ACTA KORANA
VOL. 20, NO. 1, JUNE 2017: 315–342

BOOK REVIEWS

Burnt by the Sun: The Koreans of the Russian Far East. By Jon K. Chang. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2016. 286 pp. (ISBN: 9780824856786)

The topic of Jon K. Chang's book—the history of the ca. half-million-strong diasporic Korean community in Tsarist Russia, the Soviet Union and its successor states—is definitely under-researched in the Anglophone scholarly world. Some of the few existing monographs on this issue prominently include the late Prof. Ko Songmu's (Helsinki University) important 1987 work,[1] which, however, is heavily outdated. Otherwise, an Anglophone researcher devoid of command of either Russian or Korean will be limited to a handful of articles, most of which, but not all, are featured in Jon K. Chang's bibliography.[2] One reason for such a paucity of research in English is plainly obvious—a research undertaking related to Russian/Soviet Koreans presupposes working knowledge of Russian in addition to a degree of knowledge on Korean and wider East Asian history. In the heavily compartmentalized academic world of our days, where Russian, Soviet or Slavonic studies often lie far apart from East Asian research, such a combination, unfortunately, is a rarity. Thus, Russian/Soviet Korean studies tend to globally remain a preserve of Russian and Central Asian researchers, mainly of Korean ethnicity themselves, joined by some of their South Korean and Japanese colleagues. With some exceptions, most of their scholarship is published in Russian, Korean or Japanese, which limits its accessibility to non-experts outside of the researchers' own linguistic communities. In this way, Jon K. Chang's monograph may well be characterized as being pioneering in the Anglophone academic tradition. It aims at creating a comprehensive historical account of the Russian/Soviet Korean minority, mainly, but not exclusively, for the period between the 1860s and 1940s, based equally on written and oral historical sources, including archival documents to which previous researchers, including Ko Songmu, had no access (see the list on p.251). Jon K. Chang's monograph is an inspiring example of interdisciplinary scholarship, as it bridges the gap between studies on the Korean diaspora—supposedly a part of the East Asian studies field—and research on Soviet and Russian history in general, as well as the history of the worldwide socialist movement and its relation to the vexing and insolvable "national question."

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[1] Kho Songmoo [Ko Songmu], *Koreans in Soviet Central Asia.* Studia Orientalia, 61 (Helsinki: Finnish Oriental Society, 1987).

[2] For example, this important article by Ross King is omitted, although Jon K. Chang's research directly deals with its subject matter: "Blagoslovennoe: Korean Village on the Amur, 1897–1937." *The Review of Korean Studies* 4.2 (2001): 133–176.

Jon K. Chang's monograph is structured in the traditional chronological way—undoubtedly, a reader-friendly narrative construction, especially for these readers whose cognizance of Russian/Soviet Korean history is limited. The Introduction is followed by Chapter Two (pp. 9–33), which describes the emergence of the Russian-Korean community in the RFE (Russian Far East) in the 1860–80s and its growth, as well as Russian authorities' policies towards Russia's Koreans until 1917. Chapter Three (pp. 33–52) is devoted to the Entente Allied powers' intervention in the RFE in 1918–22, which cemented the pro-Bolshevik allegiance of the majority of Russian Koreans—after all, the central force of the intervention was an army of more than one hundred thousand Japanese troops, who tended to be especially brutal vis-à-vis the RFE's Korean population. Chapter Four (pp. 52–80) deals with the post-intervention Soviet-Korean history of the 1920s, marked by increasing political integration of the RFE Koreans (the majority of them acquired Soviet citizenship by the end of the decade) as well as the legacy of unresolved socio-economic issues (a solid portion of rural RFE Koreans was landless and were reduced to permanent tenants' status). Chapter Five (pp. 80–112) summarizes the Soviet-Korean history of the mid- and late 1920s, the *korenizatsiya* ("indigenization") campaign of minority empowerment being contrasted with the Soviet authorities' lingering geopolitical suspicions towards the RFE's diasporic minorities. Chapter Six (pp. 112–51) essentially dwells on the same issue based on the materials of the 1930s, dealing with the Korean history in the RFE until the fateful year of the forced deportation of Koreans to Central Asia in 1937. While the Korean community's Sovietization proceeded quickly, the period also saw an even more powerful re-emergence of the security concerns around RFE Koreans, as Japan's de facto colonization of adjacent Manchuria (North-Eastern China) was deemed a direct threat to the Soviet borders and Tsarist-period suspicions of Koreans appeared again, now couched in the rhetorical decorum of the Stalinist "foreign espionage" paranoia. Chapter Seven (pp. 151–79) describes in all the excruciating details the events of the Koreans' deportation in 1937—chronologically the earliest of ca. twenty ethnic minorities' deportations in Stalinist USSR's history. As Jon K. Chang demonstrates, it was also in many ways unique: Koreans, while formally Soviet citizens, were deemed foreign enough to even be allowed a choice of leaving the USSR for good (for either Japan's puppet state of Manchukuo or colonized Korea) instead of being forcibly deported to Central Asia. No other deported minority was ever given options of this kind (pp. 153–5). Finally, Chapter Eight (180–6), followed by the Conclusion (186–97), relays to the reader some extremely interesting materials from Jon K. Chang's field interviews—harrowing stories of state violence, but also heart-warming accounts of minorities' solidarity and mutual compassion in the meeting with state oppression.

How the tragedies of the sort which the 1937 deportation represents—forcible removal of an "unreliable" ethnic group combined with the brutal eradication of its intelligentsia (ca. 2500 Koreans were executed before, during and after the year 1937, most of them educated and socially or politically active, p. 159) and thorough destruction of its culture—were possible in a supposedly "socialist" state which, at least on the surface, subscribed to the progressive belief in universal human equality? The tragedy looks even more incomprehensible if put against the generally very good early Soviet record of minority empowerment (*korenizatsiya* represented indeed a sort of affirmative action even before this term was coined in the USA in the early 1960s)—the record which made it possible for some historians to refer to the Soviet Union of the 1920–30s as an "affirmative action empire".[3] As Jon K. Chang demonstrates in his book, Soviet Koreans were among the beneficiaries of early Soviet efforts to create and develop minorities' national cultures with "socialist content": by 1935, there were nine Korean-language newspapers and six journals for the mostly rural, ca. two-hundred-thousand-strong Korean population of the RFE. Ca. thirteen per cent of all Soviet Koreans were enrolled in primary and secondary schools. Koreans had two pedagogical institutes and thirty-six authors publishing in Korean and Russian (p. 114). Indeed, the pre-deportation Korean community in the RFE enjoyed standards of cultural life that were obviously superior compared to those on the other side of the Soviet-Korean border, in their colonized homeland. Against this backdrop, the 1937 deportation appears very much unexpected, a brutal interruption of an otherwise very successful story of a minority benefitting from the Soviet version of modernity.

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[3] Terry Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939.* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001).

The answer Jon K. Chang offers to the questions regarding the origins of the 1937 deportation atrocity is that Soviet "socialism" never managed to completely change the primordealist, nativist views on "Russian-ness" that the Soviet apparatus inherited from its Tsarist predecessors (pp. 5, 174–9, 186–195). These continuities manifested themselves in a number of policy suggestions regarding the "undesirable" minorities of the RFE throughout the 1920s–30s, including the infamous 1928 "white paper" on RFE minorities, Koreans included, by Vladimir Arsenyev (1872–1930), a noted geographer, explorer, botanist and popular fiction writer. Defining Koreans as essentially foreign and unassimilable, the report provided a "scientific" foundation for the mass removal of Koreans nine years later, in the atmosphere of increased war hysteria, by the Stalinist bureaucracy which arrogated to itself many more powers during these nine years (pp.103–4). This answer, in effect, constitutes the main argument of the book. This argument, indeed, is not necessarily new. While Jon K. Chang's book does not mention it, the former PhD advisor of the present reviewer, the late Prof. Mikhail Nikolaevich Pak (1918–2009), himself a Soviet-Korean activist whose family was deeply affected by the Stalinist repressions (his father was executed in 1937), already deployed a similar argument in the 1990s.[4] He analysed the underlying reasons for the deportation as a combination of lingering "Russian chauvinistic" attitudes on the part of either the Russian or thoroughly Russified Soviet leadership with their geopolitical concerns in the context of Soviet-Japanese relations.

The "Tsarist continuities" argument, while possessing strong explanatory power, has, however, to be put into context. Of course, after the earlier Soviet attempts to speed up the development of world revolution elsewhere failed and Stalin began the early promotion of his "one-country socialism" ideas in 1924 (p. 96), the USSR essentially started its long drift towards eventually becoming one more nation state in a world of nation states—and, as such, the heir to the Tsarist Russian Empire. This drift, however, was hardly the only content of Soviet history: the impulse of the 1917 revolution was strong enough to force the Stalinist bureaucracy to thoroughly hide its primordealist, nativist leanings. In a country where "Russian chauvinism"—that is, hate speech and discrimination against minorities—was officially a target of "struggle", even if actual prosecutions were rare (p. 62), reports which otherised Koreans as "foreign" and "dangerous" (the "white paper" by Arsenyev, or the Central Control Committee report of 1929, see p. 88) had to be confidential papers for official use only. The language of these reports would strike the majority of the Soviet youth of the 1920s–30s, socialized through Komsomol (Communist Youth Organization) and other Communist mobilizational organization, as strange and unfamiliar. For the Soviet media, after all, Koreans were first and foremost "oppressed people" whose liberation the USSR was to assist. Indeed, the solid allegiance towards the USSR the RFE Koreans developed (pp. 4, 161) works as a proof of a strong universalist, internationalist component in the make-up of the "Soviet people". While the primordealist attitude of the sort Jon K. Chang describes for today's Russia—essentially equating Russian-ness with Slavic ancestry or/and phrenology (p. 187)—certainly does exist, they do not necessarily represent the whole picture. Could a Soviet Korean rock singer with prominently displayed non-Slavic facial features, Victor Tsoi (1962–90), have become a popular culture icon of the late Soviet days if othering of the non-Slavic peoples had not been balanced by a healthy dose of openness and tolerance? In a word, the continuities between the Tsarist and Stalinist bureaucracies' attitudes towards supposed "diasporic threats" are just as real and traceable as the enormous changes the 1917 revolution brought to the country formerly known as the "prison of peoples"—changes which, in fact, are well documented throughout Jon K. Chang's book.

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[4] Mikhail Pak. "O prichinakh nasil'stvennoi deportatsii koreitsev Dal'nego Vostok'a v Srednyuyu Aziyu" (On the Reasons of the Forcible Deportation of the Far Eastern Koreans to Central Asia) in *Dorogoi gor'kikh ispytaniy. K 60-letiyu deportatsii koreitsev Rossii* (Through the Way of Bitter Trials. To the 60th Anniversary of Russian Koreans' Deportation). 12–33 (Moscow: Exlibris Press, 1997).

All in all, the book constitutes a crucially important contribution to the study of Korean diasporas abroad, and to research on early Soviet nationalities policies. It is based on a rich selection of primary and secondary materials (alas, mostly in Russian and English, with practically no sources in Korean or Japanese)[5] and reveals a number of important empirical facts which have never been mentioned previously in English-language publications. However, it has to be noted also that the editorial work on the book was sloppy at best. The number of easily correctible mistakes is puzzlingly high. The USSR was divided into fifteen nation states in 1991, but on p. 2 Chang mentions its division into "more than sixteen different" countries. The mis-spelling of An Chunggŭn's name on p. 28 ("Chung-Gun An") does not conform to any known transliteration standard. The same goes for Korean words like *kunett wigi* (according to the McCune-Reischauer system, it should be *kŭnettwigi*) on p. 121. More seriously, "Tuesday Association" (Hwayohoe) did not have its headquarters in Irkutsk, contrary to the statement on p. 97; it was a Communist organization based in Korea proper. *Hanmun*, contrary to what is stated on p. 116, is not "a Korean script," it is a Koreanized version of literary Chinese. The Russian word *ieroglify* (hieroglyphs) routinely used for

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[5] However, curiously enough, some of the most important secondary works in Russian, such as Boris Pak's foundational monograph, *Koreitsu v Sovetskoi Rossii* (Koreans in Soviet Russia) (Irkutsk: IGPI Publishers, 1995), are omitted from the literature list.

Chinese logographs, is not necessarily "loaded with preconceived bias and the idea of primitiveness", contrary to the (unsourced) statement on p. 118. It rather conjures an image of an ancient, venerable culture, worthy of admiration—if it is Saidian Orientalism of sorts, then of a more positive kind. Manchukuo could not have had "four embassies on Soviet territory" (p. 129) even in theory, as states usually have only one embassy in each of the foreign states they have diplomatic relations with (Manchukuo, in reality, simply had three consulates in the USSR). The mistakes of such kind are too many to list all of them here. It remains to be hoped that this usable and highly important book will re-appear in paperback after a thorough editorial check, for the benefit of both Korean and Soviet history students.

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Numinous Awareness Is Never Dark: The Korean Buddhist Master Chinul's Excerpts on Zen Practice. By Robert E. Buswell, Jr. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2016. 352 pp. (ISBN: 9780824867393)

In *Numinous Awareness Is Never Dark*, Robert Buswell returns to the masterwork of the Korean Sŏn Master Chinul (1158–1210), *Excerpts from the "Dharma Collection and Special Practice Record" with Inserted Personal Notes* (*Pŏpchip pyŏrhaeng non chŏryo pyŏngip sagi*) (hereafter *Excerpts*). Buswell's early work on Chinul, *The Collected Works of Chinul* (University of Hawai'i Press, 1983), was originally executed in the 1970s. This work not only helped contribute to Buswell's well-deserved reputation as one of the most influential Western scholars of East Asian Buddhist traditions, but more importantly it served to expand scholarly awareness of Korea's distinctive Zen tradition in Anglophone academe. In the present volume, Buswell draws upon at least thirty years of teaching, reflection, and scholarship on Chinul's magnum opus.

The book is divided into two principal parts: the translator's introduction (pp. 1–92) and the translation proper (pp. 93–194), with an appendix of the contents of Chinul's *Excerpts* (pp. 195–197), and endnotes (pp. 201–276) comprising the bulk of supplementary material before the bibliography and index (pp. 277–326). Buswell's introduction is a précis of many of the distinctive qualities of *Excerpts*. He explains how *Excerpts* can be shown to function as Chinul's religious autobiography (pp. 7–12). He articulates the struggles scholars have faced in understanding (and translating) the title of this work and its relationship with

Guifeng Zongmi's (780–841) *Dharma Collection and Special Practice Record* (*Faji biexing lu*), which was written originally between 830 and 833 (pp. 12–17). He also lays out Zongmi's and Chinul's assessments of the four Chan/Sŏn schools: the Northern School of Shenxiu (606?–706), the Oxhead School of Farong (594–657), the Hongzhou School of Mazu (709–788), and the Heze School of Shenhui (684–758), in the only section of the book that closely mirrors his 1983 work (pp. 17–30; cf. *The Collected Works of Chinul*, pp. 40–49).

Buswell clearly articulates what is both important and special about Chinul. Chinul's religious life, as articulated in *Excerpts*, portrays a striver after truth seeking and acquiring enlightenment experiences mediated through the study of texts: the *Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch*, Li Tongxuan's (635–730) *Exposition of the New Translation of the Avataṃsakasūtra*, and Dahui Zonggao's (1089–1163) description of *kanhua Chan/kanhwa Sŏn* in his *Letters*. This is all relevant background to understanding Chinul's place in the debates that have defined the Chan/Sŏn/Zen tradition for hundreds of years: the nature of awakening, or as Chinul describes it and which Buswell has taken as title words in this and other books, "numinous awareness" and "tracing back the radiance," and the debates regarding Sudden vs. Gradual Enlightenment. Buswell lucidly lays out Chinul's measured analysis of the different kinds of Zen approaches to practices conducive to enlightenment, what Buswell terms "soteriological schemata," and Chinul's sensible critique of sudden awakening and sudden cultivation and his practical promotion of sudden awakening and gradual cultivation (pp. 31–57).

Furthermore, Buswell's introduction also functions as a useful and accessible briefing of the Korean Sŏn tradition during the Koryŏ and the succeeding periods. It charts the rise of the *kanhwa* technique in Korea by Chinul's followers and explains the dynamics of the contemporary critiques of Chinul's moderate subitism by T'oeong Sŏngch'ŏl (1912–1993), one of the most influential and outspoken leaders of the Korean Chogye Order in the twentieth century. Buswell shows that despite a few forthright critics of Chinul's approach of sudden awakening and gradual cultivation, *Excerpts* has been deeply influential among Sŏn commentators and has held a position of importance as the capstone book of the fourfold collection (*sajip*): (1) Gaofeng Yuanmiao's (1238–1295) *Essentials of Chan*, (2) Dahui's *Letters*, (3) Zongmi's *Preface*, and (4) Chinul's *Excerpts*, which constituted the basic curriculum of Sŏn monks in the Chosŏn period (1392–1910) and still occupies a pivotal place in Korea's Zen tradition today (pp. 68–92).

Buswell's translation of Chinul's *Excerpts*, as found in *Numinous Awareness Is Never Dark*, is not simply a rehash or reproduction of his original translation published in 1983 like the selection of material published for the Kuroda Institute's series in his *Tracing Back the Radiance: Chinul's Korean Way of Zen*

(University of Hawai'i Press, 1991, pp. 150–187). To illustrate this point, let's look at two short passages, comparing the 1983 translation to the 2016 translation. In the excerpted passages that follow I have omitted Sino-Korean logographs and notes for the sake of simplicity. The first passage is the very first section of *Excerpts*:

> I. Chinul's Preface
> Moguja said: Ho-tse Shen-hui was a master of our school known for his intellectual knowledge and conceptual interpretation. Although he was not the formal dharma successor to Ts'ao-ch'i [the Sixth Patriarch Hui-neng] his awakened understanding was lofty and brilliant and his discernment was clear. Since Master Tsung-mi inherited his teachings, he has developed and explained them in this *Record* so that they could be understood clearly. Now, for the sake of those of you who can awaken to the mind through the aid of the scriptural teachings, I have abbreviated its superfluous verbiage and extracted its essentials so that it can serve as a handbook for meditation (*The Collected Works of Chinul*, p. 263; cf. *Tracing Back the Radiance*, p. 151).

Now, the opening in Buswell's revised translation:

> I Chinul's Preface [741a]
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> I, Moguja (The Oxherder), said:
> Heze Shenhui was an esteemed master of intellectual understanding. Although he was not the direct heir to Caoxi [the Sixth Patriarch Huinung], his awakening and understanding were lofty and brilliant and his discernment clear. Because Master [Zong]Mi inherited his teachings, [Zongmi] explained them extensively in this [*Dharma Collection and Special Practice*] *Record* so that they could be clearly comprehended. Now, for the sake of those who can awaken to the mind through the aid of the Teachings (Kyo/Jiao), I have abbreviated [the text's] prolix verbiage and extracted its essentials so that it can serve as a vade mecum for contemplative practice (97).

First, the page number in brackets, [741a], after the statement that this is Chinul's preface illustrates that Buswell's new translation is keyed to the original text as published in volume 4 of the *Collected Works of Korean Buddhism* (*Han'guk Pulgyo chŏnsŏ*, 14 vols, Seoul: Tongguk University Press, 1979–2004). Fully searchable electronic editions of Chinul's *Excerpts* and other texts in the collection are available at http://ebti.dongguk.ac.kr/ebti/main.html. Second, Buswell uses the McCune-Reischauer Romanization system for Korean and Pinyin for Chinese. Third, Chinul's referring to himself as "Moguja," the Ox-herder, is often translated in the third-person in the 1983 translation, but the 2016 translation displays Buswell's deepening understanding that this title is Chinul's humble way of referring to himself, a translational decision found infrequently in the 1983 translation, but one more readily adopted in the 2016 translation.

Although much of the language is the same, there are many small differences in the translation that demonstrate Buswell's evolving views about the translation and fidelity toward the original text. For instance, the 1983 translation simply refers to Zongmi, but the 2016 translation preserves the conventional East Asian scholarly practice of referring to well-known individuals by only one Sinograph. Words not found in the original text are placed in brackets, such as in the case of [Zong]Mi or [*Dharma Collection and Special Practice*] *Record* to help facilitate understanding. Furthermore, the change from "scriptural teachings" to "Teachings (Kyo/Jiao 敎)" demonstrates Buswell's more nuanced understanding of the rhetorical functions of such words as "Sŏn" and "Kyo" in Chinul's day and before—which have only intensified in succeeding times to the present. Chinul's frequent use of "Sŏn" and "Kyo" as rhetorical terms is much easier to follow in the 2016 translation.

The second passage not only highlights what was special about Chinul's Korean approach to Zen—his profound knowledge and appreciation of Hwaŏm/Huayan material and his willingness to incorporate insights from this doctrinal tradition into his practice—but also how Buswell makes it accessible to readers. The 1983 translation is as follows:

> I, Mogjuja, am often vexed by scholar-monks who do not study the Sŏn dharma. Having read Ch'eng-kuan's *Chen-yüan Commentary*, I was happy to find that its assessments of the approaches of cultivation and realization accord with the principles of Sŏn. For this reason I have recorded it here. Its explanations of what is awakened to (the nature and characteristics of the mind) and the catalysts of awakening (the two approaches of *samādhi* and *prajñā*) are not the same assessments of imperatives of this *Record*. Nevertheless, as I fear that students of doctrine will wholeheartedly accept the Sŏn dharma only when it is explained according to the perspectives of this text, I will briefly assess the strengths and shortcomings of the various approaches to the practice of *samādhi* and *prajñā* so that they may give rise to right faith (*The Collected Works of Chinul*, 283).

The 2016 translation revises the same passage as follows:

> *Correlating Chengguan's Kyo Views with Sŏn*
>
> I, Moguja, am often vexed by scholar-monks who do not study the Sŏn dharma. Having read Chengguan's *Zhenyuan Commentary*, I was happy to find that [this Kyo scholar's] careful assessments of the approaches of cultivation and realization accord with the basic premise of Sŏn. For this reason, I have recorded it here. Its explanations of the object of awakening—the nature and characteristics of the mind—and the catalysts of awakening—the two approaches of samādhi and prajñā—are not the same assessments or imperatives of [Zongmi's] *Record*. Nevertheless, as I fear that students of Kyo will wholeheartedly accept the Sŏn dharma only when it is explained in accordance with the perspectives of this text, I briefly assess its strengths and shortcomings so that those students may give rise to right faith (122–123).

Here, Buswell supplies sectional headings that summarize the main points and purposes of Chinul's argument. The rhetoric usage of Sŏn and Kyo is also manifest, but the revised passage also emphasizes "the nature and characteristics of the mind" as the object of awakening rather than placing them in parentheses following the 1983 translation. This helps illustrate Buswell's deepening understanding of Chinul's message and helps clarify that message to readers.

Chinul's *Excerpts* includes many long passages of excerpted material from the writings of Zongmi, Chengguan, and others Buddhist masters. In some cases, Buswell breaks down and schematizes the arguments in the excerpted material to facilitate the reader's comprehension of the assertions and arguments found in the cited material (see, for example, his diagraming of Chengguan's Taxonomies of Sudden and Gradual, pp. 128–129). In short, Buswell's translation is enhanced with an apparatus enabling students of the text to follow Chinul's method of textual criticism and rhetorical strategies. It also enables students of the text follow and learn from Buswell's approach to the original text with ease. Furthermore, the notes provide a wealth of insights and erudite translations of Buddhist terminology that will enhance the vocabularies of students of East Asian Buddhism.

Numinous Awareness Is Never Dark is a significant contribution to the Korean Classics Library: Philosophy and Religion Series. Buswell's translation of Chinul's masterwork *Excerpts* is lucid and full of aids for the dedicated reader. It is a must read for students of Korean thought and religion, particularly students of Korean Buddhism, because it is one of the seminal writings of the Korean Buddhist tradition since its compilation in the early thirteenth century, and it is pertinent to Korean Buddhist thought today. The relevance of this text is amplified despite—or perhaps better stated because of—Chinul's controversial place in the living and dynamic Chogye tradition in Korea today, which verbally espouses the mainstream Linji rhetoric of sudden awakening and sudden cultivation. Regardless, the indisputable truth is that the Korean Sŏn tradition has been profoundly influenced by Chinul's balanced approach of sudden awakening and gradual cultivation.

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Korean Religions in Relation: Buddhism, Confucianism, Christianity. Edited by Anselm K. Min. Albany: State University of New York, 2016. 336 pp. (ISBN: 9781438462752)

Korean Religions in Relation: Buddhism, Confucianism, Christianity, ably edited by Anselm Min, presents a host of thought-provoking articles that focus on the relationship between different Korean religions. As such, this work makes an important contribution to English-language scholarship worthy of the scholar to whom it is dedicated, Professor Wi Jo Kang, a pioneer in the study of the relationship between religion, particularly Christianity, and politics in Korea. Min highlights the importance of such scholarship, noting in his introduction to this volume that "relations among religions are so critical to peace in society and the world" (1). At the same time, Min emphasizes that this volume is a beginning, not an end, and expresses his "hope that more comprehensive studies will follow that will also include Tonghak and other religions of Korean origin" (2).

Despite this acknowledged limitation and a focus on only three religions, this is still a hefty volume chocked full of both rich detail and provocative arguments. Helpfully, the ten chapters that follow the introduction are paired together into five dyads that share important themes: Buddhism and Confucianism during the Koryŏ period; Catholicism and Confucianism during Chosŏn; Protestantism and traditional Korean religions; Christianity, Confucianism, and feminism today; and finally the relationship between Christianity, other religions, and politics. This collection can therefore boast of managing to be coherent while providing diverse, scholarly perspectives.

The first article of the Koryŏ pair is Jongmyung Kim's "Interactions between Buddhism and Confucianism in Medieval Korea," in which Kim contends that "Confucianism was the dominant ideology which often exploited the potential of

Buddhism to serve the preservation and prosperity of the ruling dynasty, Confucianizing Buddhism in many important respects in the process" (20). For instance, under Confucian influence, Koryŏ Buddhism came to serve the dynasty by offering rituals for the longevity of the monarch, making Buddhism into a "political tool to support Confucianism" (28) that, according to Kim, departed from the Buddha's original teaching as set forth in the Four Noble Truths.

Charles Muller continues this examination of religion in Koryŏ with his "Philosophical Aspects of the Goryeo-Joseon Confucian-Buddhist Confrontation: Focusing on the Works of Jeong Dojeon (Sambong) and Hamheo Deuktong (Gihwa).[6] Muller carefully places the dialogue between Jeong, who was anti-Buddhism and pro-Neo-Confucianism, and Gihwa, an apologist for Buddhism who had a relatively open attitude towards Confucianism, in its late Koryŏ context, noting how Buddhism was closely connected with a dynasty in decline, with Neo-Confucianism providing a new worldview that could be used to criticize the corruption of the old order. In his study, Muller finds an interesting near-parallel between these thinkers in that both criticized the other's worldview for inconsistency but in different ways—Jeong finding Buddhist teachings self-contradictory and Gihwa observing contradictions between how Confucians believed they should act and what, according to him, their tradition actually required. Gihwa even went so far as to argue that Confucianism had been misunderstood "by even the most important figures of their own tradition" (71) and that if they truly understood it, their ethics would align with those of Buddhism. A particularly important insight of Muller's is that these polemics were made possible only by the fact that both men believed in "the existence of a good mind that can be developed to a high level of purity and wisdom by engagement in a given set of practices" (77).

The second pair of chapters examines the relationship between Catholicism and Confucianism, with Don Baker's "Catholic God and Confucian Morality: A Look at the Theology and Ethics of Korea's First Catholics" seeking to answer the question, "Why did a group of young Confucians become Catholics before they had even met a Catholic missionary?" (89). As Baker shows, what makes this question particularly significant is the extraordinary differences between these two worldviews in terms of the existence of God and an eternal human soul, the grounds of morality, and the importance of belief. Baker argues that while there is a tendency to emphasize social or political movements in answering this question, often understood as representing a Korean embrace of modernity, they cannot on their own account for such a shift in fundamental understandings of the universe. Rather, Baker argues that an increased death rate in the eighteenth century and a gap in the idealism of Neo-Confucianism and the ability to live up to its expectations made some Korean scholars receptive to a Confucianized Catholicism that offered the promise of eternal life, grace to follow Confucian morality, forgiveness when one failed, and an explanation of why it was so difficult to be good in the first place. Despite this radical shift, the focus of these Catholics on Confucian morality showed that they continued to adhere "to core ethical values of their culture," and therefore remained Korean despite their embrace of a new religion (112).

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[6] For this work, scholars were allowed to use whichever Romanization system they preferred, provided that they were consistent. I will therefore use whichever system the authors used while presenting their arguments, while using MR for my own comments.

Yong-bae Song in his, "On the Family Resemblance of Philosophical Paradigm: Between Dasan's Thought and Matteo Ricci's *Tianzhu shiyi*" compares the writings of these two scholars, paying particular attention to how the former introduced Aristotle's teaching in such areas as matter, the soul, and the idea of God to the latter. This exposure led Dasan to develop his own Catholic-Confucian synthesis which included a rejection of much of the *i-gi* metaphysics in favor of belief in a moral, personal God, though one that did not judge as in the Catholic understanding. For Song, historically speaking, Dasan's synthesis "marked the beginning of a modern understanding of nature" (145).

The third dyad examines the relationship between Protestant Christianity and other religions in Korea. The first of these articles, Sung-Deuk Oak's "A Genealogy of Protestant Theologies of Religions in Korea, 1876–1910: Protestantism as a Religion of Civilization and Fulfillment," provides a fascinating overview of how Koreans and missionaries serving on the peninsula developed a theology for how relate to other religions through their interaction with Anglo-American scholarship and Christian experience in China. Through his fascinating survey of the texts these different groups produced, Oak shows that rather than "militant fundamentalists determined to destroy traditional religions" these Protestants were "moderate evangelicals who were open-minded enough to seek points of contact between Christianity and traditional Korean religions" (156), a position Oak believes should be revisited by contemporary Korean Protestants.

Young-Ho Chun, in his "What Can Christianity Learn from Korean Religions? The Case of Ryu Yongmo," examines the life and thought of a self-identified Christian who was radically open to other religions. Chun focuses particularly on Ryu's concept of "*eol*" (a complex term meaning something like "core" or "substance"), which played a key role in his theology, and helped him to bring Christianity into conversation with Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism. While willing to enter into critical dialogue with Ryu, for instance, noting that he tended to obscure differences between religions instead of acknowledging them (204), Chun also praises Ryu as someone who "did not lose his identity and language as a Korean, as so many others have…In his attempt to indigenize Christianity, he was a quintessentially Korean thinker. In both he proved to be indeed a great and original thinker" (206).

The next two chapters, focusing on the triangular relationship between Confucianism, Christianity, and feminism, take opposing views. Namsoon Kang, in her "Resurgence of Asian Values: Confucian Comeback and Its Embodiemt in Christianity" criticizes the Confucian revival under the "guise of the noble Asian values" and how it has led to the "creation of male homosocial reality in Korean society and Christianity" (216). Kang is particularly concerned that in the name of Asian values (Confucianism), inequalities, particularly ones related to gender, are ignored, while feminism itself is rejected as foreign and therefore unsuitable for Asians (219). While Kang holds out little hope for the reformation of Confucianism, she does believe that its baleful influences can be purged from Christianity as "A large number of feminist theologians have attempted to recover the egalitarian principles and practices in Christianity and reconstruct Christianity as a more just religion" (233).

In contrast, in her "Korean Confucianism and Women's Subjectivity in the Twenty-First Century," Un-sunn Lee sees an unwillingness to participate in the public sphere as the central problem facing Koreans, and that Confucianism can act "as a source of inspiration for developing women's subjectivity in the twenty-first century." In particular, Lee believes that women, in part because of their nurturing qualities, can develop a "life-giving and caring" (241) Confucian spirituality that does not demarcate between the sacred and profane, but instead sacralizes the world, thereby restoring the concern for public affairs that she fears is being lost. Particularly noteworthy is that Lee points back to two Chosŏn Confucian women scholars, Im Yeon-ji-dang and Gang Jeong-il-dang, to show how though "they were restricted in their family life" they performed their "obligations with a strong sense of public responsibility and a sense of justice" (245).

The fifth dyad shares some themes with the fourth, examining the political implications of Christianity and Confucianism. Young-chan Ro, in his "Confucianism at a Crossroads: Confucianism and Democracy in Korea" calls for a reinterpretation of "the basic assumptions of the Confucian worldview and values in light of the contemporary social, political, and philosophical discourse" (264). Ro is particularly interested in the question of why Confucianism has been used to justify authoritarian politics in Korea despite the fact that there are humanistic and democratic ideas in the tradition. Ro's answer is that Confucianism was so optimistic about human nature and the possibility of sage rule that sufficiently strong institutions did not develop that could keep bad rulers in check. In contrast, the Christian West's understanding of a basically good human nature marred by sin meant that it was optimistic enough to trust human beings with democracy, but not so optimistic as to trust them completely, leading to institutional checks and balances that allowed democracy to flourish.

While Ro focuses on the positive benefits brought by Christianity through historical reflection, Anselm Min, in his "Between Tradition and Globalization: Korean Christianity at a Crossroads" describes the challenges facing Korea, particularly in terms of the environment, the economy, and migration, and the difficulties Korean Christians must overcome in order to help meet them. For Min, of key importance to addressing these issues is developing a positive relationship between Korean Christianity and "traditional Korean religions and cultures" (285). While Min recognizes the importance of theological discussion, he makes the important point that even as Koreans became Christians, they maintained "all the ontological, religious, and ethical assumptions particular to the culture that" shaped them (290). It would seem then that these cultural forces could then help act as a grounds of dialogue and that there is more real unity among different Korean religions than is generally recognized. Min also believes that to deal with the challenges facing Korea, Protestants need to work to overcome their divisions by finding some authority to unify them on issues of morality, and that the clericalism that dominates the Korean Catholic Church needs to be reformed to unleash the energy of the laity.

I found the studies in this edited-volume fascinating and thought provoking. At the same time, critically speaking, I notice that one commonality amongst some of these works is the idea of returning to ancient texts or traditions to find inspiration for the present. I believe that this is in itself a worthy goal. However, at times, some of these attempts seemed to be built upon problematic premises, one of which being that the people who followed these texts and traditions in the past had somehow misunderstood or corrupted them, necessitating their rescue. However, treating such mediators in this way risks us losing the opportunity of learning from them (for instance, we would miss out on the insights of Gi-hwa presented by Muller with this approach). Another related premise is the idea that we can even obtain unmediated access to these texts and traditions that would make this rescue possible, something the reviewer doubts. Moreover, removing a text or tradition from the context in which it was produced makes it easier to impart meanings that do not do justice to the text (I believe this is summed up in the old saying "A text without a context is a pretext for a prooftext"), in which case, why appeal to the text at all? Thus, while a "hermeneutics of suspicion"

(302) is warranted, I believe so too is a "hermeneutics of reform"[7] that takes seriously the wisdom of the mediators who have handed ancient wisdom on to us.

I would also like to raise a few issues that might be useful for consideration by those who continue this work (and I hope that Min and his co-authors will be among them). One such issue is what makes a religion "Korean." For instance, should Islam be included? There are ethnic Korean Muslims and an increasing number of Muslims on the peninsula, so it seems to me that the answer is yes. Similarly, it would be helpful to include religions outside of the chronologies they are normally assigned to. For instance, what of Buddhists and Catholics today? That being said, *Korean Religions in Relation* is an excellent, thought-provoking work that explores areas of particular importance not only for Korea, but for the world. In particular, this work is to be praised not only for the quality of the individual chapters, but for how they fit together so coherently, no easy thing for an edited volume. One fascinating aspect of this work is that it is not simply descriptive, but also normative, with scholars not simply discussing what is or what was, but what should be, and it therefore seems to me to be particularly suited not only for scholars, but for classroom use as well, as it would provide an efficient way of introducing students to the richness of Korean religions, how they are both historical and lived traditions, and the complex and fascinating ways they interact with each other.

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The Birth of Korean Cool: How One Nation Is Conquering the World Through Pop Culture. By Euny Hong. New York: Picador, 2014. 267 pp. (ISBN: 9781250045119)

This is a terrifically readable book, and there's no hyperbole in the subtitle: Korea (meaning the Republic of Korea—South Korea) is driving cultural production worldwide. Journalist Euny Hong draws on interviews with major players in the Korean culture industry as well as her own formative years as a reverse emigrant (her immigrant father, an economist, was recruited from the U.S. *back* to Korea in the 1980s) to show that the international spread of Korean popular culture is the fruit of a well-orchestrated and ongoing campaign involving Korean government policy planners and bureaucrats, the most successful conglomerates (*chaebŏl*) in the land, and a key cohort of visionary producers and artists.

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[7] For a discussion of this issue in connection to the Catholic Church's developing understanding of its relationship to other religions in terms of religious freedom, see Nicholas J. Healy, Jr., "Dignitas Humanae," in *The Reception of Vatican II*, edited by Matthew L. Lamb and Matthew Levering (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017): 378–379.

What is it in Korean tradition that made this possible? According to chapter 4, two things—neo-Confucian ideology ("the most stressful belief system on Earth") and *han*, a "culturally specific, ultra-distilled form of rage" resulting from the invasions of the Korean peninsula over the millennia, culminating in imperial Japan's colonization of Korea from 1910 to 1945. Neo-Confucianism, state orthodoxy during the Chosŏn period (1392–1910), provided the necessary social structure, each individual knowing his or her place in a patriarchal, hierarchical, class-based society. *Han*, which is never-ending, provided the drive—the desire to get even with cruel fate. *Han* has become something of a Korean cultural cliché (for a more nuanced assessment, see Kevin O'Rourke's *My Korea*), but how else to explain the fact that "4 percent [2.8 million people] of the population of South Korea auditioned in 2012 for *Superstar K*, Korea's biggest televised singing competition"? (The comparable figure in the U.S. for *American Idol* is 0.03 percent.) Korean women getting even with half a millennium of Chosŏn history, in which well-born women were discouraged from displaying their talents outside the home?

The direct intervention of the Korean government, which has provided massive funding for Hallyu ("Korean wave"), the nation-brand applied to Korean cultural production, should come as no surprise—a similar collaboration between government and *chaebŏl* underlies much of the South Korean economic miracle that began with the authoritarian regime of Park Chung Hee (1961–79). But serendipity was also at play, as Hong reveals in several delightful anecdotes: A television drama, *What Is Love*, transferred by diplomatic pouch to the Korean consulate in Hong Kong in 1992 and then dubbed in Cantonese, became a huge hit with Hong Kong viewers.

The 2002 series *Winter Sonata,* "Korea's cultural Waterloo" and the television program that captured Japanese audiences, was born of a simple directive to the two writers—the drama had to take place in winter and it had to involve amnesia. And in 2011 the director of the Korean Cultural Center in Paris finagled funding from both the Korean Ministry of Culture and SM Entertainment (which manages such K-Pop idol groups as Girls Generation) to put on a K-Pop concert in the French capital; tickets placed online for sale were snapped up in fifteen minutes.

What's the appeal of Korean popular culture? According to Hong, in the case of Korean online gaming, it's an emphasis on story rather than graphics. The same could be said of Korean dramas and cinema as well—though, truth be told, much of the appeal of Korean visual culture lies in the perceived beauty of the performers, enhanced by South Korea's status as "the world's plastic surgery capital" (discussed in chapter 8 in "The Gangnam Chainsaw Massacre"—the book's section titles are a real kick). K-pop, poo-poohed by academics and other, higher-browed consumers of culture, owes much of its success to music videos, the best of which offer a strong story in a strikingly creative combination of intermediality and intertextuality—see, for example, Park Jiyoon's "Coming-of-Age Ceremony" (Sŏnginsik) and 2NE1's "Go Away."

Another reason Korean popular culture, and especially K-Pop, is so engaging is that it is viscerally exciting—and here Hong could benefit from a tutorial by the aforementioned Kevin O'Rourke on two other, arguably more persuasive Korean cultural clichés, *hŭng* and *mŏt*. *Hŭng* is the shiver of excitement you get when you feel a fish tug on the end of your line, or the tapping of your foot in time to the hook and rhythm of a K-Pop song such as Brown-Eyed Girls's "Abracadabra." *Mŏt* is a sense of personal style, all the more compelling in a neo-Confucian society that emphasizes group membership over individual achievement (one reason, according to Hong, that Korean online gamers prefer to work in teams rather than individually). And what better embodiment of *mŏt* than Psy, responsible for the most-watched music video ever, "Gangnam Style."

Irony is plentiful in the Hallyu saga, and Hong devotes a chapter to it. How, for example, did Korea displace its erstwhile colonial master, Japan, as the locus of cultural production in East Asia? Hong's answer is, "Koreans understand how the Japanese think." She also argues that most everywhere Korea achieved dominance, other nations had already established a presence. She might have taken the logical next step to point out, as Dawn Kim, co-director of Arko Design, with production credits in the Korean music industry, observes—that Japan essentially paved the way for the success of Korean popular culture in East and Southeast Asia. Hong hints at this possibility late in the book in her discussion of drafting—a competition cycling metaphor.

Further irony: The stress of "the most stressful belief system on Earth," neo-Confucianism, is presumably linked to Korea's high world ranking in several areas—per-capita suicide rate, divorce rate, and a negative birth rate. And South Korea's online community is vicious and unforgiving for stars who step out of line; witness the recent vilification of 2NE1 member Pak Pom for bringing a controlled substance into the country, and of Epik High leader Tablo (Daniel Armand Lee) on a charge (since proved bogus) of having never graduated from Stanford.

The book contains a few slips. In the 1993 film *Seo Pyun Jae* (properly *Sŏp'yŏnjae*—romanization of Korean words is in general a chronic problem, and not just in this book), the father blinds his daughter-in-training not by gouging out her eyes but by administering potassium cyanide. (Hong admits to having slept through part of the film—perhaps this scene?) Nor is the girl training to be a classical singer; rather, she's being trained in *p'ansori*, an indispensable element of the Korean oral tradition, a narrative (of a core story) partly sung and partly spoken by a performer who plays the roles of all the characters. K-Pop star G-Dragon's Korean given name is misspelled Ji-Young; it's actually Ji-Yong, the *Ji* pronounced "gee" and the *Yong* being the Sino-Korean word for "dragon"—thus G-Dragon.

Toward the end of the chapter on Hallyu and K-drama Hong, citing the head of Taewon Entertainment, states that "history is still made by great men" Granted she cites the two writers of *Autumn Sonata* (both women), but almost all of the government and business figures she interviews are male. I wonder what she would make of K-pop idol group 2NE1 leader CL's recent dominance of the TIME 100 reader poll—at one point she was drawing more votes than Beyoncé. The Korean oral tradition, of which K-Pop is the most recent incarnation, would not exist without the passionate songs of women of the Koryŏ period (918–1392), the short lyrics of the professional entertaining women known as *kisaeng*, the narrative chants of the *mudang* discussed by Hong in chapter 4, and the renditions of Korea's best-loved stories by the *p'ansori* performers exemplified by the girl-in-training in *Sŏp'yŏnjae*.

I would have liked to see a discussion of Korean graphic novels, an increasingly influential element of Hallyu. A pool of dozens of webtoons (graphic novels serialized online), including Yoon Taeho's novel *Moss* (*Ikki*), is currently being serialized by *The Huffington Post*. More interviews with the artists themselves would help flesh out the popular-culture panorama—in particular, an interview with one of the pop stars who have endured the obligatory years-long training period that some compare to indentured servitude.

The Birth of Korean Cool is one of the best books on Korean culture I have read in decades, and sets the bar for future writers on the subject—and there will be many, to judge from Hong's last chapter, on the newest South Korean ministry: the Ministry of Future Creation and Science. Let's hope that Euny Hong is among those writers (and that Picador will price her next book a bit more affordably—my students at the University of British Columbia would not be pleased at the CDN equivalent of U.S. $16.95).

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A Chinese Traveler in Medieval Korea: Xu Jing's Illustrated Account of the Xuanhe Embassy to Koryŏ. Korean Classics Library. Translated, annotated, and with an introduction by Sem Vermeersch. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2016. 400 pp. (ISBN: 9780824856441)

In an informative and erudite introduction to Xu Jing's *Illustrated Account of the Xuanhe Embassy to Koryŏ* (*Kaoli tujing*), Sem Vermeersch first identifies and discusses the various extant texts of *Kaoli tujing* available to translators and then examines the historical context of Xu Yujing's mission in relation to the Liao, Jin and Song states and Koryŏ's vassal state relationship with Song. This is followed by further contextualizing that provides a helpful overview of the travelogue tradition in China to which *Kaoli tujing* belongs. Vermeersch duly notes Xu Yujing's tendency to approve of all things emulating China while being disdainful of Koryŏ's native traditions such as mixed-sex bathing in the summer. Nevertheless, despite Xu Yujing's biases, Vermeersch emphasizes the work's value as a source that complements the *Koryŏsa* (History of Koryŏ), while cautioning that Koryŏ officials appear to have deliberately given Xu an impression that Koryŏ was emulating China and that there was an intention by the Chinese embassy's Koryŏ guides to flatter the former's sense of China's *mission civilatrice* so that not all the information in Xu's account should be taken at face value.

The translation itself begins with Xu Jing's preface, in which Xu acknowledges that Wang Yun's *Monograph on Kyerim* (*Jilin shi*), which is no longer extant, provided a template for his own work. This preface addressed to Emperor Huizong is followed by a historical overview of the founding of Koryŏ, tracing its origins to "King Wu of Zhou's enfeoffment of Kija" (63) and tracing it through a chronological account of Koguryŏ (referred to simply as Koryŏ) with only passing references to Silla and Paekche. In the following chapter this account of Koguryŏ history culminates in Wang Kŏn's accession to the throne. Xu then provides a chronological account of the Wang dynasty until Wang Hae (Injong), who was king at the time of Xu's embassy to Koryŏ. This section, as might be expected, also emphasizes the loyalty of the Koryŏ royal family to the successive Chinese emperors.

Chapter 3 contains Xu's description of the borders, topography, and capital of Koryŏ, pointing out the importance of the Amnok River to the northern defenses of the country, the Koryŏ people's literacy, interest in geomancy, and indulgence in the "heterodox worship of spirits" (77). There is also information on trade and Koryŏ's use of cloth and silver ingots for large purchases and rice for less expensive items. Xu comments, "The people have long been at ease with this custom and find it convenient" (78). This chapter concludes with a short account of the local administrative divisions and mentions that taxation is not sufficient to support the government and consequently it "looks to rich people for donations" (79).

Chapters 4 to 6 deal with the architecture of the gates and halls of Kaesong. While Xu acknowledges that the Koryŏ capital's system of "prominent gates" emulates that of "the feudal lords of old," he nevertheless disparages them as pedestrian imitations of the Chinese originals (80). On the other hand the palace buildings with their "square roofs and rows of flying rafters colorfully decorated with red and blue" gave Xu "a vast and lofty feeling" (83). The highlight of chapter 6 is the account—copied from a palace record by Xu—of a royal banquet in Ch'ŏngyŏn Pavilion, characterized by the heavy but ceremonious drinking that still prevails in Korean society today.

Chapter 7 provides an account of the garments worn by the Koryŏ king and his officials and is followed by a chapter on "famous people," which includes a surprisingly forthright description of the notoriously corrupt Koryŏ official and royal in-law Yi Ch'agyŏm, who Xu writes, "believes in slander and covets profits. . . . Because of this all the people in the country despise him. What a shame!" (102). Kim Pusik, the compiler of *Samguk sagi* and nemesis of Myoch'ŏng, on the other hand is the recipient of Xu's admiration as someone who "possesses broad learning and vast knowledge and is good at composition; he knows about present and past and instills trust and confidence in fellow scholars; there is nobody who can match him" (103).

Chapters 9 and 10 deal with ceremonial paraphernalia such as fans, parasols, banners and halberds. These are followed by three chapters on Koryŏ's guards, armies and weapons that should be of considerable interest to military historians. Xu, however, does not appear to have been impressed by Koryŏ's displays of martial prowess, "if by chance there are a few able soldiers [among them], they hurry to show them off to people. How risible this is" (116). Koryŏ weaponry also fails to impress, being described as "rough and simple," although Xu suggests that this is because the Koryŏ people's "natural disposition is meek and compliant; they are thus not like the western rong barbarians, who love arms" (118).

These chapters are followed by chapters on flags, horses and carts, officials and offices, shrines and temples, and Taoism and Buddhism. Concerning official titles, Xu laments that although Koryŏ had by and large adopted Chinese titles, "the title and reality do not match; the titles are only used for window dressing because they sound impressive" (127). Concerning punishments, Xu concludes, "the barbarians are humane in nature, and capital punishment is often pardoned; instead [the convicted] are banished to mountains and islands" (132). In the chapter on Buddhist shrines and temples, Vermeersch has also provided helpful English translations of their Korean names. The chapter on Taoism and Buddhism suggests that Taoism was not an insignificant force in the Buddhist state of Koryŏ, although as Taoism had its origins in China, it is likely that Xu may have exaggerated its relative importance, especially as he was clearly prejudiced against Buddhism, referring to it as "barbarian teachings" (141).

It is in the opening lines of chapter 19 on the common people that Xu's most famous observation on the people of Koryŏ is found, "among the professions of the four classes of people, Confucian scholars are considered the most precious. Therefore, in their country it is considered shameful if you don't know how to write" (145). Nevertheless, this praise is soon counterbalanced with censure of Koryŏ's moral standards, "men and women marry easily, but unions are easily dissolved. Their ignorance of law and propriety is truly laughable" (145). This chapter is followed by chapters on women and on official servants. Xu's observations on Koryŏ women focus almost exclusively on their way of dressing with some comments on how they carry burdens on their heads and children on their backs.

Chapters 22 and 23 are filled with observations of Koryŏ customs from burial practices to bathing habits, about which Xu writes, "they always laugh about how dirty the Chinese are. When they get up in the morning they have to wash before going out the door. In the summer months they bathe again during the day" (159). These comments are followed by further observations on agriculture, fishing and local products. Here and elsewhere in the text one is struck by how many Korean customs in Koryŏ times are still recognizable in the present day, from the aforementioned custom of babies being carried on women's backs and burdens on their heads—although the latter custom appears to have almost died out—to Koreans' predilection for all manner of seafood.

Chapters 24 to 27 deal with the pageantry attending the arrival of the Chinese embassy, vividly portraying the way in which the relationship between Song and Koryŏ was affirmed through ceremonial expressions of benevolent paternalism on the part of the former and filial acquiescence on the part of the latter. Nevertheless, here and elsewhere in the text, whenever there is a suggestion of Koryŏ's latent military capability in the ceremonies, Xu is quick to express his disdain, "next came the colonels in charge of the army… They use tinkling bells to decorate their horse fittings and gallop along at breakneck speed in a conceited show-offy fashion" (164). These chapters include accounts of Injong's receipt of the imperial edict, banquets held in honor of the Song envoys, the ceremonial departure of the embassy from Kaesŏng and the embassy's quarters, the Sunch'ŏn Hostel, which according to Xu was "more luxurious than the residence of their king" (180).

Chapters 28 to 32 focus on various Koryŏ artifacts from tents, mats and screens to all kinds of metal and ceramic utensils and vessels, which conjure up a vivid image of Koryŏ's aristocratic culture and should be of particular interest to art historians. As is the case throughout Xu's account, everything is described in meticulous detail. To accompany these chapters, Vermeersch provides photo illustrations of a silver-gilt stem cup with saucer and a celadon lion-shaped incense burner in the National Museum of Korea that perfectly match Xu's description of these items in the text. Of the latter artifact Xu writes admiringly, "Of all the pieces, this one is the most sublime" (200).

Chapters 35 to 39 deal with shipping and sea lanes. After a rather disparaging description of Koryŏ ship building, "I have observed that their ships are very simple, lacking an advanced level of manufacture" (203), Xu continues with a description of the main types of ships he encountered on his arrival in Koryŏ. In the subsequent chapters he begins by speculating on the nature of tides and the formation of islands before providing a vivid account of the envoy's ships and the perilous voyage they embarked on from Mingzhou to Kaesŏng's Yesŏng Harbor. From this account it appears that the envoys were particularly prone to seasickness, "our guts and stomach also rose and fell, and gasping for air we barely managed to stay alive. We fell down and vomited and could not swallow even a grain of food" (218).

In chapter 40 Xu summarizes those aspects of Koryŏ culture that were based directly on Chinese culture, namely, the calendar, Confucianism, music, and weights and measures. Xu laments that Koryŏ still does not use the "correct calendar" but recognizes that this was because of the coercion of the Khitan and Jurchen. In terms of Koryŏ's wholehearted adoption of Confucianism and literary Sinitic, however, Xu is unstinting in his praise, "therefore, in the beauty of their culture and its products, they are on a par with the suzerain country!" (239). He is less fulsome in his praise of Koryŏ's examination system, however, deriding it for failing to include an essay question on politics and denigrating Koryŏ scholars for their inept compositions, which he likens to "the remaining dregs of the Tang [way of composition]" (241). Concerning music, Xu identifies two main forms, namely, Tangak based on Chinese music and indigenous music Hyangak along with an additional form identified as 'lower music' performed by female entertainers. Xu laments that because King Injong was still in mourning, the musicians refrained from playing their instruments and so he was unable to experience any musical performances during his stay in Koryŏ. In the final chapter Xu states his happiness in reporting to the emperor that "there was not even the slightest difference" between Chinese and Korean weights and measures thus demonstrating Koryŏ's sincere respect for its Chinese suzerain (245).

The *Illustrated Account of the Xuanhe Embassy to Koryŏ* concludes with some biographical information about its author written by Zhang Xiabao, praising Xu Jing's sagacity as a public official and his service to Emperor Huizong through his participation in the embassy to Koryŏ. The rest of the biography somewhat predictably portrays Xu as a Confucian/Taoist superman, incorruptible, generous to a fault, unsurpassed in literary composition, calligraphy and painting, adept in music, able to hold his liquor, and yet humble with it, "therefore, wherever he went, everybody always loved him, even when he went to barbarian countries" (251). The work closes with a postscript recounting how Xu's account of his embassy to Koryŏ had been temporarily lost and had then finally been printed as a wood block printed book at Qiandao in 1167 by Xu's nephew Xu Chan. The translated text is supplemented by an appendix of dynastic lineages, copious endnotes, a bibliography, and an index.

In his outstanding annotated translation Vermeersch has set a high standard for the translation of classical texts on Korea. The translation itself is lucid and eminently readable and supported by a wealth of scholarship on the Koryŏ and Song dynasties. Vermeersch is to be applauded for his unstinting labors in bringing this important text to a wider readership, and it is to be hoped that his work will encourage other scholars to engage in similarly valuable endeavors that are so substantially helpful in developing the field of Korean historical studies outside Korea. This work is a must have for any serious scholar of Korean history and indispensable for those specializing in the Koryŏ period.

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Under the Ancestors' Eyes: Kinship, Status, and Locality in Premodern Korea. By Martina Deuchler. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2015. xvi, 609 pp. (ISBN: 9780674504301)

In her long career, Martina Deuchler has been fortunate in opening up many new fields and questions concerning premodern Korean society and thought, and her new publication continues in this direction. *Under the Ancestors' Eyes* is a pioneering study in the history, structure and strategies of Korean elite descent groups, from their ancient origins until the modern period. The reader will find, in this monograph, many motifs and topics from Deuchler's previous works (inheritance practices, matrilineal patterns in Korean society, Neo-Confucian orthodoxy, and so on), with particular regard to the theme of elite descent groups and their role in traditional Korean society. Yet this monograph, which provides a description of the "origin, function, and the development of the Korean descent group in an extended historical perspective reaching from early Silla to late Chosŏn" (p. 397) goes far beyond describing the kinship structures of Korea's most powerful families in addressing the most specific features of traditional society on the peninsula—their extraordinary stable power, and the hereditary character of Korean local elites. Written almost as a family saga, Deuchler narrates how Korean elite descent groups created, maintained and ultimately lost their power and wealth through the centuries and the vicissitudes of history, highlighting, as an example, two localities, Andong in Kyŏngsang Province and Namwŏn in Chŏlla Province. The term "locality" mentioned in the subtitle of the book proves to be a very successful concept in demonstrating the shifting patterns of Korean elites: Andong and Namwŏn serve as vivid examples, and the nearly overwhelming number of local archival sources that the author brings to bear supply the reader with a lively image of local society. The stories of the main protagonists, narrated in detail, offer a wide range of examples illustrating the general trends of descent group survival strategies over the long centuries. From the arrival of first settlers in the area, we can witness the story of the creation of the descent groups' economic base via the cultivation of land and the acquisition of slaves together with the military and bureaucratic careers of the early generations during the Koryŏ and early Chosŏn periods. We see the saga of family members competing in state examinations and identifying with the rising movement of Confucianism combined with the establishment of control over local society and the enhancement of family prestige via the building of shrines and schools, genealogical research or the practice of the cult of ancestors. The late periods witness the participation of local families in fractional fights and turbulent court politics and result in the creation of the typical image of the local *yangban* devoted to Confucian virtues who encounters numerous challenges in terms of the maintaining of his claim to status. The monograph can also be read with a less optimistic, but equally valid and useful perspective—as a narrative of the dark and brutal struggle of local elites to hang on to property and maintain their own social status, in which the local heroes, seen in this light, at first distance themselves from their own origins among petty local officials, subsequently excluding their own daughters from inheritance; this was followed by the estrangement of secondary sons and other siblings as well. The portrayal of both sides of these issues allows us to see all aspects of these local elites: their enslavement of the local commoners occurred in parallel with the creation of memorial gates for virtuous widows; we also witness the great thinker T'oegye Yi Hwang exhibit a prodigious ability to enlarge his own land holdings while fighting over the proper management of the ancestral cult. The overall picture presented in the book illustrates one key recurrent motif: "the primacy of socially manipulated and legitimized pattern of hierarchy and dominance" (p. 2) over the political structures of the Korean state. The Korean elites (unlike their Chinese counterparts) were more likely to base their hegemonic status on kinship ideology and ancestry, as opposed to their political or economic societal roles. Indeed, the sections of the book describing how the Andong elites were able to survive despite their exclusion, for hundreds of years, from the state bureaucracy, and with only limited access to state examinations, truly redefine our understanding of the relationship between state and local elites in premodern Korea. The landed elites, in the two cases under review, were able to defend their privileges and status, both in respect to the state and the potential challenges to power from the lower classes for many centuries, without, seemingly, much change (at least until the partial breakdown of the order at the end of the dynasty). The maintenance of elite status was an ongoing process, fuelled by the unending display of power and capacities via costly rituals, the preservation of local alliances, and the mobilization of political ties during the turbulent events in Korean political life. The narrative focus, in this monograph, on these two groups of local descent elites is greatly enhanced by the author's emphasis on the relation between micro-history—for example, inheritance disputes, or the establishment of a family graveyard—and the crucial events of Korean history: see, for example, the description of the impact of the Imjin War or the dethronement of King Kwanghaegun on local society and the protagonist of this monograph. The reader wishing to explore the complicated world of the Andong elites in the light of major historical events in even more detail could read, in parallel with Martina Deuchler's monograph, a recent publication by Andrew Jackson on the 1728 Musin Rebellion: one of the seminal events which shook the Andong elite to its core, drawing it into a whirlpool of violent politics beyond the borders of the region.

To fully enjoy *Under the Ancestors' Eyes* one must keep in mind certain provisions, the main being that the book fulfils only what it really promises: to provide a description of elite descent groups through the centuries in two localities. The author discusses almost every facet of premodern Korean society, ranging from slavery, court politics, and the economic situation, to Confucian philosophy or legal disputes, but only to the extent relevant to the main topic—the status and locality of the Namwŏn and Andong elites. The reader interested in the question of slavery in pre-modern Korea might feel there is not enough description of the plight of the *nobi* as the prevalent focus is placed on their masters, whereas aficionados of T'oegye and Confucian philosophy will certainly feel that there is too much stress on T'oegye's family ties and not on his thought. Yet, when one accepts that the book is about the *sajok* 士族 elites, the proportion of these variegated topics makes sense as a whole.

The second problem concerning the publication (which has also been pointed out in previous reviews) is rather a question for the future: how can Deuchler's analysis be used and applied for further studies of premodern elites and society? "Do the Andong and Namwŏn *sajok* represent typical cases, models for emulation, or simply locale-specific strategies?"[8] or "Is it necessary to see a comparison of Chosŏn's northern and southern regions"?[9] The answer to both these questions could be both affirmative and negative: it will be useful and even necessary to have precise descriptions of other regions elites at our disposal, and in this sense we may regret that the present monograph discusses only the Andong and Namwŏn descent groups. On the other hand, from a structural point of view, the analysis of the situation in other regions (including the capital city) will no doubt follow the methodological groundwork laid by Deuchler. Other Korean regions will certainly show a different proportion of Confucian academies, a higher or lower dependency on tenant work, or different political orientations, but the general categories that need to be filled out with precise data will largely remain the same. It is also true that the Andong example is to a certain degree unique, thanks to the unusual number of the documents extant (even in comparison to the case of Namwŏn), as well as the fact that Andong descent groups were able recently to make these documents accessible via electronic databases and research institutes (indeed, an ultimate proof of their still considerable social elite status and exclusivity). With the northern provinces effectively lost to any research endeavours, and many documents in the South remaining in private hands, the challenges for future studies in this direction remain, sadly, rather formidable, and we can only hope that research of similar depth and scale will soon be applied to the other regions of Korea.

It is in fact difficult to find anything to criticize in this outstanding monograph. The only problem that bears mentioning is that the language—one could even say jargon—of the book is perhaps too specific to the specialty of Korean studies: frequently used terms like *sajok*, *chokpo*, *kolp'um*, *hyangni* or *munjung* are automatically understood by Korea specialists, but the reader from outside the field will almost certainly—if only temporarily—be perplexed. The close affinity to the perspective of Korean studies is at times highlighted by rendering Chinese terms in Korean pronunciation: for example, the ancient Chinese states Teng 滕

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[8] Wang Sixiang, "Review of *Under the Ancestors' Eyes: Kinship, Status, and Locality in Premodern Korea,*" Journal of Asian Studies 75/3 (2016):853.

[9] Javier Cha, "The Dynamics of Elite Domination in Early Modern Korea (Review Essay)," *Sungkyun Journal of East Asian Studies* 17/1 (2017):101.

and Xue 薛 are written as Tŭng and Sŏl (p. 260), or the Ming Dynasty era Chongzhen 崇禎 is presented as *sungjŏng* (p. 247). The price for the copious indexes and notes is indicated by the weight of the book: a tome of no less than 1.3 kilos is perhaps better read while comfortably seated, not standing with the volume casually balanced in one hand. Worthy of mention are the well-chosen figures and unique photographs, often provided by the author herself.

Under the Ancestors' Eyes is a fantastic contribution to Korean studies and certainly one of those publications which both scholars and students will use as a reference book on premodern Korea for years to come. And finally, there are two pieces of welcome news: it seems that a paperback edition is in preparation, and the monograph will soon be published in Korean.

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