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## Staging Universality and Civilization in Late Chosôn Korea

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### I. Forward

In past decades, the geopolitical and economic importance of Korea has been increasingly visible in the global community. Despite the Westernizing transformation of economy and politics, however, Korea has also featured a great extent of flexibility, as well as distinctiveness, in cultural and spiritual terrains. The following presentation attempts to trace the historical context of the vital interactions between Korean and the rest of world by charting one pattern of fashioning Korean civilization in the Sino-centric world system, especially with the demise of Ming China in 1644.

Specifically, I observe how Confucian *Sa* (士) elites in late Chosôn Korea articulated the omnipresence of Universal (理 K. *li* or *i*; Ch. *li*) in the Confucian civilization, in ways that empowered them to handle politics and culture in a transcendental language. They were able to separate the geopolitical presence of Imperial China (中國 Ch. *Zhongguo*) from the cultural entity of the Center of the Confucian civilization (中華 Ch. *Zhonghua*), while enhancing the Confucian civilization of Chosôn (小中華 K. *Sojunghwa*) in conjunction with their view of the Eastern Realm of Ours (東國 K. *Tong'guk*) as a lasting socio-political and cultural collectivity. Tying universality and civilization together, they externally cushioned the geopolitical and cultural impact of China, and domestically confirmed their unchallenged leadership in ushering the rest of society into a civilized order.

This new attitude will help to re-think the creative activities of human agents, particularly the *Sa* elites in their quest for universality embracing Chosôn Korea, Imperial China and beyond. It also captures the ensuing viability and adaptability of Korean culture/civilization as it has endured historical change and geopolitical upheavals.

### II. Confucian Practice, Universality, and Hegemony

#### 1. Confucianism Revisited

Embodying the image of sagehood was the point of departure and the ultimate goal for the Confucian elites to substantiate the presence of Confucian Principle (理) encompassing humans, phenomena, the universe altogether.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, the universal operation of

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<sup>1</sup> Tu Wei-ming, *Way, Learning, and Politics: Essays on the Confucian Intellectual* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1993).

Principle, pivotal to the self-transformative project, was not confined to the Confucian elites themselves but accessible to other human agents, specifically ruler and people.<sup>2</sup>

In content, the earthly translation of Principle into this world is Timeless Order (綱常 K. *kangsang*) encapsulated in Three Bonds (三綱 K. *samgang*) and Five Constancies (五常 K. *osang*). Three Bonds enunciate the familial and social relations of human beings in a hierarchal yet harmonious order between father and son, the ruling and the ruled, and husband and wife. The Five Constancies add to the order of Three Bonds the two elements of generation and fellowship.<sup>3</sup> Five and Three created a complementary organism that binds kinship, court, and statecraft in a proper yet harmonious order.<sup>4</sup>

Hao Chang touches on the way the transcendence of moral-spiritual meaning was further developed into the theoretical underpinning of egalitarianism in association with sociopolitical order.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile, Michael Nylan demonstrates how the practice of filial piety, fundamental to Confucian morality, and the stability of state came into confluence.<sup>6</sup> The forte of filial piety was natural and universal ease with which to justify moral collaboration and commitment of human relations, to expand it into the relationship between ruler and subject, and to juxtapose the two value systems of family and state tightly together. Absorbing power relations into morality and combining family and state, in my view, this Confucian mode of thinking translated the worldly working of Principle as Timeless Order in which ‘the benevolent sage-kings and scholars formed an intellectual and moral upper class.’<sup>7</sup>

To put it another way, as Mencius asserts, ‘[t]here is the saying, “Some labor with their minds, and some labor with their strength. Those who labor with their strength are governed by others. Those who are governed by others support them; those who govern others are supported by them.” This is a principle universally recognized.’<sup>8</sup> Here, the relationship between the rulers and the ruled could be presumed as natural and universal as a co-operative form of division of labor. Especially, the sage-rulers in the Great Antiquity

<sup>2</sup> Confucian Universal, Principle, and *li* are used interchangeably in this paper.

<sup>3</sup> Deuchler also explains these basic interpersonal relationships as 1) righteousness between sovereign and subject; 2) proper rapport between husband and wife, 3) separation of functions between husband and wife, 4) proper recognition of sequence of birth between elder and younger brothers, and 5) faithfulness between friends. See Deuchler, *The Confucian Transformation of Korea*, p. 110.

<sup>4</sup> Mencius 1 p. 327 南軒張氏曰 三綱五常 人類所賴以生而國之所以爲國也 上失其禮下廢其學 則綱常日以淪棄 國將何恃以立 民將何恃以生乎! “孟子曰 君子之於物也 愛之而不仁於民也 仁之而不親 親親而仁民 仁民而愛物。程子曰 仁 推己及人 如老吾老 以及人之老於民則可 於物則不可 統而言之則皆仁 分而言之則有序” [Emphasis Mine] Zhu Xi (1130-1200)’s Commentary on Book of Mencius [孟子集注] Chapter 13, in *Zhuzi quanshu* [Comprehensive Works of Zhu Zi] (Shanghai, 2000), vol 6, p. 441.

<sup>5</sup> See Hao Chang, “Confucian Cosmological Myth and Neo-Confucian Transcendence,” in Richard J. Smith and D. W. Y. Kwok, eds., *Cosmology, Ontology, and Human Efficacy: Essays in Chinese Thought* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993), pp. 11-33.

<sup>6</sup> Michael Nylan, “Confucian Piety and Individualism in Han China,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 116, No. 1 (Jan. – Mar. 1996), p. 1-27.

<sup>7</sup> Julia Ching, “Truth and Ideology: The Confucian Way (Tao) and (Tao-T’ung),” *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 35, No. 3 (Jul. – Sep., 1974), pp. 371-388; Hao Chang, *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 2 (Feb., 1980), pp. 259-272). p. Zhu Xi was the towering figure in the establishment of Neo-Confucianism in Song China (960-1279). For more reference to Zhu Xi’s scholarship, see Hoyt Tillman, *Confucian Discourse and Chu Hsi’s Ascendancy* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1992).

<sup>8</sup> “故曰 或勞心 或勞力 勞心者 治人 勞力者 治於人 治於人者 食人 治人者 食於人 天下之通義也” *The Four Books*. Translated by James Legge (Culture Book Co.:Taipei, 1974), p. 627.

of the Three Dynasties-Hsia, Shang, and Zhou China (三代) established the framework for enlightenment project of Civilization in conducting Timeless Order. In this manner, featuring the moral utopia as the hallmark of the universal working of Principle, the Confucian elites tried to stamp out the actual model for the earthly performance of Confucian universal by staging order and civilization in moral terms and passed it down to next generation. This combinative mode of theory and praxis in Confucianism is what I would like to call ‘Confucian Practice.’

Moreover, it was Cheng-Zhu scholarship that drew on further the Confucian practice to guarantee the legitimate engagement of the Confucian elites as the ultimate mediators between state/court and people in taking the moral, political and cultural leadership. Borrowing the statement of Cheng I, Zhu Xi reinforced the vision of a moral utopia, where politics and cultures are inseparable and a harmonious hierarchy between the rulers and the ruled is restored.<sup>9</sup> But, the learning of the Way (道 K. *to:C. tao*), or the Path of Principle, was made separate from the political entity after the fall of the sage-rulership in the Antiquity. Subsequently, the responsibility for holding the Way was deemed as belonging to the Confucian elites themselves rather than the dynastic government left oftentimes in the hands of the improper rulers or hegemon far from the image of the sage-rulers. The reconstruction of Timeless Order and Civilization relied on the initiative of the true Confucian elites capable of handling together political and cultural values so as to secure Principle.<sup>10</sup> The negative evaluation on the post-Antiquity era granted Zhu Xi a definite and restorative sense of mission to think beyond the dynastic vicissitude, and to create the ground for practical interposition between court and people on the one hand, and between civilization and politics on the other.<sup>11</sup> Likewise, the universal movement of Principle and the performance of the Confucian practice ushered Zhu Xi to envisage elite activism in a universal language, and to conceptualize ways of legitimizing their privileged mode of leadership before the other agents.

In the meantime, within the theme of the universal working of Principle, they explored anew the movement of the all-pervasive Principle both in transcendence and immanence.<sup>12</sup> The notion of transcendence offered an integrative framework able to discharge human agencies from their self-centered position. For instance, Hoyt Tillman indicates how Zhu Xi’s re-conceptualization of heaven as the main source of authority was ultimately set for the enhancement of Confucian principles.<sup>13</sup> Zhu Xi maximized the use of transcendence as the indispensable vehicle to integrate diverse values, virtues, and worldviews into normative conformity and constancy directly tied to the order of a Confucian polity. In this aspect, exploring the feature of inward transcendence, Hao Chang

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<sup>9</sup> “周公之沒 聖人之道 不行 孟軻死 聖人之學 不傳 道不行 百世 無善治 學不傳 千載 無真儒 無善治 士猶得以明夫善治之道 以淑諸人 以傳諸後 無真儒 則天下 貿貿焉 莫如所之人 欲肆而天理滅矣 先生 生乎千四百年之後 得不傳之學於遺經 以興起斯文 爲己任 辨異端 闢邪說 使聖人之道 煥然復明於世 蓋自孟子之後 一人而已” Book of Mencius, Chapter 13, Vol 6, p. 459.

<sup>10</sup> Julia Ching gives us a glimpse of the independent attitude of Zhu Xi behaving himself as a moral teacher of the Way. Julia Ching, “Truth and Ideology,” pp. 371-388.

<sup>11</sup> Apropos of eremitism, see Tu Wei-ming, *Way, Learning, and Politics: Essays on the Confucian Intellectual*, pp. 57-92; Tom Fisher, *Loyalist Alternatives in the Early Qing*, Harvard Journal of Asian Studies, Vol. 44, No. 1 (Jun., 1984), pp. 83-122.

<sup>12</sup> Julia Ching *Truth and Ideology: The Confucian Way (Tao) and its Transmission (Tao-T’ung)*; Song Young-bae, “Countering Sinocentrism in Eighteenth-Century Korea: Hong Tae-Yong’s Vision of “Relativism” and Iconoclasm for Reform,” *Philosophy East and West* 49.3: 278-297 (1999).

<sup>13</sup> Hoyt Cleveland Tillman, “Consciousness of Tien in Chu Hsi’s Thought,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 47.1: 31-50 (Jun., 1987).

adequately observes that the surpassing mode of inner unity to encompass humans and heaven in a selfless whole had been compromised with the political reality that justified a universal naturalness of human relations as given in a proper hierarchy.<sup>14</sup> Cheng-Zhu scholarship also paid fresh attention to the concept of immanence as another facet of the Confucian universality since they believed it to ‘condition and be expressed in the patterns of change and emerging order which comprise the world.’<sup>15</sup> The immanence of Principle presented a ground of exposition on multiplicity, immediacy, and contingency, all of which could specify the practical application/adaptation of Principle in this world. Finally, holding to the universal nature in transcendence and immanence helped theoretize a coherent and complementary structure with which they furnished the operational mode of Principle, characterized as 'diversity in unity' (理一分殊), in the Confucian practice.

Lastly, we should not dismiss a process of transvaluation in the Cheng-Zhu reconstruction of the Confucian practice. That is, behind the grand motto of consummating inner-being/self-cultivation and outer world/statecraft, and embodying Principle in this world, what the scholarship would practically achieve was to register their subjective worth, virtue, and worldview in the larger domain of state, and to countermand the different voices potentially veering away from the Confucian regime of thoughts.<sup>16</sup>

## 2. *Sa* Elites and Chosôn Confucianism

From the fifteenth century, the Confucian literati took vigorous part in placing the Confucian agenda into their society, and demonstrated the sociopolitical materiality of Confucianism for the ideological consolidation of their socio-economic, political, and cultural privilege and prestige.<sup>17</sup> Among them, the political reform group (*sarim*) in the late sixteenth century, reorganized under the banners of Yi Hwang (T'oegye, 1501-1571) and Yi I (Yulgok, 1536-1584), successfully occupied the political center.<sup>18</sup>

This group expounded the profound cosmological account of Neo-Confucianism that systematically and comprehensively consummated the proper sequence of kinship, status system, and statecraft. Their reformulation of Chosôn Confucianism was indispensable to solidifying more objectively and sublimely the privileged mode of existence of the *Sa* literati to the end of late Chosôn. The moral definition of power relations in Timeless Order

<sup>14</sup> Hao Chang, “Confucian Cosmological Myth and Neo-Confucian Transcendence,” in Richard J. Smith and D. W. Y. Kwok, eds., *Cosmology, Ontology, and Human Efficacy: Essays in Chinese Thought* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993), pp. 11-33.

<sup>15</sup> See Kirill O. Thompson, “Li and Yi as Immanent: Chu Hsi’s Thought in Practical Perspective,” *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (Jan., 1988), 30-46.

<sup>16</sup> “True subjectivity, as the genuine will beyond the restriction of self desires, is not simply a state of being but also a transformative activity.... The authentic way of making oneself whole is, therefore, not simply to search for that which is uniquely one’s own but to acquire a taste for the quality that is uniquely human – ultimate self-transformation as a communal act” Tu Wei-ming, *Way, Learning, and Politics: Essays on the Confucian Intellectual*, p. 116. Here, I would like to take Tu’s philosophical interconnection between subjectivity and collectivity up to the field of discursive practice tied to power relations.

<sup>17</sup> Martina Deuchler, *The Confucian Transformation of Korea*, Harvard University Press, 1992. Deuchler highlights the significance of the Confucian transformation in terms of the hegemonic project of the Confucian literati.

<sup>18</sup> Yi Pyônghyu and Chông Manjo’ studies illuminate the structural condition in which the intellectual reformulation of their next generation, guided after Yi Hwang and Yi I, had been further compounded beyond metaphysical exposition to political engagement by the mid sixteenth century. Yi Pyônghyu, *Chosônjôn’gi ûi kihosalimp’a yôn’gu* [Studies on the Salim Group in the Kyônggi and Ch’ungch’ông Provinces in Early Chosôn] (Seoul: Iljogak, 1984); Chông Manjo, “Chosônsideae Yong’injijyôk sajok ûi tonghyang” [The Movement of *Sa* Elites in Yong’in Area in the Chosôn Period], *Theses of Korean Studies* 19: 73-125 (1997).

was fully upheld in this world as the universal designation of Principle that they equated with the traditional status system of Chosôn. And, the high level of being civilized in the Confucian sense, as Haboush and Deuchler enunciate, was the cardinal way of rendering both geopolitical stability and cultural dignity vis-à-vis China in the Sino-centric world system.<sup>19</sup> Civilization was effectively employed as the practice of cultural engagement to legitimize their subliminal role in guiding the rest of society into a civilized world outside of China proper, by which means they could nourish their unique identity running between the competent image of metropolitan intellectuals and the special persona of the Chosôn elites. In light of this, again, I contend that the attachment of the Chosôn *sa* elites to Principle and the use of the Confucian practice were enmeshed with power relations across geopolitics and domestic order alike.

Historically, the power structure that they reconstructed had survived the Hideyoshi invasions (1592-9) and the Manchu invasions (1627 and 1636), and continued into late Chosôn. One remarkable changing attitude of the central power was to take the active lead in more effectively rationalizing and reforming a wide scale of the dynastic policies. The conventional mechanism of managing human resources and material resources on the same scale was considerably modified. It meant that public service assignments and occupational categories were necessarily the sole factor to ordain social status in hierarchy no longer; social status and social differentiation encountered a growing gap between themselves.<sup>20</sup> Also, among the *sa* elites power struggle at the political center and the marginalization of the local elements were aggravated. The size of their kinship organization had been gradually reduced to the patrilineal branches, and multiplied into numerous sub-lineage groups in difference.<sup>21</sup>

Nonetheless, the dynastic change did not occur as in the case of the fall of Ming China in 1646 and the advent of Tokugawa Japan in 1600. Nor did the coup of Injo (r. 1623-49) in 1623, supported by some of the new literati group, overrule the existent principle of pro-Ming policy at the face of the Qing's ascendancy.<sup>22</sup> It is advisable to attend to the fact that the pattern of dominance of the *sa* elites, grounded on kinship, state power, and education, continued to structure the route and mode of their Confucian engagement till the end of the Chosôn dynasty.<sup>23</sup> For them, state apparatus signified a middle ground geared toward dynastic security, social order, and egalitarianism in a reciprocal form of unity whereas kinship retained a private corporate, intellectual/cultural diversity, political line in a variant form of diversity. Academically, they had equipped themselves to be competitive discourse players, distinguishing their scholarly mastery from

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<sup>19</sup> See Haboush, "Constructing the Center: The Ritual Controversy and the Search for a New Identity in Seventeenth-Century Korea," in JaHyun Kim Haboush and Martina Deuchler, eds., *Culture and the State in Late Chosôn Korea* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 67-71; Yi Kyonggu, "Literary/Artistic Activities and Discourse on Civilization of Kim Sanghôn Family from Andong Clan," [Changdong Kimmum ûi munmul suyongron kwa munye hwaldong] *Han'guk hakppo* 112, pp. 138-167.

<sup>20</sup> Chông Chinyông, *Quarterly Review of Korean History* No. 48, June 2003, pp. 53-80.

<sup>21</sup> Mutsuhiko Shima, "In Quest of Social Recognition: A Retrospective View on The Development of Korean Lineage Organization," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 1 (Jun, 1990), pp. 87-129.

<sup>22</sup> Haboushi informs us of the lasting memory of late Ming China and its ideological implication in late Chosôn even after the state acknowledged the might of Qing China in geopolitics. See JaHyun Kim Haboushi, "Contesting Chinese Time, Nationalizing Temporal Space: Temporal Inscription in Late Chosôn Korea," in Lynn A. Struve, eds., *Time, Temporality, and Imperial Transition: East Asia from Ming to Qing*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005), pp. 115-141.

<sup>23</sup> Hwang Kyung Moon, *Beyond birth: social status in the emergence of modern Korea* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 2004).

one another by way of displaying solid academic dedication to Confucianism, creative modes of textual analysis, upgraded versions of commentaries on the classics, and thematic expansion applicable to a wider range of disciplines. Given this context, one of the main topics in the intellectual community of late Chosôn was to articulate a meta-narrative theme of sameness and difference.

At this juncture, the literati expounded the Cheng-Zhu scholarship that fathomed the overarching mechanism of the Confucian universal by focusing on the unity of Principle (*i* or *li*, C. *li*) and the diversity of Differences--‘diversity in unity.’ They noticed that this binary facet of Principle was able to embellish both a metaphor of sameness inclusive of assimilation, association, and discipline, and a metaphor of difference inclusive of dissimilation, dissociation, and individuality in the transcendental nature of Principle. The ideological appropriation of the universality of Principle had a practical significance to command their higher vantage point vis-à-vis non-literati groups, imperial China, and even the other vying groups of the elites themselves in late Chosôn. The comprehensive regime of thoughts furnished a meta-narrative ground to keep the other agencies from uniting against the elite group while objectifying their hegemonic ideology and sharing it with the others in a universal language. Consequently, the existence of the Confucian universal symbolically came to mean the omnipresence of their dominance over late Chosôn. Especially, the advanced groups at the political center took up more seriously Cheng-Zhu learning’s articulation of Principle in terms of diversity and unity. What they rediscovered is a metalanguage conceptualizing a co-existence of sameness and difference for the theoretical furtherance of the practical negotiation between 1) state integration and status differentiation, 2) political association and dissociation, and 3) assimilation and dissimilation in cultural policy.

Besides, even though recognizing the Cheng Yi (程頤) and Zhu Xi (朱熹) line as legitimate in digesting Confucianism, nevertheless, the power elites also had a still wider extent of conceptual consumption in refined defense of Cheng-Zhu scholarship. Shao Yong (1012-1077) and Zhang Zai (1020-1077) in Northern Song China, and Lao Qinshun (1465-1547) in Ming China were considerably influential.<sup>24</sup> Such figures as Lao Zi, Zhuang Zi, Guan Zi and Lei Zi from the Hundred Schools (諸子百家) in the other intellectual tradition were selectively and creatively inscribed in the Cheng-Zhu language so as to extrapolate their own definition of Confucian practice in Chosôn. For instance, the eminent scholar-official Hong Sôkju (1774-1842)’s openness to Lao Zi is another example where the other intellectual components were blended with and wrapped up the Cheng-Zhu line, and the discursive equipment became consistent and complete.<sup>25</sup> Hong juxtaposed and identified the transcendental view of Lao Zi’s Way (道), or the Path of the Principle, with the concept of infinitude in Confucianism, such as the Great Ultimate. The effort to make a connection between Lao Zi’s interpretation of the Way and the Confucian version of the Way empowered Hong to delve into the metaphysical elaboration of the working of *li* in the world unseen, and to confirm the premise, which Yulgok stressed, that Principle stands

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<sup>24</sup> Cho Sôngsan, Cho Sôngsan, *Chosôn hugi nangnongyehakp’ung ûi hyôngsông kwa kôngseron yôn’gu* [The Formation of the Nak School (洛論) in the Late Chosôn Dynasty] (Ph. D. diss., Korea University, Seoul, 2003).

<sup>25</sup> See Cho Minhwan, “The Study on the Hong Suk-Ju’s 『The Correct Misunderstanding about Lao-Tzu』 ” *The Journal of Korean Studies* (Seoul: Hanyang Univ.), Vol. 37 (2003), pp. 85-106. Hong’s P’ungsan clan produced such noted politicians and scholar-officials of the Westerners and the Old Disciples as Hong Isang (1549-1615), Hong Chuwôn (1606-72), Hong Sanghan (1701-69), Hong Ponghan (1713-1778), Hong Inhan (1722-76), Hong Naksông (1718-98), and Hong Naggim (1741-1801).

unchangeable both in the natural world and the social realm.<sup>26</sup> In content, I believe that what was reinforced is the natural rationale for the Confucian norms, predicated on the hierarchical relations of human agents and functioning as the underpinning of the status system of late Chosôn, in an all-encompassing and coherent aspect. By so doing, Hong's final objective was to re-inscribe practicality and plainness of the Zhu Xi's scholarship in Lao Zi, and to demonstrate the distinctive quality of his own knowledge as opposed to those infatuated with the unduly detailed side issues in Zhu Xi's.<sup>27</sup>

At this point, we can raise a critical question. What was the symbolic meaning of China in this intellectual project of materializing and accommodating the Confucian universal to late Chosôn? More careful observation regarding the motif of the *sa* elites and their strategic adaptation enables us to chart a historical dimension of the Confucian practice in the combination of politics and culture outside of China. Instead of the conventional thesis centering on the dichotomy between universalism of China and nativism of non-China, this approach will explore anew the conceptual and cultural interaction between China and Korea in the pre-modern period.

### III. Re-patterning China in the Confucian Universal

#### 1. The Late Ming and Beyond

The demise of Ming China, which used to be the foremost authority of the Confucian civilization in the Sino-centric world system, became an integral motivation for the state and the literati of late Chosôn to promote the uniqueness of its own civilization as opposed to the Manchu-dominated Qing.<sup>28</sup> However, what should not go unnoticed is the fact that the recollection of the Antiquity in Confucian civilization was related to the matter of internal security rather than merely being an act of toadyism before the erstwhile Chinese dynasty.

Yi Chô, one of the descendents of the late Ming Liadong military governor Li Chengliang, went to Qing China as a diplomatic attendant and obtained Li Chengliang's portrait from Yi's other relatives in Qing China.<sup>29</sup> Yôngjo (r. 1720-1776) instructed Yi to support civilized manners and, as a practical measure, to keep royalty for the Chosôn court. During the reign of the Crown Chôngjo, the offspring of Confucius in Qing China met the delegation of Chosôn in person. They presented the portrait and original genealogy of Confucius for their relatives living in Chosôn.<sup>30</sup> Interestingly, the royal diction informs us that the genealogy of the late Ming general Li Rusong (?-1598), one of the Liadong commander Li Chengling's sons, was already published in late Chosôn, again, with the

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<sup>26</sup> 道一而已矣 萬物莫能與對 故曰獨立 古往來今 皆是道也 故曰不改 無乎不在 無所不包...”p. 94; “夫自然之道，當行之亦道，是二者，未始有二道也” Cited from Cho Minhwan p. 89.

<sup>27</sup> Kim Hanmok, *Minhok munhwa* 23, pp. 205-30. Hong's critique of the contemporary scholars needs to be further explored in the context of power relations Hong's P'ungsan clan experienced in central politics throughout late Chosôn.

<sup>28</sup> JaHyun Kim Haboush, “Constructing the Center: The Ritual Controversy and the Search for a New Identity in Seventeenth-Century Korea,” in JaHyun Kim Haboush and Martina Deuchler, eds., *Culture and the State in Late Chosôn Korea* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 67-72.

<sup>29</sup> “有李著者 李寧遠伯李成樑之後 隨使臣入彼中 得寧遠伯畫像而來 上聞之 命持入觀之曰 其貌似謹慎吉人也... 上曰 今見畫像 心焉多感 寧遠伯子孫之在彼者 衣冠殊制 而爾等不改 乃祖之衣服 須念爾祖 毋墮先業 以事國家也” *Ibid.* 53:22b9-12.

<sup>30</sup> “昨年使行之入燕也 孔聖後裔 委訪我人 面傳聖人遺像 使之歸奉國中 尤豈非愧甚處乎 東來者 卽孔紹也 紹之持來世譜 雖有我國印本 其在慎重之道 不可不更求系譜 眞本於曲阜之孔族 然後自芸閣印頒 實合事面 今行書狀官 以堂下閣臣中差送 李提督系譜 猶且誠心搜訪 中原人聞而感之 齎送一本 至有建祀藏譜之舉 況聖人系派乎” *Chôngjo silrok* 35:47b4-8.

help of some Chinese contemporaries in Qing China. What I find here is that the different layers of China-- the nostalgic entity of Ming China, the ethno-cultural Han Chinese component, and the geopolitical reality of Qing China-- were carved out together. The Chosôn state separated the previous two categories from the last one, placed them in the cultural realm of the Confucian civilization, and left the latter intact. Then, being a player of division and recombination, the Chosôn state elevated its own position to the level that it diversified China from its vantage point.

For another instance, in a gathering of the crown prince, the officials from the Office of Special Advisers, and the selected number of the posterity of the Ming imperial subjects, Yôngjo ordered them to recite *feifeng* and *xiaquan* in Songs Classic (詩經).<sup>31</sup> These two chapters deliver the fervent recollection of the Zhou dynasty in the end of the Three Dynasties and at the zenith of the Great Antiquity. Both of them had been repeatedly cited by the monarchs and the elites in late Chosôn. Recalling the Hideyoshi invasions (1592-9) that broke out two and half centuries ago, Sunjo (r. 1800- 1834) exhibited the rueful sentiment of *feifeng* and *xiaquan* in gratitude for the imperial grace that made possible the reconstruction of Chosôn (皇朝再造之恩), specifically the relief army of Ming China. However, Sunjo also paid a sincere remembrance to the royal subjects in Chosôn who sacrificed their lives during the warfare. He acknowledged their price of royalty for the court and confirmed the unforgettable value of the stability preserved in late Chosôn.<sup>32</sup> That is to say, the rhetoric of civilization, classicism, and China was still more intertwined with the sociopolitical structure of late Chosôn.

Accordingly, as noted above, the focal point of the cultural project including the Han-Chinese refugee policy in late Chosôn was not simply to remind themselves of the splendor of the Antiquity in Sino-centrism but to propagate the spirit of these programs into the rest of society for the sake of social order and national unity.<sup>33</sup> In order to do so, the court and the *sa* elites maximized the significance of the Confucian universal and the Confucian practice in such an effective way to distinguish culture and politics and to reunite them in the distinctive civilization of Chosôn (*Sojunghwa* 小中華). Ultimately, by so doing, the cultural enterprise symbolized a deep commitment to the Confucian civilization, bolstered their mission statement of a civilized Chosôn in domestic order, and offered a ground of catharsis for their inferiority to Qing China in geopolitical power.

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<sup>31</sup> “上詣敬奉閣 王世孫隨詣 上 展拜後 命皇朝人子孫入侍 仍御玉署 誦匪風下泉二章 仍命儒臣讀奏 又命世孫讀奏 又命春坊讀奏” *Yôngjo silrok* 122:7a14-b1. Here, Oksô (玉署) means Office of Special Advisers (*Hongmungwan* 弘文館) that formed the exceptional echelon of the central officials until the end of late Chosôn.

<sup>32</sup> “教曰 當今年追念 皇朝再造之恩 天高地厚 報答無所 風泉之感 於何可憑 宣武祠征東官軍祠遣承旨致侑 平壤武烈祠 一體致侑... 至於本國殉難樹勳諸臣之忠之勞 又豈可忘...” *Sunjo silrok* 27:3b14-4a3.

<sup>33</sup> In his study of the cultural interaction between Chinese and Japanese intellectuals in the late nineteenth century, Howland tends to stress the geopolitical dynamics in understanding the meaning of Civilization. D.R. Howland, *Borders of Chinese Civilization: Geography and History at Empire's End* (Durhan: Duke University Press, 1996). Moreover, the Order, the core content of the Civilization, is conceived in terms of the world system, specifically the sinocentric system in pre-modern East Asia. I believe that is why Howland uses Civilization almost interchangeably with Chinese Civilization before the introduction of the West-originated version of Civilization. In the case of late Chosôn, as noted above, the matter of civilization involved domestic order and geopolitics alike. Furthermore, the elites, vigorously envisioning and promoting the project of a civilized Chosôn, firmly grasped the Confucian universal to justify their claim for universality of the Civilization in late Chosôn, which allowed simultaneously their dominance over the rest of society and the international stability under the guidance of imperial China.

## 2. Toward a Chosôn Version of Civilization

From the seventeenth century on, the resettlement and security of the borderline between Chosôn Korea and Qing China remained a sensitive geopolitical and diplomatic issue. The border conflict continued even after the two states established an unmanned buffer zone along the Amnok River (Chin. *Yalu*) after the second Manchu Invasion in 1637.<sup>34</sup>

During the reign of the *Kangxi* (r. 1662-1722) emperor who actively incorporated Manchuria as a consecrated land of their origin, Qing China asked Chosôn for a re-drawing of the border, and the two states set a new borderline in 1712. In response, the Chosôn state also continued to cull and analyze the information on the various matters of the Qing state.<sup>35</sup> Ideologically, as Pamela Crossely and Mark Elliott point out, the Qing court propagated the various cultural projects to re-write the history, ethnicity, language, and culture of Manchuria from their perspective and to reconstruct Manchu identity within the empire.<sup>36</sup> It published such crucial academic works as *Manzhou yuanliu kao* [Researches of Manchu Origins], *Manzhou shizu daquan* [Complete Book of Manchu Lineages], *Baqi tongzhi chujì* [Comprehensive History of the Eight Banners], and *Manzhou jishen jitian dianli* [Manchu Rites for Sacrifices to the Spirits and to Heaven]. Historical entities long presumed as belonging to the history of Chosôn across southwestern Manchuria would be in danger of subjugation to the history of Qing China.<sup>37</sup> The ancient history of Chosôn, located at southwestern Manchuria and northeastern Korea, encountered a serious challenge from Qing China's resurrection of Manchu history. It seems that for the state and the elites at the political center, it was hard to take any official measure against the new strategy of the Qing court in historical and cultural representation, which might aggravate the latent conflict of the national border. Alternatively, the marginalized intellectuals, most of whom came from the Southerners (*namin* 南人) and the Young Disciples (*oron* 小論), were in a

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<sup>34</sup> Bae Usông examines the various discussions of the elites at the court and the measure of the state, whose topic included the military strategies of total war and limited warfare, the development of cartography, the mobilization of information agencies on Mongols and Manchuria, and the expected route of Qing's retreat in an emergency. Bae Usông, *Chosôn hugi ch'ôn hagwan kwa kuktt'okwan ûi pyônhwa* [Changing Conceptions of National Territory and Worldview in Late Chosôn] (Seoul: Iljisa, 1998). For more reference to the issue of the borderline in late Chosôn, see Yang Taejin, *Han'guk Chôpgyôngsa Kaegwan* [Introduction to the History of Korean Borders] (Seoul, Pôpgyông Ch'ulp'ansa, 1989), pp. 19-21.

<sup>35</sup> “召見回還書狀官李翊模 上謂翊模曰 古人出疆 覘國之術 所見何如 翊模曰 所聞未必皆信 而近有兵憂 湖南曰苗 湖北曰匪 苗已討平 而匪則聚散無常 且蒙古在皇城者 與滿人相婚 故不甚驚 而其在邊鄙者 桀然難制 此爲將來之憂矣 上曰 新皇帝登極後 人心之嚮背如何 翊模曰 人心則洽然 而太上皇老多忌諱 亦日之頒布者 書嘉慶 宮中進用者 書乾隆 通寶之印出也 乾隆居七” *Chôngjo silrok* 46:26b5-10. As above, one of the three envoys Yi Ingmo (李翊模 1747-1812)'s reports before the court in 1797 informed the rebellious movement of some minorities, the relationship between Qing China and Mongols, and the inner-politics of the imperial court. More details on the diplomatic accounts of Qing China were stored in the Copied Records of Border Defense Command (*Pibyónsa dúngnok* 備邊司謄錄).

<sup>36</sup> For more reference, see Pamela K. Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror: History and Identity In Qing Imperial Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Mark C. Elliott, *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners And Ethnic Identity In Late Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001).

<sup>37</sup> Schmid also examines some of the eminent historians from the Southerners and the Young Disciples in the period, and underlines the impact that their scholarship made on the intellectual understanding of border and territory in early modern Korea. See Andre Schmid, “Looking North toward Manchuria,” *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 99.1: 219-240 (2000).

freer situation to address the historical and geographic issues of ancient history in their private scholarship.

Besides, Crossley scrutinizes the imperial claim of Qing China for universality and the reconstruction of its historical memories, which indicates the ongoing reinvention of universality.<sup>38</sup> From a different angle, Chow Kai-wing describes the manner in which the Han-Chinese elites turned the universality of the Confucian civilization, particularly in their ardent faith in the Great Antiquity of Three Dynasties and the Classics, into their cultural project in order to bear the barbarian regime and restore their hegemonic voice for social order.<sup>39</sup> In the case of late Chosôn, the theoretical exposition on the transcendental presence of the Confucian universal became indispensable to assuaging their adverse and disagreeable situation of geopolitics from a transcendental perspective. Sukjong (r. 1674-1720) uttered inexplicable subtleties to perceive the worldly operation of the Principle when the barbarian Qing occupied the Center of Civilization for fifty years without a major sign of disintegration.<sup>40</sup> Compared to other barbarian dynasties in China, Qing was lasting longer than expected. The monarch remarked that the Heavenly Principle is truly inscrutable beyond speculation (天理實難推知也). The statement connoted his complex state of mind vacillating between the practical acceptance of Qing's power and the psychological resistance against it. In response, the attendants on duty exhorted the crown to pay more attention to nurturing the royal mind-and-heart so as to move beyond the ignoble and indignant situation at present. Virtually, they consented with the royal attitude of internalizing the geopolitical subservience to Qing China. Nevertheless, the royal faith in the continuous work of the Principle also exuded a sense of hope for a constructive future in which the progeny of the late Ming China would arise and construct a new Han-Chinese dynasty at the center of the Confucian civilization.

This episode snapshots how late Chosôn effectively took advantage of the significance of the Confucian universal by couching the contemporary Qing in terms of politics and the erstwhile Ming in the cultural vein. Namely, I contend that vouchsafing the omnipresence of Principle enabled the state and the elites were able to de-essentialize imperial China and partitioned it into different sectors while equally reconstructing the distinctive cultural heritage of their own and the autonomous polity in a self-referential form. This move empowered them to fashion a creative ground of their flexible positioning between various elements of China.

For example, the Southerner Kim Sôngt'ak (1648-1747) deployed the geopolitical and cultural categories of China to overview the great rulers from Han China and T'ang China, and their government.<sup>41</sup> The lack of the imperial zeal and effort to dedicate themselves to self-cultivation and moral suasion made the dynasties compromise with the ostensible advantage of the utilitarianist/legalist policies. Self-cultivation and moral suasion, Kim asserted, were the key to executing the Confucian civilization in the ideal performance of the sage-rulers who brought politics and culture together to completion. To

<sup>38</sup> Pamela K. Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology*, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1999).

<sup>39</sup> Chow Kai-wing, *The Rise of Confucian Ritualism in Late Imperial China: Ethics, Classics, and Lineage Discourse* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994).

<sup>40</sup> “上曰 自古匈奴之入處中華者 皆不能久長 而今此清虜 據中國已過五十年 天理實難推知也 大明積德源厚 其子孫必有中興之慶 且神宗皇帝於我國 有百世不忘之恩 而抱於強弱之勢 拘羞忍過 以至於今 痛恨可勝言哉 侍讀官姜錕與典經宋疇錫對曰 聖教惻怛 可泣神明 若常存此心而勿矣 益盡修攘之道 則國勢自強 而亦有可爲之日矣” *Sukjong silrok* 17:55b3-7.

<sup>41</sup> “臣竊觀漢唐以來所謂英君誼辟莫不欲云云 而其於修己治人之道 發政制事之方 率不能以真實之心 加真實之功 而不免爲流俗功利之說所擾奪 故上下數千年間 終未見有追蹤三五之盛軌者 豈不惜哉” *Chesanjip* [Collected Works of Kim Sôngt'ak] 3:6b6-10.

observe and judge the political entities of imperial China, Kim drew on the Confucian civilization and the actual working of Principle in this world. The comprehensive standpoint in tune with the Confucian universal furnished a more flexible, if imaginary, space in which Kim was able to go between imperial China and the Confucian civilization from his own point of view. Chôngjo (r. 1776-1800) pinpointed the imbalance of Song governance (960-1279) between the civil and the martial by referring to the Antiquity, which heightened his own authority to access the Confucian civilization.<sup>42</sup> Then, despite the critical comments on the governance of Song China, the monarch moved on to discuss the trajectory of Song Confucianism. Within the theme of the Confucian universal and civilization, the crown made a clear distinction between a geopolitical reality of China and a cultural definition of China. In the process, dividing China into culture and politics landed the king himself in a high position to bear the subliminal image of a civilized Chosôn to the neglect of the domineering power of Qing China at present.

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<sup>42</sup> “上曰 宋朝爲治 專尙文教 武克之不振 最於歷代 根本虛耗 夷狄侵擾 畢景高擔闕涉 無賴於扶顛持危 此後世之所當鑑戒者也 大抵文武并用 自古爲難 互相輪贏 亦理之常 何以則主之寬大敦朴 濟之以發強剛毅 文而不至於委靡 武而不至於窮黷也 夫禮樂之餘而不廢乎射御 農桑之際而不忘乎蒐狩 韎韁韜鞬之中 而亦習詩書禮樂之文 從容揖遜之間 而亦熟座作進退之節 此古聖王兩在不測之神化也 予雖不德 乃所願則在此 將何術以致之 諸臣咸作而對曰 我殿下有是志矣 志之不懈 事苟有不從者乎 臣等庸淺 誠不足以對揚 上 因繼論濂洛淵源”  
*Chôngjo silrok* 15:67b14-68a6.