientèle of predominantly right-wing politicians, and from the sixties onwards, successful entrepreneurs as well.

[68] Perhaps this refers to the previously unidentified Li Chung-hwang.

[69] I have no idea who this might be.

[70] Hwashin Department Store (Hwashin paekhwajŏm 和信百貨店)) was a famous department store dating from the colonial period, when it was the only Korean-run department store. It closed its doors in 1987. In its place Chongno Tower now stands.

gehaald, en bij Airways afgeleverd, waar tevens passage betaald. 12 uur Dr. Kim, daarna journalist Cheng komen in hotel, lunch met Dr. Kim, 2 uur samen naar thee-partij van Min. Min. 4.30 met Dr. Kim naar Radio station, waar speech gehouden. 5 uur in hotel, beide Pak's komen, samen naar huis jonge Pak, waar diner met rechters en Dr. Liang. 9 uur in hotel terug, waar Kim Man-soo en vrienden komen. Verder bagage gepakt.

the Buddha, and delivered it at Airways, where passage also paid. 12 o'clock Dr. Kim, then journalist Cheng comes to the hotel, lunch with Dr. Kim, at 2 o'clock together to the tea party of Min. Min.[71] *4:30 with Dr. Kim to the radio station and gave a speech. 5 o'clock back in the hotel, both Paks come, together to the house of young Pak, where dinner with judges and Dr. Liang.*[72] *9 o'clock back in the hotel, where Kim Man-soo and friends come. Packed further luggage.*

Oktober 22, zaterdag
8.30 in stationwagon Airways van Chosen hotel naar Kinpo Airfield. 1.30 in Tokyo op Haneda aangekomen. (...)

October 22, Saturday
8:30 in the Airways station wagon of the Chosen Hotel to Kimpo Airfield. Arrived in Tokyo at Haneda at 1:30. (...)

Oktober 23, zondag
's ochtends rapport over Korea opgesteld. (...)

October 23, Sunday
In the morning prepared report on Korea. (...)

[71] I wonder whether "Min" is a misspelling of "Lin", which would then refer to Minister of Foreign Affairs Im. There was no minister called "Min" in the South Korean cabinet during van Gulik's visit. Ockam's razor, however, demands that we accept "Min", as that is a regular Korean family name. I do not know what particular member of the Min clan van Gulik then refers to. I am not entirely sure whether the text actually says "Min. Min" however – it could also feasibly be read as "Mr. Min."

[72] I have not been able to identify this person.

P'iltam and Other Calligraphies Gifted to van Gulik

Calligraphic Works Preserved at Leiden University Libraries

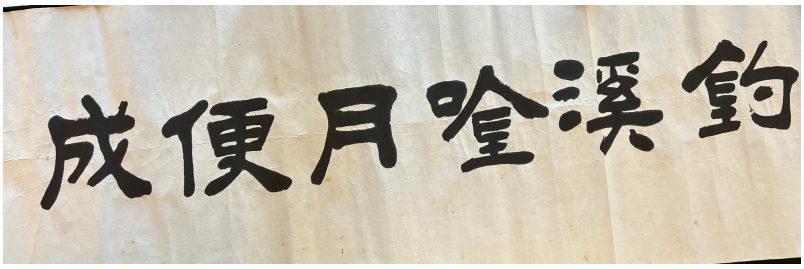


Figure 8: Overview of the calligraphic scrolls by An Chongwŏn and Chŏng Inbo, including An Chongwŏn's calligraphy, Chŏng Inbo's poems with dedications, and the *Chunghwa kŭmsil* 中和琴室 study name calligraphy, in the collection of Leiden University Libraries.

List of Works

▸ 1. Calligraphy by An Chongwŏn (1874-1951), dedicated to RHvG. Text: 釣溪唫月便成翁. Dated 己丑 [1949]. Size 124 x 32 cm. Seal 觀水居士, another seal, plus one very peculiar seal at the beginning of the scroll.

▸ 2. Poem with dedication to RHvG by Chŏng Inbo (1893-1950), dated October of the 31st year of the Republic of Korea 大韓民國31年十月. Korea. Long text about RHvG and his study.

▸ 3. Poem with dedication to RHvG by Chŏng Inbo (1893-1950), Tamwŏn. Seal of Chŏng Inbo plus one seal with eight characters. Topic: lute music. Size: 101 x 33.5 cm.

中和琴室. Seal 鄭寅普印 and 薇蘇山人.[74] Size: 110 x 33 cm.[75]

Context and Contents of the Works:
(1) An Chongwŏn: Poetic line

釣溪唫月便成翁.

Fishing the stream, chanting to the moon - thus I became an old man

The line appears to be derived from the Tang-dynasty poet Fang Gan 方干's poem "Lament for the Jiangxi Recluse Chen Tao" (哭江西处士陈陶).

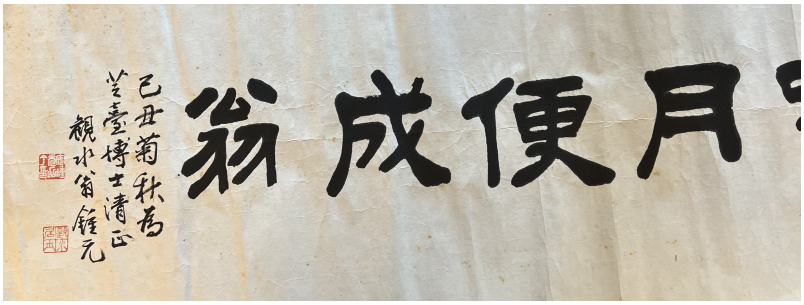


Figure 9: An Chongwŏn's calligraphy: 釣溪唫月便成翁 ("Fishing the stream, chanting to the moon — thus I became an old man").

(2–3) Chŏng Inbo: Two poems

Apart from his study of calligraphy Robert van Gulik deeply studied the *guqin* (古琴), and created a study named Chunghwa kŭmshil 中和琴室 ("The Harmonious Zither Chamber"), where he continued to collect and research materials related to the ancient zither. What follows are the two poems that Chŏng Inbo presented to van Gulik, one composed specifically for the study Chunghwa kŭmshil, and another recording a poem by Su Shi 蘇軾.

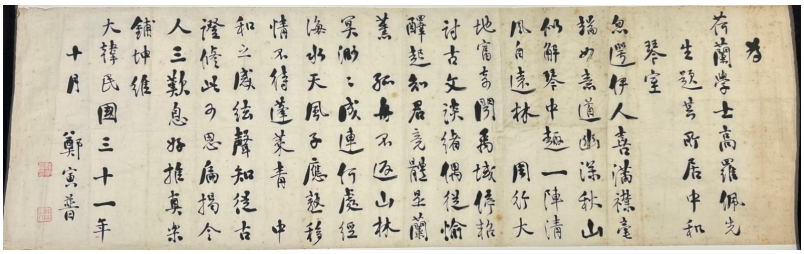


Figure 10: Chŏng Inbo's calligraphy: Poem 1, composed for van Gulik's study Chunghwa kŭmshil 中和琴室.

Poem 1:

爲 荷蘭學士 高羅佩先生 題其所居中和琴室

忽遇伊人喜滿襟, 毫端如意道幽深.

秋山似解琴中趣, 一陣淸風自遠林.

When I met him, to my surprise,

joy billowed in my chest:

freely expressing his thoughts with his brush,

[75]One of Chŏng Inbo's literary pseudonyms was Miso sanin 薇蘇山人– the first character on the seal is hard to read, but the other three are quite clear.

[75]The Wereldmuseum in Leiden also hosts several calligraphies and seals from van Gulik's collection. Karwin Cheung wrote about these in his 2024 article: see Karwin Cheung, "A portrait of the scholar as intelligence operative."

周行大地富奇聞, 禹域停軺討古文.
談緒偶從愉釋起, 知君竟體是蘭薰
孤舟不返山林冥, 渺渺成連何處經.
海水天風子應熟, 移情不待蓬萊青.
中和之感絃聲知, 從古證修此可思.
扁揭令人三歎息, 好推眞樂鋪坤維.
大韓民國 三十一年 十月
鄭寅普

he plumbed the obscurest depths.
As mountains in autumn seem to open up
so did feelings from his *qin*,
a sudden fresh wind, blown
from faraway woods.
He circled this great globe,
rich with tales;
but in China, his journey paused
to discuss our ancient lore.
As the conversation flows
easily and joyfully,
I realized this gentleman's essence
was pure as an orchid's breath.
The lone boat doesn't return,
hills and woods grow dim;
where did Cheng Lian's[76]
voyage end?
On sea waves, the sky breeze
you echo, sir;
the transfer of feelings
does not need the eternal green of Mt. Penglai.[77]
A sense of harmony (中和)
Is what the song of the strings knows...
The ascesis of yore:
this deserves long contemplation.
May the motto of his study inspire
three awestruck gasps.
It is fit to spread the true music
to the ends of the earth.
October, the 30th year of the Republic of Korea[78]
Chŏng Inbo.

Poem 2:

(written by Su Shi 蘇軾)

琴上遺聲久不彈,
琴中古義本長存.

The *qin*'s echoes linger,
long untouched,
but the ancient meanings in it

[78]This passage evokes the story of the famous *guqin* master Cheng Lian 成連 from the Spring and Autumn period. Cheng Lian set out to find his teacher, Fang Zichun 方子春, who was said to be at Mount Penglai in the eastern sea, in order to teach his disciple, Boya 伯牙, the art of playing the *guqin* in a way that could move people's hearts. However, upon reaching Mount Penglai, Cheng Lian, claiming he would bring his teacher, boarded a boat and sailed away, never to return. Boya, filled with sorrow and longing, played the *guqin*, pouring his emotions into the music. Eventually, he reached the highest level of *guqin* playing, expressing human emotions in a way that could deeply move others. This is a metaphorical expression of Robert van Gulik's study and scholarly journey with regard to the *guqin*.

[78]This can be interpreted as expressing the potential of music and scholarship to transcend the eternity symbolized by the greenness of Mount Penglai.

[78]The 'Republic of Korea' era counts from 1919, the year of the proclamation of independence and the establishment of the Korean Provisional Government.

苦心欲記常迷舊,
信指如歸自看痕.
應有仙人依樹聽,
空教瘦鶴舞風騫.
誰知千里溪堂夜,
時引驚猿撼竹軒.
錄蘇軾次子由彈琴一首
簷園
芝臺 博士正之

still are handed down.
The mind strains, longing to remember,
yet always loses its way to the old melody.
But trust your fingers, and it is like going home,
you can still glimpse its traces.
Maybe there are immortals[gods]
leaning on trees, listening,
while a gaunt crane
sways aimlessly in the wind.
Who knows whether hundreds of miles off,
in a riverside pavilion by night,
sometimes a startled monkey
shakes the bamboo rails?

A poem by Su Shi, written in response to his younger brother Su Zhe's qin performance, recorded by Tamwŏn (*Chŏng Inbo*) *and presented to Dr. Zhitai.*[79]

[79]This was van Gulik's literary pseudonym. It was derived from the name of the location of the Dutch embassy in Tokyo: Shiba-dai, of which the characters in Chinese pronunciation are read Zhitai.

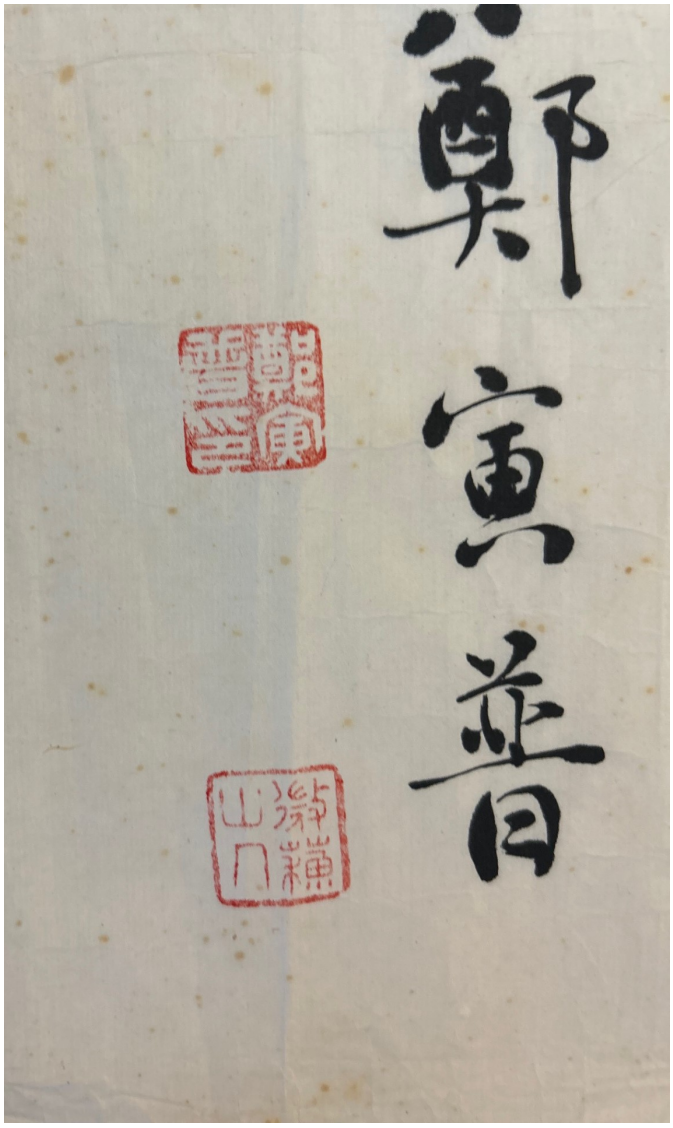


Figure 11: Detail of Chŏng Inbo's signature and seals on Poem 1.

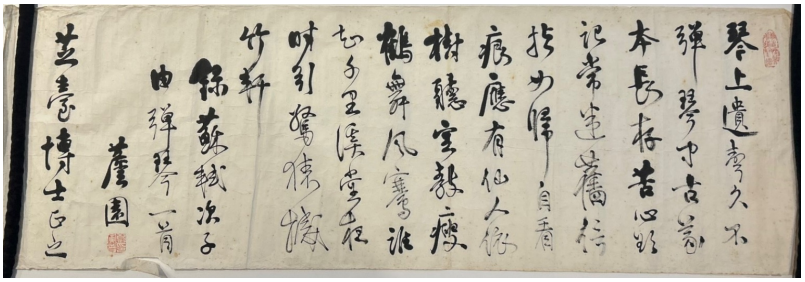


Figure 12: Chŏng Inbo's calligraphy: Poem 2, recording a poem by Su Shi 蘇軾.

Analysis of the Two Poems and Their Significance

Chŏng Inbo's poems do not merely praise van Gulik as a foreigner capable of deeply understanding and performing ancient music; rather, they address him as a scholarly subject who can comprehend the *to* (道) of the *kŭm* (琴) and the normative rules of *mun* (文). Images such as "autumn mountains" (*ch'usan* 秋山), "distant forests" (*wŏllim* 遠林), "clear winds" (*ch'ŏngp'ung* 淸風), "heavenly winds" (*ch'ŏnp'ung* 天風) and "orchid fragrance" (*nanhun* 蘭薰) are not expressions of purely personal emotion, but motifs long accumulated within the tradition of classical Chinese literature. The same is true of the allusions to Cheng Lian and Boya, paradigmatic figures of musical understanding and sympathetic resonance. The motif of the "lone boat" (*koju* 孤舟) also evokes the story of Cheng Lian and Boya, in which solitude leads to a deeper level of musical understanding. By drawing on such classical stories, the expanded imagery and narrative allusions would likewise have generated a deep sense of resonance between the two scholars. These elements further reinforce this shared symbolic vocabulary. The harmonious balance at the core of all action and thought—namely, *chunghwa* (中和)—not only designates the name of van Gulik's study, but also functions as a shared value order through which its deeper significance is jointly recognized and understood.

Through these shared references, the two figures would have resonated with one another both literarily and emotionally. And the line "the transfer of feelings does not need the eternal green of Mt. Penglai" may be read as indicating that civilizational understanding does not rely on transcendent utopias or mythic fantasies, but instead situates cultural exchange between a Westerner and a Chosŏn intellectual firmly within the realm of lived reality. Moreover, the fact that Chŏng Inbo presented van Gulik with a *kŭm* 琴-related poem by Su Shih was not simply because van Gulik was a Western diplomat, but because he was already a figure who had understood and enacted the order of *mun* 文 and *kŭm* 琴. Van Gulik was not only someone who took Chinese traditional culture as an object of study; he was a Western intellectual who actively sought to internalize the lifestyle and cultural practices of the classical literati-officials. His sustained engagement with calligraphy, seal carving, painting, and the *guqin* 古琴 may be understood as going beyond the realm of personal hobby, approaching instead a practical effort to integrate himself into a particular set of civilizational norms.

Van Gulik's book *Lore of the Chinese Lute* encapsulates this orientation in a concentrated form. In this work, van Gulik understands the *guqin* not as a mere musical instrument, but as a cultural apparatus in which literati self-cultivation, ethical reflection, and perceptions of nature are condensed. In order to convey this understanding to Western readers, he adopted a careful and deliberate strategy extending to translation, annotation, and even the selection of conceptual terminology.

It is against this background that Chŏng Inbo's attempt to converse through the civilizational language of Su Shih's poetry may be understood. Su Shih's poem centers on the idea that even when the *kŭm* has not been played for a long time, the "ancient meaning" (*koŭi* 古義) embedded within it does not disappear, and that tradition is transmitted not through memory or abstract concepts, but through the tactile knowledge of the hands and embodied practice. While ostensibly a poem about music, it is at the same time a meta-level reflection on cultural transmission and modes of understanding.

In this sense, the poem can be said to overlap with van Gulik's own identity. He was a figure who, even after Chinese civilization had lost its political power and authority, possessed a profound understanding of its cultural and ethical order, and who further extended that understanding to Korean culture, actively seeking to learn it. To present him with Su Shih's poem, therefore, can be interpreted not merely as viewing van Gulik as a "Westerner who studies East Asian culture," but as an act of recognizing him as a scholar capable of sensing the lingering resonance of tradition and grasping its significance.

O Sech'ang's Calligraphy at the Wereldmu-

seum Leiden

O Sech'ang: Text for the Dutch Scholar *Gāo Luópèi*, presumably written for a signboard (plaque) for his study "Chunghwa kŭmshil" ("The Harmonious Zither Chamber")
中和琴室.[80]

芝臺先生正謬 檀紀四二八二年冬 韓京老布衣 吳世昌
Dedicated to Master Zhītái. Winter of 1949. O Sech'ang, an old scholar residing in Seoul

O Sech'ang who produced this inscription for the Dutch scholar "Gāo Luópèi", intended for the signboard of his study *Chunghwa kŭmshil* ("The Harmonious Zither Chamber"), devoted himself to the study of seal script (篆書) and archaic pictographic forms (象形古文), and developed a distinctive calligraphic style that foregrounded the visual form of characters and the structural strength of their brushstrokes. Rather than producing a merely functional inscription, he created a carefully composed work in a pictographic script that reflects both scholarly refinement and visual deliberation. This calligraphy is part of the collection of the Wereldmuseum in Leiden.[81]

P'iltam: Cultural Exchange beyond Political Language

These encounters, in which *p'iltam* and calligraphic works were exchanged, can be reconstructed on the basis of van Gulik's diary. They are also situated within a broader context by the *Chayu sinmun* 自由新聞 article of October 21, 1949—in one of two South Korean newspapers published after liberation—which shows these exchanges within a broader context. With the subheading "Even Master Widang was speechless" (爲堂 先生도 啞然), the article introduced a Dutch scholar–diplomat, described as an "eminent guest of the academic world," who had come to Korea to study its ancient culture, and reported that he had long pursued research in East Asian studies. News reports placed particular emphasis on van Gulik's meeting with Master Widang Chŏng Inbo and included a photograph showing him engaged in scholarly exchange at the home of Chŏng Inbo. In this interview, Robert van Gulik stated that he was conducting research on Kojosŏn and on ancient Korean music, particularly the *kayagŭm*. Given his profound expertise in the *kŭmdo* (琴道, the way of the zither), this attests to his deep interest in Korea's *kayagŭm* tradition as well. The photograph taken at Widang's residence depicts van Gulik practicing calligraphy, suggesting that the two men conversed with one another in this way.

By the mid-twentieth century, *munŏn* 文言, Classical Chinese had lost its status as an international lingua franca, and *p'iltam* likewise had ceased to function as an institutionalized and customary mode of communication. The regions of East Asia no longer employed Literary Chinese as a transnational common script, and with the formation of modern nation-states, Western scholarship and vernacular prose styles became the new standards for knowledge production. Against this backdrop, the fact that Chosŏn intellectuals chose the forms of poetry and calligraphy in their encounter with van Gulik indicates that these media could still operate as viable tools for recognizing and positioning the other as a scholarly subject.

From a functional perspective, the calligraphic works and poems that An Chongwŏn, O Sech'ang, Chŏng Inbo presented to van Gulik possess a *p'iltam*-like character insofar as they employ poetry and prose as a medium of communication. This was neither a question-and-answer exchange conducted within the framework of official diplomacy, nor an extension of institutionally guaranteed literati interaction. At the same time, it would have been inappropriate to reduce this exchange to a mere personal tribute or a hobbyist exchange of calligraphy and painting. This mode of communication differed in a crucial respect from premodern *p'iltam*. Whereas written conversations between Chosŏn and Ming–Qing China or Japan took

[80] While "chunghwa" is a well-known word which means "harmony", it is simultaneously a play on words, referring to Robert van Gulik's sophistication as a scholar of ancient China (*chung* 中) and his Dutch ancestry (*hwa* 和, as in Hwaran 和蘭).

[81] It was catalogued there under this call number: RV-5265-10.

place within a shared *munŏn* civilizational sphere, in the case of Chŏng Inbo and van Gulik, van Gulik as a Westerner—previously perceived as external to that sphere—, entered it by learning and performing its rules from the outside. Rather than treating van Gulik as a representative of diplomatic power or as a proxy for Western civilization, Chŏng positioned him as a scholar capable of responding to the norms of *mun* 文. Van Gulik, in turn, possessed the cultural competence and disposition required to respond to such an evaluation.

According to press reports, Chŏng Inbo and van Gulik appear to have been able to communicate at a basic level in Korean. Nevertheless, Chŏng's choice to respond through the traditional forms of classical poetry and calligraphy should be understood not as a matter of linguistic necessity, but as a deliberate selection of the level and mode of communication. Might *p'iltam*, then, be understood as a tool through which intellectuals could position themselves as cultural subjects under conditions in which political language failed to operate? This perspective may also help explain why, according to interviews, van Gulik in 1949 continued to display a cautious attitude in his encounters with intellectuals. This was not only due to memories formed before liberation, but also because the international and domestic instability confronting Korea persisted even after liberation. In 1949, Korea was formally an independent state, yet within the international order it remained positioned at the periphery. Although the Republic of Korea was established in 1948, it was not recognized as one of the victorious powers of the Second World War and was excluded from the central processes of managing Japan's defeat and restructuring the postwar order. While the historical legitimacy of anti-Japanese resistance was acknowledged to some extent on moral and narrative grounds, it did not translate into substantive voice within an international system structured around international law, military power, and diplomacy dominated by the great powers that shaped the postwar settlement.

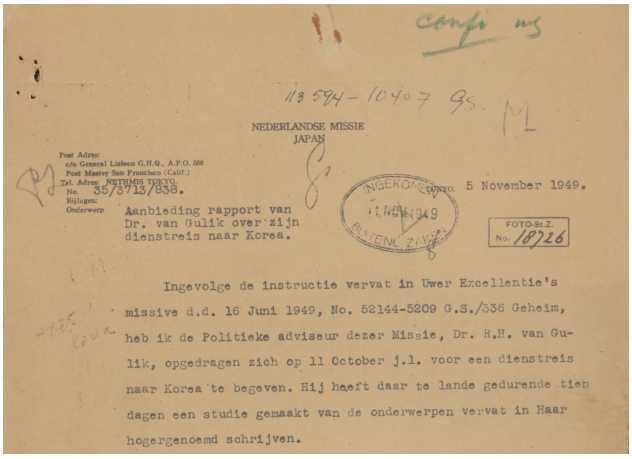
The individuals involved each perceived these international conditions from their own positions. Van Gulik's perspective, as a diplomat visiting Korea, was faithfully reflected in his official reports. In this process, cultural exchanges and *p'iltam* with Korean intellectuals, though personally meaningful to him, were deliberately excluded from the framework of diplomatic judgment and policy reporting. By contrast, the conditions of speech confronting Korean intellectuals under the same circumstances were fundamentally different. In this context, *p'iltam* and *mun* were not alternatives to politics or diplomacy, but spaces in which intellectuals could position themselves as cultural subjects precisely under conditions where political and diplomatic language no longer functioned—although such cultural practices, to be sure, could not in themselves overcome the asymmetries of the international order.

In the post-liberation international order, Korean intellectuals such as Chŏng Inbo—despite their profound scholarly authority—found themselves structurally marginalized within the arenas of diplomacy and politics. Chŏng Inbo, moreover, stood in a tense relationship with the Rhee government, which may have further constrained his position within the emerging political order. It was against this backdrop of marginalization and constraint that such an encounter assumed particular significance. Under conditions in which the subject of the international order had shifted to the West, the fact that a representative of that West engaged in exchange through the languages of East Asian civilization—poetry and music—may have carried particular significance for intellectuals who were likely experiencing a sense of loss. To be sure, the asymmetries of political power were not resolved within the space governed by the rules of *mun* 文; yet those asymmetries were, for a brief moment, suspended. In this sense, the encounter may be understood as a cultural event in which, amid the fractures of a civilizational transition, Korean intellectuals were able to momentarily reaffirm their dignity.

This divergence between cultural exchange and diplomatic purpose becomes particularly clear when we place these encounters alongside van Gulik's official reports. The question undergirding a broader appraisal of van Gulik's visit to Korean intellectuals such as Chŏng Inbo in the guise of a holiday trip is

to what extent his intellectual activities aligned or perhaps clashed with the diplomatic objectives of his visit. A short analysis of van Gulik's official report to the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs is in order then.

The Diplomat Writes



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Post Master San Francisco (Calif.)
Tel. Adres: NETHMIS TOKYO
No. 35/3713/838.
Bijlagen:
Onderwerp

Aanbieding rapport van Dr. van Gulik over zijn dienstreis naar Korea.

Tokyo, 5 November 1949.

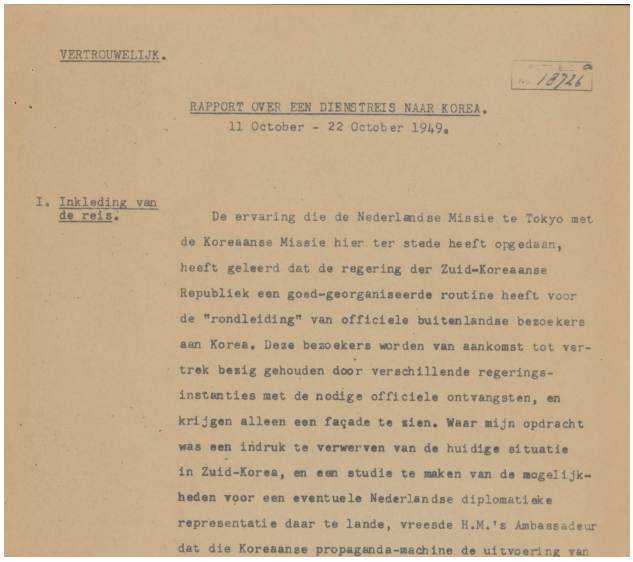
INGEKOMEN 11 NOV 1949 BUITENL. ZAKEN

FOTO-St.Z. No. 18726

Ingevolge de instructie vervat in Uwer Excellentie's missive d.d. 16 Juni 1949, No. 52144-5209 G.S./336 Geheim, heb ik de Politieke adviseur dezer Missie, Dr. R.H. van Gulik, opgedragen zich op 11 October j.l. voor een dienstreis naar Korea te begeven. Hij heeft daar te lande gedurende tien dagen een studie gemaakt van de onderwerpen vervat in Haar hogergenoemd schrijven.

Figure 13: Cover letter by Ambassador H. Mouw, accompanying van Gulik's rapport on his trip to Korea, dated 5 November 1949. Source: Gulik, Robert Hans van (1949). *Rapport van de politiek adviseur van de Nederlandse Missie in Japan over zijn dienstreis naar Korea*. Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, 2.13.72, inv. nr. 1441.

The report for the benefit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs that van Gulik wrote, apparently in one morning right after he returned,[82] tells the story of an experienced diplomat visiting a potential ally of the Netherlands amidst difficult and unstable circumstances. The cover letter to the report was written by H. Mouw, Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador to Japan. The tone of that is somewhat patronizing towards the young Republic of Korea but also betrays concern. It is patronizing in its undiplomatically displayed lack of understanding of South Korea's difficult position as a recently divided post-colonial country. It displays concern over Seoul's savvy economic politics: Seoul is interested in relations with the Netherlands, but mainly, it seems because it was economically interested in Batavia (present-day Jakarta). Although in 1949, Batavia was still part of a Dutch colony, Seoul did not expect this to last much longer. As such it made it clear that it would then (also) establish economic relations with Indonesia. The letter finally mentions the conclusion van Gulik had also reached: establishing fully staffed and equipped embassies would be a financial burden for both countries, so frequent mutual visits was the way forward for the time being.[83]



VERTROUWELIJK.

No. 18726

RAPPORT OVER EEN DIENSTREIS NAAR KOREA.
11 October - 22 October 1949.

I. Inkleding van de reis.

De ervaring die de Nederlandse Missie te Tokyo met de Koreaanse Missie hier ter stede heeft opgedaan, heeft geleerd dat de regering der Zuid-Koreaanse Republiek een goed-georganiseerde routine heeft voor de "rondleiding" van officiele buitenlandse bezoekers aan Korea. Deze bezoekers worden van aankomst tot vertrek bezig gehouden door verschillende regeringsinstanties met de nodige officiele ontvangsten, en krijgen alleen een façade te zien. Waar mijn opdracht was een indruk te verwerven van de huidige situatie in Zuid-Korea, en een studie te maken van de mogelijkheden voor een eventuele Nederlandse diplomatieke representatie daar te lande, vreesde H.M.'s Ambassadeur dat die Koreaanse propaganda-machine de uitvoering van

Figure 14: First page of van Gulik's rapport, marked *Vertrouwelijk* (Confidential), titled "Rapport over een dienstreis naar Korea, 11 October – 22 October 1949." Source: Gulik, Robert Hans van (1949). *Rapport*. Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, 2.13.72, inv. nr. 1441.

As mentioned before, and as noted by Karwin Cheung, van Gulik made his trip under the pretence of going on a private holiday trip.[84] In reality, as the report states on its first page, van Gulik and the Dutch

[82] See the entry for October 23, 1949.

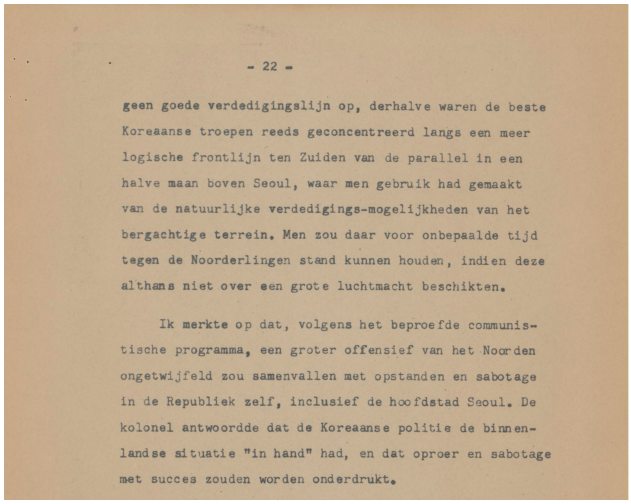
[83] H. Mouw, "Aanbieding rapport van Dr. Van Gulik over zijn dienstreis naar Korea," pp. 1-4. In "Rapport van de politiek adviseur van de Nederlandse Missie in Japan over zijn dienstreis naar Korea, met geleidebrief," Nationaal Archief. Inventaris van het archief van de Commandant Zeemacht in Nederlands-Indië, (1942-) 1945-1950, 2.13.72, Inventarisnummer 1441.

[84] See Cheung, p. 85.

ambassador found it wise not to make this an official trip, because South Korea "had a well-organized routine to 'show around' foreign visitors." It was feared that Seoul's proactive attitude would get in the way of a fact-finding mission such as this. Van Gulik was tasked with finding out what the political, economic, and diplomatic situation in Seoul was like. A further concern was that sending an official Dutch mission to Seoul from Tokyo would create the impression that the Dutch government still saw South Korea as subservient to Japan – this it wanted to avoid at some cost.

The report continued with an introduction of the present political, economic, and diplomatic circumstances. To that end, van Gulik provides a bird's eye overview of Korean history, culminating in the establishment of the Republic of Korea in 1948. This historical summary is, given van Gulik's stature as a leading scholar on Japan and China, perhaps disappointing in that it is a recapitulation of the Japanese colonialist view of Korea as a geographically unfortunately positioned culture, bound to be dominated and fought over by the greater powers in its vicinity.[85] Van Gulik repeats some of the staple notions of colonialist historiography here: the historical subservient position of Korea vis-à-vis China, later replaced by Japan and Russia (p. 4), its fundamental political fragmentation which obstructed in his view effective resistance against the Japanese and now made the US South Korea's obvious "guardian" (p. 10). He notes the stark political division within the Korean peninsula and within South Korea itself, yet fails to come to the realization that perhaps the colonial period was an important factor in the emergence of different kinds of political radicalization and indeed in the division of the peninsula itself. When he discusses the economy of South Korea, however, he does recognise the "division of North and South as the core problem that disrupted economic life" (p. 36). Traces of Wittfogel's essentialist Orientalism shine through when Syngman Rhee is described as an "unadulterated Asian despot" (p.8).

Van Gulik's sharp eyes do not miss the problems of the Rhee administration, its corruption, its unrealistic assessment of its own strengths vis-à-vis North Korea, the fraught security situation within South Korea (pp. 14-20). At the same time, he writes down how he reached out to opposition figures, just in case "the Rhee government would leave the stage." (p. 19). He shows an acute sense of the military situation when he mentions the 12,000 North Korean troops fighting in Manchuria for the Chinese communists and what would happen to the equilibrium on the Korean peninsula when they would return (p. 21), but lacks the sense of urgency that, perhaps in hindsight, might be expected, given the outbreak of the Korean War a mere eight months later. A potential outbreak of hostilities is not treated seriously in the report.



- 22 -

geen goede verdedigingslijn op, derhalve waren de beste Koreaanse troepen reeds geconcentreerd langs een meer logische frontlijn ten Zuiden van de parallel in een halve maan boven Seoul, waar men gebruik had gemaakt van de natuurlijke verdedigings-mogelijkheden van het bergachtige terrein. Men zou daar voor onbepaalde tijd tegen de Noorderlingen stand kunnen houden, indien deze althans niet over een grote luchtmacht beschikten.

Ik merkte op dat, volgens het beproefde communistische programma, een groter offensief van het Noorden ongetwijfeld zou samenvallen met opstanden en sabotage in de Republiek zelf, inclusief de hoofdstad Seoul. De kolonel antwoordde dat de Koreaanse politie de binnenlandse situatie "in hand" had, en dat oproer en sabotage met succes zouden worden onderdrukt.

Figure 15: Page 22 of van Gulik's rapport, discussing the military situation near the 38th parallel and the possibility of a communist offensive from the North. Source: Gulik, Robert Hans van (1949). *Rapport*. Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, 2.13.72, inv. nr. 1441.

Van Gulik's analysis is of uneven quality. His long experience and broad knowledge about East Asian history, culture, and current affairs is clearly present, but two factors negatively impact the quality of the analysis: his consistent essentialism with regard to the "Easterner" and his clear reliance on the information

[85]Van Gulik, "Rapport", p. 4-7. This notion echoes the Japanese colonialist notion of "gai'atsu no rekishi" or "history formed under foreign pressure." See Breuker, "Contested Objectivities".

and intelligence of other foreigners in Korea, instead of relying on Korean informants and sources. The report mentions his visits with Korean dignitaries, the president and several cabinet ministers, but none of the Korean scholars and intellectuals for whom he said he was visiting Seoul are even given a brief mention, underscoring the fact that his cultural activities in Seoul truly were the fig leave they were intended to be. Even though both O Sechʾang and Chŏng Inbo still were leading intellectuals, the period of US military administration and the division of the country had not helped their political authority. Furthermore, O was 85 when he and van Gulik met and Chŏng focused on cultural exchange. The poems they exchanged also refuse to be read as political or diplomatic statements, either directly or indirectly, but rather as the products of the meetings of scholars from different backgrounds but at home in the same Sinitic civilization. Chŏng seems to have been genuinely impressed by the learning and skills of his Dutch visitor. In return, van Gulik was clearly very much taken with the calligraphy Chŏng Inbo made for his study, for as Karwin Cheung showed in his article, van Gulik hung the calligraphy at the entrance of his study.

Conclusion

Robert van Gulik's "holiday trip" to South Korea must be counted a success. He formulated an answer to the question of a possible establishment of a Dutch embassy in Seoul that satisfied both the Dutch and the South Koreans: such an establishment was inopportune at the moment, but both countries would continue to work on strengthening their relationship until the financial and political situation would allow the next step in the Dutch-South Korean relationship. The remainder of van Gulik's report is on the predictable side. His information on Korea seems to have come predominantly from fellow diplomats and other foreigners (from the US, UK, France, ROC) and a limited number of English-speaking Koreans on the right side of the political spectrum. It is hard to determine whether his cultural contacts had an impact on his ability to inform himself of the situation as he would have done in Japan or in China, where his command of the language, knowledge of the context, and availability of personal networks would have made his analysis above average. This compromised his information position – for a report written just before the outbreak of the Korean War it is surprisingly light on a serious treatment of this possibility and what such an armed conflict might mean for the region and for the Netherlands, who of course ended up sending a detachment of 5,000 soldiers to join the UN Command in combatting what the report had called the "nuisance value" of sporadic North Korean armed attacks on the South. The situation at the 38th parallel was after all "well in hand" (p. 20) and van Gulik confidently stated that "[o]ne could hold out there against the Northerners for an indefinite period of time, provided that they did not possess a large air force." (p. 22) Van Gulik may have thought so, the Koreans he talked to disagreed: "Both members of the government and opposition leaders told me that they expected a bloody civil conflict as soon as the North were to launch a major offensive." (p. 22) Given his normal predisposition to take his Japanese and Chinese sources seriously,[86] the question is why he did not do the same with his Korean counterparts, especially if both persons from the government and the opposition agreed with one another on this point. Van Gulik, however, was mainly worried about the dangers guerrilla warfare and communist infiltration from the North posed for South Korea. In that regard, "[i]t will come as no surprise that the assurance of the American military attaché that the situation was 'well in hand' failed to convince me." (p. 25)

Chŏng Inbo's poem and his reproduction of Su Shi's poem all point to the fact that Chŏng had recognized and acknowledged Robert van Gulik as a kindred spirit, a fellow scholar and peer familiar with the conventions of the classical Sinitic world. O Sechʾang's calligraphy to hang above the door to his study suggests the same. It is altogether feasible that the endorsement of Robert van Gulik by famous intellectuals

[86] Indeed, the possibility of van Gulik going or having gone "native" was always a concern at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

such as Chŏng and O opened doors to South Korea's elite to him while he was in Korea, but if it did, the contents of such meetings did not filter down into the report he wrote for the Dutch government. In that sense, it seems the *p'iltam* conversation between Chŏng and van Gulik truly functioned as a temporarily resurrected symbol of an age irrevocably past, a remarkable yet futile intellectual effort that was precisely what it had been intended to be: a culturally and historically grounded but ultimately contingent access path into the higher levels of South Korean society through van Gulik's practical efforts, sustained over decades, to integrate himself into that particular set of civilizational norms of the classical Sinitic scholar.

Two worlds that do not meet; that is the overriding impression one is left with after reading about van Gulik's interactions with Korean scholars, his diary, and his official report. Van Gulik's meetings with Chŏng Inbo, O Sech'ang, and An Chongwŏn seem to have made an impression on him; van Gulik hung O's calligraphy with the name of his study hung above the entry to it. Van Gulik's extraordinary learning and scholarship had these scholars acknowledge him as an equal in Sinitic learning, a fellow traveler in a world that no longer existed and that would shortly explode in frightening violence and bloodshed. An died in 1951 in the midst of the Korean War, O died after a long sick bed in the spring of 1953, while Chŏng was kidnapped and taken to Pyongyang in the early stages of the Korean War and is presumed to have been executed there not long after. Yet, van Gulik's report stays away from the looming certainty of the grisly intimacies of death and destruction that his Korean counterparts, both those in the government and those in the opposition had seen coming. The objective of the mission, evaluating the possibility of whether a Dutch embassy should be physically established in Seoul in 1949, had been accomplished, but one wonders whether the more important topic of South Korea's immediate future, a future in which 4,748 young Dutch soldiers would fight and 122 would lose their lives, was not overlooked. The two vocations that made up van Gulik's live (to which would be added his activities as a global best-selling author of mysteries not much later), that of the scholar and the diplomat remained separate where in Japan and in China they had often merged and made van Gulik more than either a scholar or a diplomat.

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Book Reviews

Isabelle Sancho, The Master from Mountains and Fields: Prose Writings of Hwadam, Sŏ Kyŏngdŏk (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2023), 262 pp., ISBN: 9780824893637.

Martin Gehlmann
Ruhr-Universität Bochum

Hwadam Sŏ Kyŏngdŏk 花潭 徐敬德 (1489–1546) is often regarded as a symbol of eremitism and one of the more enigmatic figures in Korean Confucianism. However, in her excellent translation *The Master from Mountains and Fields*: *Prose Writings of Hwadam, Sŏ Kyŏngdŏk*, Isabelle Sancho demonstrates how deeply Hwadam was integrated into the Confucian discourse of his time and how thoroughly he was versed in intellectual traditions imported from China.

The translation includes not only Sŏ Kyŏngdŏk's prose writings from his *munjip* 文集 (collected writings) published in 1787 but also features prefaces and postscripts written by his disciples and their descendants. By incorporating these additional texts, the translation goes beyond just a study of Hwadam's philosophical writings, revealing how his followers sought to frame their master's work to elevate their own reputations through the creation of such a collected edition. Sancho makes this clear in her introduction to the translation, as she discusses the compilation and publication history of the *Hwadam chip* 花潭集 (Collected Writings of Hwadam) and highlights the significance this publication held for the legacy of Sŏ Kyŏngdŏk (pp. 12–16).

In her introductory discussion of Hwadam's thought, Sancho emphasizes that, although his disciples attempted to downplay his focus on the *Book of Changes* (*Yijing* 易經) and the numerological and cosmological writings of Song dynasty scholar Shao Yong 邵雍 (1011–1077) to present him as more "orthodox," these texts reveal how central these theories were to his thinking and how profoundly they influenced his writings on ritual and metaphysics (pp. 17–18). Nonetheless, Hwadam's four texts on "Patterning Principle (*yi* 理)" and "Vital Energy (*ki* 氣)" (pp. 81–113) remain central in this translation. This is due less to the arrangement of the *Hwadam chip* by Hwadam's disciples to emphasize these texts and more because of Isabelle Sancho's excellent and consistent translation, along with her thorough explanations provided in the notes to the respective texts. These texts, together with Sancho's annotations, can be viewed as an introduction to the fundamental Neo-Confucian metaphysical beliefs of 16th-century Chosŏn Korea, including references to the debates that would later arise over the relationship between the two concepts. Although some prior knowledge of Confucian philosophical concepts is certainly helpful for the reader, the coherent translation of terminology and the extensive explanations in the notes provide a clear and vivid understanding of how Hwadam perceived the formation of the universe and everything within it. The practical application of this theoretical framework then becomes evident in the text "On the Distinctive Characteristics of Hot Springs" (pp. 122–125), where Hwadam addresses the conundrum of warm water emerging from the ground. Here, his 'Confucian' epistemology and logic become more graspable by offering the reader a real-life application of his ideas.

Not all of Hwadam's writings were related to meta-

physical speculations; his social and political convictions become apparent in the longer memorial addressed to King Injong 仁宗 (r. 1544–1545), which was never submitted due to the king's premature death (pp. 52–72). In this memorial, Hwadam criticizes what he perceives as the court's misguided choices regarding clothing and ritual behavior during the mourning process for the deceased King Chungjong 中宗 (r. 1506–1544). By heavily referencing ritual texts from antiquity, he emphasizes the importance of rituals for maintaining social order. For the modern reader, the text reveals the potential for disputes over appropriate headgear, clothing, and the proper duration of mourning—issues that would later dominate Korean Confucian discourse in the 17th and 18th centuries. Additionally, the memorial challenges later portrayals of Hwadam as a world-weary hermit, casting doubt on the notion that he was detached from the Confucian discourse of his time. The text reveals that, despite his reputation as an eccentric scholar, Hwadam was regarded by his contemporaries as an authority on politically significant, albeit dry, issues.

Hwadam's historical status as an enigmatic hermit or mystical figure stems from his engagement with numerology, cosmology, and, prognostication. Texts dealing with these fields, as well as phonology, comprise the latter part of his *munjip*. Works on the relationships and movements between hexagrams (pp. 144–157) and the "Analysis of the Numbers of the *Supreme Ultimate Across the Ages*" (pp. 137–143) reveal this layer of thought and present a challenge for readers unfamiliar with the core ideas of the educational tradition of Shao Yong. Once again, it is Isabelle Sancho's exceptional translations and insightful explanations that make these texts accessible, dispelling their arcane reputation. One can only imagine the immense effort and research required not only to grasp these texts in their original, but to also render them comprehensible in English.

Up to this point in the translation, the decision to place notes directly after the respective texts is a sensible one, as footnotes would have cluttered the pages and leave only a sentence of translation alongside numerous notes. Pure endnotes, on the other hand, would require tedious flipping back and forth of the whole book. However, in this section, the limitations of the chosen format become evident. Illustrations and diagrams would have been helpful in clarifying the shifts between hexagrams, as well as the tools and practices of divination, making these complex concepts more accessible to the reader. In her preface, Sancho notes that illustrations and other references had to be omitted for editorial reasons (p. XIV). These materials would have been especially helpful in this section of the book. Without them, the text remains only accessible for experts, or demands further research from the reader. Thankfully, Sancho offers a wealth of starting points for such inquiry through her references. The practical implications of the ideas on hexagrams and divination discussed in the texts become evident in the sections on the courtesy names of two of Hwadam's disciples included in the translation. The last few texts round out the translation with the chronological biography of Hwadam and several postfaces by his disciples and later editors of his collected writings.

In my opinion, it would have been beneficial to include at least one or two of Hwadam's poems in the translation. Sancho explains that she focused on the prose, believing her translations would not do justice to Hwadam's poetic works (p. XI). However, poetry holds such a central role in the collected writings of Confucian scholars that including even a few of his poems—no matter how formal or allusive—would have provided a more complete picture of Hwadam's thought and intellectual legacy. In particular, many of Hwadam's poems are closely tied to his philosophical ideas or offer valuable insights into his literary world.

Isabelle Sancho's translation of the collected writings of Hwadam is a masterful demonstration of how significant academic translations are to the field premodern Korean studies. It also serves as a reminder that translation work deserves greater respect and recognition. The book offers both a window into the world of a 16th-century Confucian scholar in Chosŏn Korea through his own words, and an in-depth study of the ideas and concepts he articulated. While the texts included in the book vary in difficulty, the explanatory notes make the translated text comprehen-

sible for both experts and newcomers with a keen interest in the history of Confucianism.

Martin Gehlmann
Ruhr-Universität Bochum

Note by the editors of Korean Histories: *Isabelle Sancho's* The Master from Mountains and Fields: Prose Writings of Hwadam, Sŏ Kyŏngdŏk *was awarded the AKSE Book Prize on June 20, 2025 at the AKSE conference in Edinburgh.*

Sheena Chestnut Greitens, Politics of the North Korean Diaspora. Cambridge University Press, 2024. 102 pp. ISBN 9781009197281.

Anqi Gao & Adam Cathcart
University of Leeds

In *Politics of the North Korean Diaspora*, Sheena Chestnut Greitens provides a nuanced analysis of the global dispersal and political engagement of North Korean émigrés, highlighting how the authoritarian nature of the North Korean regime shapes the experiences and oppositional activism of its diaspora. By using North Korea, "one of the most closed and repressive regimes in the contemporary world", as a central case study, Greitens contributes to broader discussions on the management of diasporas and their political roles, making it an important text within both Korean diaspora studies and studies of authoritarianism.

Greitens highlights the differing patterns of North Korean asylum applications and resettlements across various countries. An early illustration Figure 2 (p. 6) visualises the global spread of North Korean refugees and asylum seekers from 1990 to 2020, with significant numbers resettling in countries such as the United States, Canada, Russia, Germany, Australia, France, and the United Kingdom, demonstrating the wide geographic dispersion of North Korean émigrés. This illustration helps set the stage for understanding the subsequent political dynamics within the North Korean diaspora. She also examines how contested citizenship affects North Korean émigrés, particularly in host countries where they may struggle to obtain refugee status due to their ambiguous legal standing. Despite being theoretically recognised as citizens of South Korea, they often experience discrimination in South Korea. This discussion underscores the limitations of international resettlement policies, which further complicate their ability to fully engage in political activities.

Greitens offers a unique perspective, arguing that within authoritarian politics North Korean authorities view the diaspora as a potential threat to its security and employ various tactics to manage and undermine it, including extraterritorial repression, propaganda campaigns and transnational violence. For example, the North Korean government has held press conferences featuring defectors who returned to North Korea, where they publicly criticise the quality of life in South Korea. At the same time, Greitens highlights how the diaspora challenges the legitimacy of the regime by participating in human rights activities and raising awareness, even while facing significant pressure from the North Korean government. The narrative traces the shift from state-led emigrants to an increasingly oppositional diaspora that challenges the regime's legitimacy. These dynamics shape the diaspora's political behaviour, as many North Korean émigrés internalise democratic norms from host countries and maintain or develop a critical stance toward their homeland's authoritarian rule. The personal stories and commitments of key diaspora members have shaped North Korean human rights advocacy in visible and specific ways.

Greitens notes that North Korea has actively worked to discredit the legitimacy of defectors, targeting well-known defectors such as Jeong Kwang-il and Shin Dong-hyuk. Shin Dong-hyuk's story became fa-

mous through Blaine Harden's *Escape from Camp 14*.[87] In 2015 Blaine Harden conceded factual errors in *Escape from Camp 14*.[88] Similarly, the book delves into the story of Yeonmi Park, a defector who has gained significant media attention. Greitens highlights their narratives as examples of North Korea's efforts to discredit defectors but is on firmer ground when it effectively incorporates empirical data, such as survey results, to show that North Korean émigrés in democratic countries often demonstrate high levels of civic engagement. For example, Table 3 on page 41, titled "Dimensions of citizenship among North Koreans in the United States," highlights their roles in advocacy and policy influence. Similarly, Table 4 on page 45, titled "Forms of political participation by North Koreans in the United States," outlines various ways they engage in political activities. These tables underscore the significant contribution of the North Korean diaspora to democratic processes in their host countries. Greitens's findings show that many North Korean émigrés actively engage in civic activities, demonstrating their ability to adapt and integrate into democratic societies, filling a critical gap in existing research. This reflects a shift from authoritarian suppression to democratic engagement, further highlighting the positive changes in their political identities. Such democratic engagement becomes even more pronounced when contrasted with the "contested citizenship" previously experienced by the North Korean diaspora.

In some cases, the survey sample size is relatively small, with only 52 respondents, this limitation is understandable given the challenges of accessing such a specific population. Additionally, the fact that most participants transited through other countries like China, Thailand, or South Korea before arriving in the U.S. complicates the interpretation of their responses, particularly in discussions about identity and political behaviour. Greitens's assertion that "many more North Koreans in the United States opt to cheer (solely) for the United States than (solely) for South Korea" (as shown in Table 1) seems tenuous. Given that not all respondents had lived in South Korea, this claim may not fully capture the complexities of diasporic identity or the varying experiences of North Koreans based on their time spent in different countries. Furthermore, while Greitens attempts to "reconfirm the distinction between civic patriotism and ethnic nationalism," this conclusion feels somewhat overstated, particularly given the mean length of residence in the U.S. (7–8 years), and the fact that not all respondents had previously lived in South Korea. A more nuanced analysis could have offered a more thorough understanding of how the length of residence in the U.S. shapes the political behaviour of émigrés.

In the appendix on pages 64–65, the text does not explicitly clarify whether all respondents had obtained U.S. citizenship or permanent residency. It is reasonable to infer that many respondents likely had not yet acquired U.S. citizenship given their relatively short length of residence (7–8 years), as U.S. naturalization laws typically require permanent residents to have held their green card for at least five years before applying for citizenship. However, without explicit clarification on the legal status of respondents, the discussion around civic patriotism may raise questions. Readers might be led to question whether these respondents, many of whom may not yet be full citizens, can meaningfully express or engage in "civic patriotism" in a U.S. context. A deeper exploration of their legal status and how it shapes their political identity would strengthen the book's analysis.

If the survey results had distinguished between North Koreans who resettled in the U.S. as refugees under the 2004 North Korean Human Rights Act and those who previously lived in South Korea before moving to the U.S. for study or work, it would provide more meaningful insights. Upon receiving refugee status in the U.S., North Korean refugees are entitled

[87]Blaine Harden, *Escape from Camp 14: One Man's Remarkable Odyssey from North Korea to Freedom in the West* (New York: Viking, 2012), 7–9.

[88]Will Sommer, "A North Korean Defector Captivated U.S. Media. Some Question Her Story." *Washington Post*, July 16, 2023, https://www.washingtonpost.com/media/2023/07/16/yeonmi-park-conservative-defector-stories-questioned/, accessed October 17, 2024.

[89]Jane Kim, "North Korean Human Rights and Refugee Resettlement in the United States: A Slow and Quiet Progress" (report, SAIS,

to the same benefits as other refugees, including cash or material aid during the first 30-90 days after arrival, amounting to around $400.[89] This amount is smaller compared to the resettlement benefits offered in South Korea. Likewise, to gain U.S. citizenship, refugees must reside in the U.S. for at least one year before they can apply for permanent residency (a green card). After receiving a green card, they must wait an additional five years before applying for citizenship.[90] North Koreans who have resettled in South Korea and received benefits and South Korean citizenship cannot be designated as refugees if they later decide to move to the U.S. Since they are automatically naturalised as South Korean citizens, they cannot file for refugee status. Instead, they must apply for a visa, such as an F-1 (student), H-1B (employment), or B-1/B-2 (visitor) visa, to immigrate to the United States.[91]

Greitens's conclusion on page 59 "diasporic migration choices, perceptions of politics, and patterns of engagement in political action are all shaped by the nondemocratic nature of the North Korean homeland." While the role of the regime is indeed significant, based on the above discussion of resettlement policy the argument overlooks how other factors, such as international resettlement policies and transnational networks, influence the political activism of North Korean émigrés. The book underestimates the impact of these policies, which can either enable or limit diasporic action depending on the resources and opportunities available.

Nevertheless, Greitens's work makes an important contribution by detailing how the authoritarian nature of the North Korean homeland significantly shapes the diaspora's political perceptions and behaviours. This contribution is crucial for understanding both the challenges of the North Korean diaspora, particularly in their adaptation to democratic environments.

Greitens also mentions WeChat on page 60, suggesting its potential role in the diaspora could mirror that of Twitter during the Arab Spring. However, this connection is underexplored. Simply stating that WeChat is a platform from the PRC and popular among the Chinese diaspora does not adequately explain why it is relevant in the context of North Korean émigrés or authoritarian regimes. A more thorough analysis is needed to justify why WeChat, specifically, is highlighted over other platforms that could also serve as tools for communication or activism within authoritarian settings. Greitens attempts to link North Korean and Chinese authoritarianism through this platform, yet the argument would benefit from deeper exploration of how WeChat's unique features and restrictions align with North Korean diaspora dynamics. Understanding these connections could clarify its significance for both regimes and the broader implications for diaspora political engagement.

Johns Hopkins University, 2008), 143–59.

[90] David R. Hawk, with Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, *The Hidden Gulag*: *The Lives and Voices of "Those Who Are Sent to the Mountains"*, 2nd ed., U.S. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, 2012, pp. 175; Adjustment of Status of Refugees, 8 U.S.C. § 1159(b).

[91] Eric Ryu, "Why the Number of North Korean Refugees in the United States Is So Low," *NKHIDDENGULAG* (blog), August 2021, http://www.NKhiddengulag.org/1/post/2021/08/why-the-number-of-north-korean-refugees-in-the-united-states-is-so-low.html, accessed July 18, 2025.

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Steven Denney
Leiden University

Andre Schmid's *North Korea's Mundane Revolution: Socialist Living and the Rise of Kim Il Sung* (University of California Press, 2024) explains how the post-war North Korean state consolidated authority not only through mass campaigns but also by regulating daily life. Schmid demonstrates that apparently ordinary practices, such as housing allocation, domestic labor, workplace discipline, and cultural consumption, were embedded with socialist ideals and legitimized the regime. By foregrounding these processes, he contests leader-centered narratives of revolutionary change.

Schmid is already well known for *Korea Between Empires, 1895–1919* (2002), which used close readings of vernacular newspapers and official publications to trace the formation of Korean nationalist discourse under Japanese colonial rule. Once again, he combines close reading of newspapers, magazines, and state directives with a sensitivity to political economy, avoiding teleological assumptions. Rather than deriving history from Kim Il Sung's biography, he reconstructs how diverse actors understood and negotiated the concept of the "New Living".

Schmid organizes the manuscript into an Introduction, four thematic parts, nine substantive chapters, and a conclusion. The Introduction situates the concept of "New Living" within Cold War debates on socialist modernity and insists on analyzing North Korean history without a teleological reliance on Kim Il Sung.

Chapter 1, "The Anxieties of Socialist Transition," lays the groundwork for the volume's core argument by situating North Korea's postwar reconstruction within the broader context of demographic disruption, labor scarcity, and institutional expansion. Schmid writes, "These anxieties were themselves rooted in the tensions that structured the rebuilding of the political economy and the growing institutional capacity of the [Korean Workers'] Party-state" (p. 22). This chapter functions as a conceptual overview, clarifying the stakes of the everyday as a location of revolutionary action.

Part One, "Cultural Living and the Ever-Striving Socialist Self" (Chs. 2–3) follows with an analysis of how socialist ethics were inculcated through moral exhortation and institutional oversight and management. Drawing on advice literature and the reports of dormitory inspectors, Schmid demonstrates how the Party-state attempted to influence individual behavior through moral suasion and surveillance. These chapters demonstrate how minor transgressions, such as untidy rooms and sluggish greetings, were construed as threats to collective discipline.

Part Two, "The Political Economy of Apartments" (Chs. 4–5), presents housing as a material necessity and an ideological spectacle. Chapter 4, "An Obsession with Efficiency," documents the apartment boom: "Never in the history of the peninsula [...] had there been such a wave of housing construction [....] this was revolution through apartments, complete with

electricity and running water" (p. 107). Chapter 5, "The Ideological Pivot," shows how zoning codes and *songbun*, the North Korean system of inherited sociopolitical classification, redefined citizenship.

Part Three, "Making Happy Family Homes" (Chs. 6–7), turns to the household as a site of ideological investment and social strain. These chapters examine how the state promoted a gendered vision of domestic harmony through advice literature and media campaigns, even as women's letters and complaints revealed deep ambivalence. By documenting the lived experience of "dual burdens" – that is, waged labor and domestic responsibility – Schmid shows the contradictions at the heart of the Party's claims to gender equality and family support.

Part Four, "The Ambivalences of Consumption" (Chs. 8–9), interrogates desire and distinction. Chapter 8 tracks savings campaigns and the moral economy of austerity. Chapter 9 dissects how home décor and accessories signaled class despite egalitarian rhetoric; a collage of handbags reminded readers that "purses, however stylish, were just another widget that had no value other than that produced by people" (p. 222).

The book's conclusion, "Looking Up at Comrade Kim," (re)introduces Kim Il Sung only after more than two hundred pages of narrative in which he is largely absent. His reappearance is deliberate, not to recenter him as a historical agent, but to show how his image retroactively appropriated the social and ideological groundwork already laid by cadres, editors, planners, and workers. The four parts of the book trace a progression from self-cultivation to urban reordering, domestic regulation, and the governance of consumption, demonstrating how socialist transformation advanced unevenly through the routines and constraints of everyday life.

The deferral of the leader figure is not incidental. As Schmid makes known in the introduction, he originally intended to write the book without once mentioning Kim Il Sung: "His absence would be the argument—a North Korean history without the man and his ego" (p. 19). Although he ultimately includes the leader in the final chapter, his narrative resists the gravitational pull of the personality cult. Instead of treating Kim as the origin of policy and ideology, Schmid approaches him as a product of the institutional and discursive field that the preceding chapters reconstruct from below.

This choice stands in stark contrast to more conventional biographical approaches. Consider, by contrast, Fyodor Tertitskiy's more recently published *Accidental Tyrant: The Life of Kim Il Sung* (2025). Tertitskiy recovers the contingency of Kim's rise through Soviet records and memoirs, focusing on strategic decision-making and elite conflict. Dae-sook Suh's *Kim Il Sung: The North Korean Leader* (1988), a classic in the canon on (North) Korean history, compiles speeches, interviews with defectors, and official publications to chart the evolution of Kim's authority within Party and state institutions. Both works treat the leader as the primary focus and an agent of historical change. Schmid, by contrast, excavates internal communications, such as administrative directives, factory bulletins, and low-circulation journals, to reconstruct a more diffuse and contested social history. This divergence in method and archive produces fundamentally different accounts of North Korea's postwar trajectory.

By relocating the revolution to the spaces of domestic life, factory discipline, and consumer regulation, *North Korea's Mundane Revolution* broadens the way socialist transformation can be studied – and especially the way we approach North Korean history. Yet its sustained attention to the everyday, while laudable in its ambitious attention to detail, occasionally obscures the political and economic stakes that defined the social transformation taking place. At times, the reader risks losing sight of what is being explained, so immersed is the narrative in the granular reproduction of routines. There is no lack of detail in this text, but the accumulation of detail sometimes comes at the expense of argumentative clarity. Less committed readers will struggle to finish the manuscript.

Moreover, Schmid's expansive definition of revolutions as a gradual and dispersed restructuring of norms and habits invites reflection on whether he is describing revolution at all. For what is revolution without the sudden, violent overthrow of an *ancien régime* or preexisting order? Still, for students and scholars of Korean history, nationalism, developmen-

tal states, and postcolonial socialism, the book offers an indispensable reconstruction of how the extraordinary ambitions of a Party-state were embedded in the ordinary life of citizens. The narrative demands patience, but its conceptual and archival rewards more than justify the effort.

Aram Hur, Narratives of Civic Duty: How National Stories Shape Democracy in Asia. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2022. 264 pp. ISBN 9781501764847.

Steven Denney
Leiden University

Aram Hur's *Narratives of Civic Duty: How National Stories Shape Democracy in Asia* explores a core question in democratic theory: why do citizens feel obligated to support democratic institutions? Against expectations that civic duty emerges from democratic culture or institutional incentives, Hur posits an alternative: civic duty is rooted in national narratives. Through what she terms a "national theory of civic duty," Hur argues that citizens are motivated by their nation's moral stories about the relationship between people and state. When those stories depict the democratic state as representing the national community, civic duty is high. When the state is seen as alien or oppositional, duty falters.

This theoretical framework challenges the conventional dichotomy that nationalism is inherently illiberal. Hur contends that nationalism is politically malleable: its civic or anti-civic effects depend on how the nation-state relationship is historically imagined. South Korea's example, where ethnic nationalism has coalesced with democratic obligation, illustrates how strong civic duty can emerge when the nation and state are tightly bond. Taiwan, by contrast, with its fragmented identity narratives and a contested state, exhibits weaker or conditional civic obligations.

Hur tests this theory through a well-designed most similar systems design (MSSD) comparison of South Korea and Taiwan, supplemented by chapters on Germany and cross-national survey data. South Korea and Taiwan are particularly well-suited for MSSD, as both experienced Japanese colonialism, postwar authoritarian rule, rapid economic development, and transitions to democracy in the late 20th century. These shared structural and historical factors control for many plausible confounds, allowing Hur to isolate the explanatory power of divergent national identity formation, particularly the contrasting nation-state linkages embedded in each country's dominant national story. Hur combines narrative analysis of over 200 personal accounts with survey and experimental data to demonstrate how citizens internalize different moral obligations to the state. The Germany chapter illustrates how civic duty can remain stunted when national identity and statehood diverge, even after institutional reunification. A cross-nationa

Part I outlines the theory. Chapter 1 introduces the puzzle of civic duty, focusing on South Korea's "gold drives" during the 1997 crisis. Chapter 2 outlines the national theory of civic duty, arguing that perceptions of moral obligation are shaped by national narratives, not simply by culture or institutional norms.

Part II provides the empirical core. Chapter 3 contrasts South Korea's unified, ethnic national narrative, which links the state and people, with Taiwan's fragmented national identity, rooted in colonial and authoritarian divisions. Chapters 4 and 5 demonstrate that these narratives shape civic behaviors. In South Korea, national pride motivates compliance with civic obligations, even among overseas Koreans. In Taiwan, civic duty is more conditional, especially among

those who see the state as historically dominated by a non-native ruling class.

Part III expands the scope. Chapter 6 shows that East Germans, socialized under a different regime and narrative, continue to show weaker civic duty than West Germans. Chapter 7 uses cross-national survey data to demonstrate that nationalism is correlated with civic duty only when state belonging is perceived. Chapter 8 concludes by arguing that national stories can be reshaped to foster civic resilience or be co-opted by populists to exclude others.

Hur's study is a welcome contribution that rethinks the relationship between nationalism and democracy. Her comparative findings show that moral narratives linking nation and state can instill in citizens a sense of democratic obligation. However, an underexplored implication of this argument warrants further consideration: the content of those national narratives – especially their ethnic exclusivity or inclusivity – may influence how democracies adapt to social change.

Hur's study is a welcome contribution that rethinks the relationship between nationalism and democracy. Her comparative findings compellingly demonstrate that moral narratives linking nation and state can instill in citizens a sense of democratic obligation. However, a further implication of this argument deserves attention: the content of those national narratives, especially their ethnic exclusivity or inclusivity, may shape how democracies adapt to social change.

In particular, Hur's findings highlight the persistence of ethnic nationalism in South Korea and the enduring state–society compact established in the mid-20th century. South Korea's civic duty rests on a narrative of ethnic homogeneity and historical struggles that tightly bind the Korean people to their state. This has been powerful for cohesion, but it also means that the democratic Korean polity still heavily equates national membership with shared ancestry. Research on Korean national identity has observed that nationhood remains rooted in bloodline, and institutions to foster a more inclusive civic identity have lagged. The very strength of ethnic national attachment that Hur credits for South Korea's democratic engagement could pose a serious challenge for the near future: as South Korea faces immigration and demographic change, will non-Koreans or those outside the dominant ethnonational frame be integrated into the "circle of we"? If the national story remains one of a single bloodline, newcomers may be perceived as outsiders.

Hur's work, focused on the national majority, hints at this issue and does acknowledge that strong nation–state linkages can be manipulated by populists to exclude others, particularly in Chapter 8. Still, she stops short of fully theorizing or empirically examining how ethnic national attachment might be re-politicized in the context of immigration and demographic change. The implication is that South Korea's democracy might need to consciously broaden its national narrative if it is to integrate a more diverse populace while maintaining strong civic unity. What, then, are the implications for feelings of civic duty in this more diverse republic? This is a crucial question to consider.

Taiwan's trajectory offers an instructive contrast. Although its fractured national identity once undermined civic duty, Taiwan's democratization enabled a more inclusive civic nationalism. The emergence of a multiethnic "Taiwanese nation," rooted in democratic values rather than ancestry, has enabled civic obligation to extend beyond the legacy of a Sinocentric state. The government's recognition of "New Residents", including Southeast Asian immigrants and their children, further signals a national story under revision. While not without complications, Taiwan's civic turn may better position it to sustain democratic engagement in a pluralistic future.

In conclusion, *Narratives of Civic Duty* is a theoretically compelling and empirically rich study that demonstrates how national narratives shape democratic citizenship. Hur's analysis encourages scholars to view nationalism as a politically contingent force: one that democracies can recast to widen or narrow the bounds of civic belonging. Who counts as part of the nation, in these stories, will determine who is seen as deserving and capable of civic duty. Hur solves a key puzzle in Asian democratic development while inviting future-oriented reflection on national inclusion amid demographic change.

Contributors

BOUDEWIJN WALRAVEN is Professor Emeritus of Korean Studies at Leiden University, where he held the Chair of Korean Studies for many years. He earned his B.A. in Japanese Language and Culture (1969) and his doctorate in Korean Language and Culture (1985), both from Leiden University, and was a research student at Seoul National University (1973–1975). He previously served as Distinguished Visiting Professor at the Academy of East Asian Studies, Sungkyunkwan University, Seoul, and as a KHK Visiting Research Fellow at Ruhr-Universität Bochum (2019). He served two four-year terms as President of the Association for Korean Studies in Europe and was editor of the *Sungkyun Journal of East Asian Studies* (2006–2018) and the e-journal *Korean Histories*. His research interests include Korean popular religion and shamanism, Buddhism in the late Chosŏn period, and the anthropology of history.

VLADIMÍR GLOMB is a Senior Researcher and Deputy Professor at the Institute of Korean Studies, Freie Universität Berlin. He studied East Asian Studies, Korean Studies, and Philosophy at Charles University Prague (M.A. 2004) and, as a postgraduate, Philosophy and Confucian Studies at Sungkyunkwan University in Seoul (2005–2007). He earned his Ph.D. in the History and Culture of Asian and African Countries from Charles University in 2010. Previously he was Assistant Professor at the Department of Korean Studies at Charles University and a member of the CRC 980 "Episteme in Motion" at Freie Universität Berlin. His fields of expertise include Confucianism, Korean philosophy, classical Korean, and premodern Korea. His recent publications include *The Lives and Legacy of Kim Sisŭp* (*1435–1493*) (Brill, 2023) and *Confucian Academies in East Asia* (Brill, 2020, co-edited with Eun-Jeung Lee et al.).

MARION EGGERT is Professor of Korean Studies and Head of Section of the Korean Language and Culture division in the Department of East Asian Studies at Ruhr-Universität Bochum, where she has held the chair since 1999. She studied Sinology, Japanology, and Cultural Anthropology at the universities of Heidelberg and Munich and at Nanjing University, earning both her M.A. (1989) and Ph.D. (1992) in Chinese Literature at Munich University. She spent a year as post-doctoral fellow at Harvard's Korea Institute (1994–95) and earned her *venia legendi* for Chinese and Korean Studies at Munich University in 1998. She served as President of the Association for Korean Studies in Europe (AKSE) from 2019 to 2023 and was elected a member of Academia Europaea in 2019. She is currently Principal Investigator of the CRC 1475 "Metaphors of Religion" at RUB. Her research interests include Korean literary and intellectual history of the 17th to 19th centuries, cultural transfer between Korea and China, and cultures of dissent in premodern Korea.

YU MYOUNGIN was a research associate at the Department of Korean Language and Culture at Ruhr University Bochum from 2008 to 2015. He earned his doctorate in 2010 with the dissertation *Kuunmong und die koreanische Literaturwissenschaft*: *Wissenschaftsgeschichte als Provokation* (*Kuunmong and Korean Literary Studies*: *The History of Science as Provocation*).

ANDREW LOGIE is Assistant Professor of Korean Studies at the University of Helsinki. A graduate of the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, he completed his Ph.D. at the University of Helsinki, with a postdoctoral period spent at Leiden University. His doctoral thesis comprises a survey of popular Korean historiography from the 13th century to the present. His research interests include popular and pseudo historiography pertaining to early Korea and northern East Asia, comparative historiography, and Korean popular music discourse.

REMCO E. BREUKER is Professor of Korean Studies at Leiden University, the Netherlands. A historian trained at Leiden University (in Japanese Studies and Korean Studies) and the Department of Korean History of Seoul National University, he has published extensively on Korean and Northeast Asian medieval history. Next to his work on historical Korea, he also works on contemporary North Korea, in particular on exile narratives, human rights issues, and DPRK overseas economic activities. A present research focus is the presence of North Korean forced labour and modern slavery in international supply chains. He is (co-) author of among other titles *Forging the Truth*: *Creative Deception and National Identity in Medieval Korea* (ANU, 2009), *Establishing a Pluralist Society in Medieval Korea (918–1170)*: *History, Ideology and Identity in the Koryŏ Dynasty* (Brill, 2010), *People for Profit*: *North Korean Forced Labour on a Global Scale* (with I.B.L.H. van Gardingen, LeidenAsiaCentre, 2018), *Invented Traditions in North and South Korea* (with Andrew Jackson, Codruța Sîntionean, and CedarBough Saeji, UHP, 2022), *Vestiges of the Three Kingdoms of Ancient Korea*: *A Translation of the Samguk Yusa* (with Boudewijn Walraven, Grace Koh, and Frits Vos, UHP, 2025), and *Not Everything Unfolds as Anticipated*: *An Annotated Translation of Selections from Yi Kyubo's Tongguk Yi Sangguk chip* (UHP, forthcoming 2026).

WONKYUNG CHOI is Assistant Professor of Korean Studies at Leiden University, where she specializes in Korean classical literature of the 18th and 19th centuries. She earned her Ph.D. in Korean literature and previously held positions at Sungkyunkwan University (SKKU), serving as Visiting Professor for Korean Literature in Classical Chinese (2018–2022) and as Chief Researcher at the Academy of East Asian Studies (2016–2022). Her research focuses on Korean intellectual history and social culture, including the expanding perceptions of identity in late Chosŏn dynasty literature and epistemological aspects of literary space.

MARTIN GEHLMANN is a Research and Teaching Assistant at the Department of Korean Studies, Ruhr-Universität Bochum, a position he has held since February 2022. Previously he was a Research Assistant at the Institute of Korean Studies and the Collaborative Research Center 980 "Episteme in Motion" at Freie Universität Berlin (2014–2022). He received his Ph.D. from Freie Universität Berlin in December 2020 for a thesis on Confucian academies. His research focuses on East Asian educational history, institutional history in premodern Korea, Confucianism, and cultural heritage. His recent publications include *Beyond the State Examinations*: *Evaluations of Knowledge in Premodern Korea* (Harrassowitz, 2024, co-edited with Vladimír Glomb).

ANQI GAO is a Ph.D. candidate in History at the University of Leeds, funded by the Korea Foundation. Her research focuses on gender, migration, and state policy in the Sino-North Korean border region from the 1950s to the 1990s, with particular attention to the experiences of North Korean women migrants at the intersection of survival strategy, state control, and informal economies. She holds a B.A. in Korean Language and Literature and an M.A. in Korean Studies.

ADAM CATHCART is Associate Professor of East Asian History at the University of Leeds. He earned his Ph.D. in contemporary history at Ohio University. His primary research areas are the Sino-Korean border region and Chinese foreign policy, and he is the founder and co-editor of Sino-NK, an online scholarly collective. His most recent book is *Decoding the Sino-North Korean Borderlands* (Amsterdam University Press, 2021, co-edited with Christopher Green and Steven Denney). He has received research fellowships from the Academy of Korean Studies and the Freeman Foundation, and won *China Quarterly*'s Gordon White Prize in 2010.

STEVEN DENNEY is Assistant Professor of International Relations and Korean Studies at the Institute for Area Studies, Leiden University. Working at the intersection of digital humanities and quantitative social science, he studies questions of national identity, migration, and political change. He earned his Ph.D. in Political Science

from the University of Toronto (2019), an M.A. in Global Affairs and Policy from Yonsei University, and a B.A. in Political Science from Harding University.

Colophon

EDITORS

Remco E. Breuker
Boudewijn Walraven
Aron van de Pol
Steven Denney
Rahel Plassen
Jeong Yo-Keun

MANAGING EDITORS

Aron van de Pol
Steven Denney

LAY-OUT AND TYPESETTING

Aron van de Pol

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