

East Asian Waters in the Chosŏn/Qing Era: The Emergence of a Maritime Order

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Yongchul Choe (Korea University)

The World of *P'yohaerok* during the Chosŏn Dynasty: The Experiences of Koreans in Southern China in the Pre-Modern Period

Korea interacted with neighboring countries such as China and Japan through vigorous marine trade during the Period of Three Kingdoms and the Koryŏ Dynasty. During the Chosŏn Dynasty, however, marine activity was banned in principle to prevent any damage from Japanese raiders and also due to the Ming Dynasty's Ocean Prohibition Policy. Chosŏn's tribute mission to Yanjing (Beijing) was sent by land, and the cultural mission was accredited to Edo (Tokyo) along the regular routes. Under these circumstances, *P'yohaerok* (漂海錄), written by those who were accidentally adrift in the sea and closely escaped death, vividly portrayed each East Asian region, including Ryukyu, Taiwan, the Southern part of the Yangtze River in China, Hokkaido, Ezochi in Japan, and even the Philippines and Vietnam.

Korean intellectuals who arrived in Southern China, in particular, tried to communicate with the local people in Chinese or through Chinese poems, revealing their pride in Korean Confucian traditions without losing their fortitude and dignity. In this way, they earned the patronage and esteem of Chinese intellectuals. As one of successful examinees of liberal arts in the fifteenth century and the best intellectual among the people adrift on the sea, Ch'oe Pu performed outstandingly in China; in addition, after his return to Joseon, *P'yohaerok*—the book ordered by King Sŏngjong—had a great impact not only within Joseon but also overseas. When Li P'angik, the military officer of Cheju in the eighteenth century, arrived at P'enghu Island in Taiwan and went north by way of Fujian, he paid a visit to the Confucian shrine and also gained the respect of the local people. Li grabbed the opportunity to travel to Tongting-hu and Yuehyang-lou and directly reported on his adventures to King Chŏngjo, which were not only recorded by Park Chiwŏn in Chinese with detailed footnotes but also introduced in *P'yohaega* and *P'yohaerok* in Korean. This shows that Li's trail had a great influence on the arts as well as literature. As a comprehensive intellectual, Ch'oe Tuchan, who had been adrift in the sea around Cheju and finally arrived at Ning Po in China in the early nineteenth century, widely exchanged with Chinese writers about poems and seemed to write the draft of *Sŭngsarok* since he was adrift. He returned to Korea through Beijing and Shenyang, along the Jinhang Grand Canal.

As these examples indicate, Joseon was closed externally, but some who were lost at sea were passionate about recording the customs and culture of Southern China and communicating with local writers by taking advantage of unexpected opportunities for travel to places that were difficult to access at the time.

Moon-yong Kim (RIKS, Korea University)

Encounters with Foreign Ships and the Ongoing Debate over Ship Design in the Late Chosŏn

Ships in the late Chosŏn typically featured a flat bottom with a centerboard rudder; lacking vertical ribs, the side-planks were supported by horizontal reinforcement beams called *kamok* or *karyongmok*. The vessels were outfitted to travel well against the wind despite having square sails. These features can be

understood as reflecting the social and geographical conditions of the time; namely, overseas commerce was virtually nonexistent, so vessel operation was for the most part limited to rivers and coastal waters. Moreover, the western and southern coasts of the Korean peninsula have a very large tidal range.

Chosŏn ships were built according to the same basic design for centuries, yet debate continued over how ships were to be built and operated. Those discussions were mainly confined to such issues as using the same type of vessel for both military and cargo transport. By the eighteenth century, however, Chosŏn scholars began mulling over the prospects of promoting commercial activities at home and trading with foreign countries, sparking greater interest in ships. People in Chosŏn became more critical of how their ships were built and operated, and debate heated up over adopting the advantages of foreign ship designs. Meanwhile, greater notice was being taken of the foreign ships that were encountered by chance, either when they drifted into Korean waters or when Chosŏn sailors drifted onto foreign shores. Mun Sundŭk drifted around Asian waters for three-and-a-half years, spending time in numerous places. Upon his return to Chosŏn in 1805, he recounted his journey—including descriptions of vessels that he had encountered in the Ryukyu Islands and Philippines—to two scholars who wrote it down. One of the scholars, Yi Kanghoe, also personally observed and left a written account of a ship from Jiangnan, China that wrecked on Chosŏn shores in 1817. In addition, there is a record of an interview with a crew of Chosŏn castaways in Satsuma-han, Japan in the 1830s. All of these reports included detailed descriptions of various foreign ships, including those with “V”-shaped hulls, revealing certain shortcomings in Chosŏn ship design.

This paper looks at the ongoing debate that took place in late Chosŏn over the way that local ships were being built and used, and how scholars began to study the issue more vigorously from the eighteenth century on, as attitudes changed toward the outside world. This study contributes to further understanding of the technological problems that were experienced with Chosŏn ship design and sheds light on cultural exchanges among East Asian countries that occurred as a result of maritime travel during the period.

Kuo-tung Ch'en (Academia Sinica)

Traders, Captives, Renegades, and Shipwreckers: Overseas Chinese Informants at the Time of Toyotomi Hideyoshi's Invasion of Korea

Toyotomi Hideyoshi, the Japanese hegemon, entertained the idea of conquering East Asia as early as the 1580s. In order to carry out his goal, he commanded the Spanish Philippines to send envoys and pay homage to him. A series of diplomatic interaction between Luzon and Japan followed. Since the opening of Manila for trade, a large Chinese community had formed; not unexpectedly, some of these Chinese were employed to assist with the negotiations. These Chinese came from southern Fujian and frequently plied the waters between there and Manila. They willingly or unwittingly spread information about Japan's movement back to China. In the late sixteenth century, there were also quite a few Chinese living overseas in Ryukyu, Satsuma, and other parts of Japan. Although their reasons for sojourning abroad were diverse (e.g., trading or captivity), some of them eagerly sent messages regarding what they learned about Hideyoshi's action to Chinese authorities out of patriotism. Moreover, when Chinese officials sent out spies to collect information, they always obtained the assistance of these overseas Chinese. This paper examines the role of the overseas Chinese diaspora and Chinese trading network in providing intelligence and information to the Ming government during the last decades of the sixteenth century.

Catherine Phipps (University of Memphis)

The Limits of Japanese Sovereignty in Transmarine East Asia, 1894–1904

Although Japan had made great strides in becoming a modern, “civilized” nation-state by the end of the nineteenth century, the country remained concerned with issues of territorial, maritime, and economic

sovereignty. The fast-paced development of Japan's economy, military, and transportation infrastructures, as well as its success with treaty revision and victory in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895, changed the power dynamics in East Asia. Yet, the region continued to exist within an environment borne of informal imperialism. Even as Japan regained sovereignty over its own affairs and expanded its borders, the contested spaces and overlapping jurisdictions of transmarine East Asia belied the totality of Japan's new national and imperial formations. With only porous oversight of its coastlines, trade routes, and maritime boundaries, the Meiji government relied on its extensive system of ports—and corresponding network of centrally-administered customs offices—to handle such problems as shipwrecks and smuggling and to provide general surveillance of goods, vessels, and people. From the Ryukyu Islands to Hokkaido and in the new colony of Taiwan, Japan's international ports were at once sites of regulation and transgression.

Yi-yuan Chen (Taiwan National Cheng Kung University)

Drifting and Migration between Vietnam and Two Islands of Taiwan: Kinmen Island and Penghu Island

This paper introduces the geography, history, and other information about Kinmen Island and Penghu Island, which are administered by the Taiwanese government. It also discusses the close relationship between the two islands and Vietnam, especially concerning migration and weather-driven drifting. Among the migrants are refugees, businessmen, and those who migrate for marriage reasons. Through the discussion, the article hopes to receive attention from Vietnamese administrators in order to further strengthen the relationship between two countries, and to encourage collaboration between Vietnam and Taiwan.