

# The Impact of Qing Imperial Gifts on Chosŏn Scholarship and Material Culture

Youyi Lin, Department of Korean Language and Culture, NCCU

The development of scholarship and material culture on the Korean Peninsula was deeply shaped by successive Chinese dynasties. During the Chosŏn period, frequent tribute missions to the Ming 明 (1368-1644) and Qing 清 (1636-1912) courts introduced new learning, technologies, and artifacts, but these exchanges did not conform to Nishijima Sadao's 西嶋定生 (1919-1998) model of a tributary order centered on the Chinese emperor. Chosŏn actively sought books on Zhu Xi's 朱熹 (1130-1200) thought through private trade, despite continuing bans imposed by the Ming and Qing governments. In material culture, demand shifted from heavy reliance on Ming goods, to brief resistance during the Ming – Qing transition, and then to renewed admiration for Qing artifacts in the late eighteenth century. Yet the Qing court's extremely limited bestowals – such as *falangci* “enameled porcelain”, reserved for official banquets, display, or burials – had only marginal influence on Chosŏn society. This scarcity invites reconsideration of the actual scope of imperial power in East Asia.

**Keywords:** imperial gifts, *yŏnhaengsa* 燕行使 “Chosŏn embassies to Beijing”, Chosŏn dynasty, books, Chinese porcelain

## Introduction:

### Rethinking the Influence of Ming – Qing Imperial Power on Chosŏn

The development of scholarship and material culture on the Korean Peninsula was long shaped by successive Chinese dynasties. During the Chosŏn period, when diplomatic relations with the Chinese empire were relatively stable, frequent tribute missions enabled envoys to bring back new learning and cultural objects, which in turn influenced Chosŏn's intellectual and material life. This article examines how Qing emperors, through the act of bestowing books and objects as imperial gifts, sought to shape the development of Chosŏn scholarship and material culture. Yet the purpose here is not to reinforce the idea of imperial authority exported through the tribute-and-investiture system. Rather, by contrasting the abundance of books – purchased legally or illicitly by Chosŏn envoys in Chinese book markets – and the abundance of goods exchanged through commercial trade between the peninsula and surrounding regions, with the scant handful of gifts conferred by the Qing court, this study highlights both the limited reach of imperial power and the active agency of Chosŏn in appropriating elements of premodern Chinese civilization. Still, the “China” invoked in these

different contexts carries divergent meanings, and clarification is required before proceeding.

As early as 1983, Nishijima Sadao 西嶋定生 (1919-1998) identified Chinese characters, Confucianism, the regulation system, and Buddhism as the defining elements of an “East Asian cultural sphere”, which is also considered essentially as a “Sinosphere”.<sup>1</sup> He conceived East Asia as a political system in which “the Chinese emperor stood at the center, ruling the people of China proper through the *junxian* 郡縣 “commandery-county”, and ruling foreign monarchs beyond China’s borders through the *cefang* 冊封 “investiture” system.”<sup>2</sup> In this framework, the emperor appeared as the driving force actively disseminating imperial culture to neighboring states. Later scholarship has questioned this view. Later scholarship, however, has raised objections to this view. David Chan-oong Kang, for example, argued that “Imperial China did not possess a messianic desire to transform the world, but instead maintained and developed stable interstate relations with its neighbors in a subtle manner; although exceptions existed, this was generally the case. In other words, Chinese empire was not keen to export its political ideals and values, but it did take a keen interest in external relations. Thus, in the process of receiving Chinese thought and values, surrounding peoples and regimes had opportunities to resist or revise them within limits, rather than simply adopting them wholesale.”<sup>3</sup> Kang’s position diminishes the influence attributed to the Chinese emperor in Nishijima’s model, and instead highlights the agency of neighboring states in actively learning from China.

As Chun-chieh Huang notes in his citation of Nobukuni Koyasu’s 子安宣邦 *Kanji-ron: fukahi no tasha* 漢字論: 不可避の他者<sup>4</sup>, “within the contact zone of ‘East Asia,’ the Chinese empire, with its vast territory, large population, and long history, exerted political, economic, and cultural influence on Korea, Japan, Vietnam, and other regions, while to a considerable degree playing the role of ‘center’ in East Asia. From the perspective of neighboring countries, China, as the birthplace of shared cultural elements such as Chinese characters, Confucian scholars, and Han medicine, was undeniably a vast ‘inescapable Other.’”<sup>5</sup> Imperial China thus undeniably shaped its

<sup>1</sup> Nishijima Sadao 西嶋定生, “Higashi Ajia sekai no keisei” 東アジア世界の形成 in *Chūgoku kodai kokka to Higashi Ajia sekai* 中国古代国家と東アジア世界 (Tokyo: Tokyo university press, 1983).

<sup>2</sup> Gan Huaizhen 甘懷真, “Suowei ‘Dongya shijie’ de zai xingsi: Yi zhengzhi guanxi wei zhongxin” 所謂東亞世界的再省思: 以政治關係為中心 in *Huangquan, Liyi yu Jingdian quanshi: Zhongguo gudai zhengzhi shi yanjiu* 皇權、禮儀與經典詮釋: 中國古代政治史研究 (Taipei: National Taiwan University Press, 204), p. 489.

<sup>3</sup> Kang Canxiong 康燦雄, “Guojia: Rujia shehui” 國家: 儒家社會 in *Xifang zhiqian de Dongya: Chaogong maoyi wubai nian* 西方之前的東亞: 朝貢貿易五百年, trans. Chen Changxu 陳昌煦 (Beijing: Shehui Kexue Wenxian Chubanshe, 2016), p. 34.

<sup>4</sup> Nobukuni Koyasu 子安宣邦, *Kanji-ron: fukahi no tasha* 漢字論: 不可避の他者 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2003).

<sup>5</sup> Huang Junjie 黃俊傑, “Zuowei quyue shi de Dongya wenhua jiaoliu shi: Wenti yishi yu yanjiu zhuti” 作為區域史的東亞文化交流史: 問題意識與研究主題, *Taida Lishi xuebao* 43 (2009): 192.

neighbors, but we may still ask: what, precisely, was meant by the notion “China”? Did the China that Chosŏn learned from equal with the Qing regime itself? Here Yung Sik Kim, citing Kyung-sup Woo’s *The Formation of Chosŏn Sinocentrism and East Asia*,<sup>6</sup> distinguishes three senses of “China”: first, a geographical concept, referring to North China and the Yellow River valley where ancient Chinese civilization emerged; second, an ethnocultural concept, referring to the Han people in contrast to groups such as *Dongyi* 東夷, *Xirong* 西戎, *Nanman* 南蠻, *Beidi* 北狄; and third, a cultural concept, referring to the Confucian community practicing governance of the *wangdao* 王道 “king’s way” and sustaining ritual and literary civilization.<sup>7</sup> Of these, the third corresponds to what Huai-Chen Kan describes as the “shared political knowledge of the East Asian region,”<sup>8</sup> and to what Young-Seo Baik calls “communicative universality.” Baik further suggests that, rather than hastily pursuing abstract coexistence, East Asian states might begin by recognizing this universality – that is, the persistence of differences and distances, and the discovery, through exchange and communication, of a certain universality within distinct particularities, which in turn makes mutual understanding possible.<sup>9</sup> These three dimensions thus help us approach a more nuanced understanding of Chosŏn’s relationship with imperial China.

In studies of the so-called “Chinese character cultural sphere,” scholars have often conflated geographical China with cultural China. As a result, discussions of Sino–Korean exchange are sometimes misread as if the Ming and Qing regimes, occupying geographical China, had actively transmitted Chinese culture to Chosŏn through official channels, and as if Chosŏn in turn had eagerly sought to learn directly from these regimes. Yet close examination of documents such as the *Tongmunhwigo* 同文彙考 (Comprehensive Collection of Communications), which records memorials from the Qing Board of Rites concerning imperial bestowals, as well as the *Chosŏnwangchosillok* 朝鮮王朝實錄 (Veritable Records of the Chosŏn Dynasty) and various *Yŏnhaengnok* 燕行錄 [A collection of travelogues recorded by Korean envoys who traveled to Beijing during the Koryŏ and Chosŏn dynasties from the 12th century to the 19th century], reveals that the books conferred by the Qing emperors were exceedingly few, and that material gifts became increasingly standardized after the Qianlong reign, exerting only limited influence on Chosŏn scholarship and material culture. By contrast, Chosŏn, in order to preserve Confucian traditions and strengthen Zhu Xi studies, actively procured books through unofficial means from Chinese book

<sup>6</sup> U Kyŏngsŏp 우경섭, *Chosŏn Chunghwa chuŭi ŭi sŏngnip kwa Tongasia 조선중화주의의 성립과 동아시아* (Seoul: Unistory, 2013).

<sup>7</sup> Kim Yŏngsik 김영식, “Munhwa rosŏ ŭi Chunghwa wa ‘Chunghwa’ kwannyŏm ŭi sangtaehwa” 문화로서의 중화와 ‘중화’ 관념의 상대화 in *Chungguk kwa Chosŏn, kŭrigo Chunghwa 중국과 조선, 그리고 중화* (Seoul: Arcanet, 2018), p.280.

<sup>8</sup> Gan Huaizhen 甘懷真, op. cit., p.492.

<sup>9</sup> Bai Yongrui 白永瑞, “Xuyan” 序言 in *Sixiang Dongya 思想東亞* (Taipei: Taiwan Shehui Yanjiu Zazhishe, 2015), p.6.

markets or merchants, and purchased porcelain and other necessities locally in China to meet practical needs or follow contemporary fashions. This evidence invites a reconsideration of Nishijima Sadao's claim that East Asia was a political system centered on the Chinese emperor, who ruled beyond China's borders through the investiture system, and clarifies that what Chosŏn sought to learn was not the Qing regime's political authority, but rather the cultural China that embodied the ritual and literary heritage of *huaxia* 華夏.

### The Transmission of Material Culture in Chosŏn–Ming–Qing Relations

#### Sino–Korean Relations and Chosŏn's Active Assimilation of Chinese Artifacts

Diplomatic relations were closely tied to the very survival of the Chosŏn state. From its founding, the dynasty established *sadae* 事大 “serving the great” and *gyorin* 交隣 “neighborly relations” as its guiding diplomatic principles: toward imperial China it actively pursued a policy of *sadae*, while toward Japan and other neighboring states it adopted peaceful strategies of *gyorin*.<sup>10</sup> Thus, from the beginning of the dynasty, Chosŏn positioned itself in *sadae* to the Ming, while the Ming in turn regarded Chosŏn as a *zhuhou* 諸侯 “feudal lords”. During the 227 years of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), Chosŏn envoys were dispatched to China some 1,252 times – an average of 4.6 missions per year<sup>11</sup> – demonstrating not only the frequency of these exchanges but also Chosŏn's sincerity in maintaining its *sadae* posture toward the Ming court.<sup>12</sup>

In the early Chosŏn period, Taejo 太祖 (1335–1408) who had risen from a humble background, sought both to consolidate his authority and to establish the fundamental institutions of the new state in order to realize the Confucian Way of governance. Within the diplomatic framework of *sadae*, he requested recognition of his enthronement from the Ming and petitioned the Emperor Hongwu 洪武帝 (r. 1368–1398), to confer a dynastic name. The Ming responded in accordance with Chosŏn's request, bestowing the title “Chosŏn,” recognizing his accession, and granting court robes. Yet in comparison to Chosŏn's active participation in tribute, the Ming attitude was relatively passive. For example, the Ming legal code, the *Daminglu* 大明律 “Great

<sup>10</sup> 事大以禮，蓋以小事大，禮之常也，自古皆然...事大之禮不可不盡，而又不可以數也。前朝則稱宗改元矣。在今日小小節次，不心拘例，但盡其誠意而已。Ryang Sŏngji 梁誠之， “Non kundao sip-i sa” 論君道十二事 in *Nŏlchae chip* 訥齋集 kwŏn 1 卷 1 of *Han'guk munjip ch'onggan ch'aek* 9 韓國文集叢刊 冊 9 (Seoul: Minjok munhwa ch'ujinhwe, 1988), p. 294.

<sup>11</sup> Xu Dongri 徐東日, *Chaoxian shichen yanzhong de Zhongguo xingxiang — yi 'Yanxinglu', 'Chaotianlu' wei zhongxin* 朝鮮使臣眼中的中國形象—以燕行錄，朝天錄為中心 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 2010), p. 8.

<sup>12</sup> Lin Youyi 林佑毅, “You Tongwen huikao lun Chaoxian houqi shichen dui zhoubian guojia de renshi - yi dui Taiwan Zheng shi zhengquan ji Annan Xishan Yuan chao de lunshu wei zhongxin” 由同文彙考論朝鮮後期使臣對周邊國家的認識—以對臺灣鄭氏政權及安南西山阮朝的論述為中心, *Journal of Korean Culture* 35 (2016): 346.

Ming Code”, which Chosŏn adopted as a governing statute in its early years, had in fact entered Korea as early as 1373, at the end of the Koryŏ dynasty—before Chosŏn was even founded—and not as the result of Ming initiative. Similarly, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Ming court bestowed a number of books upon Chosŏn: the *Wenxian tongkao* 文獻通考 (1401); the *Yuan shi* 元史, *Shiba shilue* 十八史略, *Shantang kaosuo* 山堂考索, *Zhuchen zouyi* 諸臣奏議, *Daxue yanyi* 大學衍義, *Chunqiu huitong* 春秋會通, *Zhen Xishan dushu ji* 真西山讀書記, and various works of Zhu Xi (all in 1403); *Gujin lienu zhuan* 古今列女傳 (1404); *Tongjian gangmu* 通鑑綱目, *Sishu yanyi* 四書衍義, and another copy of *Daxue yanyi* 大學衍義 (1406); 50 volumes of the collected writings of the Empress Xiaoci Gao 孝慈高皇后 (1575-1603) and 300 copies of *Quanshanshu* 勸善書 (1408); 600 copies of *Weishan yinzhi* 偽善蔭鷺 (1417); *Wujing* 五經, *Sishu* 四書, *Xingli daquan* 性理大全, *Tongjian gangmu* 通鑑綱目 (1426); *Wujing daquan* 五經大全, *Sishu daquan* 四書大全 (1433); *Hu Sanxing's Annotated Zizhi tongjian* 胡三省音註通鑑 (1436); *Song shi* 宋史 (1454); and both the *Da Ming huidian* 大明會典 (1518) and its revised edition (1588).<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, these imperial bestowals fell far short of the Chosŏn court's needs. In response, King Chungjong 中宗 (1448-1544) issued a special directive to the Ministry of Rites, ordering that “envoys traveling to and from the Middle Kingdom should seek out and obtain books as widely as possible” and that “if there are missing classics or rare works that might broaden inquiry and aid in governance, generous rewards shall be given.”

A royal edict was transmitted to the Ministry of Rites, stating: “Books are the repository of the Way of governance, and have been treasured in every age. The Tianlu 天祿閣 and Shiqu 石渠閣 collections of the Han 漢, and the *Mishu* 祕書閣 compilations of the Tang 唐, all testify to the gathering of writings as the treasure houses of their times. While the true measure of an emperor lies in the cultivation of virtue and personal practice, the esteem they placed on literary refinement can also be discerned from these endeavors. Since the founding of our dynasty, generation after generation has honored Confucian learning. From the sacred classics and worthy commentaries to the histories, masters, and collected writings, and even to rare or fragmentary works, none have been neglected. They are not only preserved within the imperial library but also widely disseminated among the households of commoners. Yet in recent years, as fortune has waned and custodianship has been lax, many volumes from the imperial storehouse have become scattered, and the holdings of the royal archives are now meager. Reflecting on this, I feel profound regret. In antiquity, Liu De 劉德 (d. 130 BCE), the King of Hejian 河間, offered gold and silk to obtain fine books, and the abundance he collected rivaled that of the

<sup>13</sup> Ok Yŏngjŏng 玉泳叟, “Chosŏn sasin ūi Chunguk sŏjŏk sujip hwaltong kwa kŭ hyŏnjon charyo e taehan sironchŏk koch'al” 조선 使臣의 중국서적 수집활동과 그 현존자료에 대한 시론적 고찰, *Sŏjihak yŏn'gu* 61 (2015): 3-15.

Han court. This was recorded by historians as a laudable achievement. Although our realm lies far across the seas, if we pursue books with genuine devotion, there is no reason our collections should not equal those of antiquity. My desire is that within the imperial library no book be absent, and among the homes of officials and commoners no book be lacking. Therefore, let envoys who travel to and from the Middle Kingdom seek books as widely as possible. Within our own country, though the territory is narrow, surely there are families of letters who still hold valuable texts. If there are rare or fragmentary classics that may broaden inquiry or assist the Way of governance, let them be brought forth without hesitation. I shall reward them generously. Let this intent be proclaimed both within and without the realm.”<sup>14</sup>

In addition to spending vast sums on the active acquisition of books, Chosŏn also continued the Koryŏ practice of maintaining state publishing offices, which were responsible for printing the Confucian classics. For example, the Yongle editions of the *Sishu*, *Wujing*, and the *Xingli daquan* (229 volumes) were printed there in the early Chosŏn period, distributed to students throughout the provinces, and used to promote Confucian governance and learning.<sup>15</sup>

By contrast, the Ming court neither actively bestowed books upon Chosŏn nor responded positively to Chosŏn requests through the Board of Rites. From the mid-sixteenth century onward, the Ming even tightened restrictions on book purchases by Chosŏn envoys. As Ŏ Sukkwŏn 魚叔權 records in his *P'aegwanjapki* 稗官雜記, at the beginning of the Jiajing reign a Chosŏn interpreter attempted to purchase the *Da Ming yitongzhi* 大明一統志 in a Beijing bookshop. When Sun Cunren, an official of the Host Department, happened to inspect the volume, he exclaimed, “This is not something foreigners ought to buy!”<sup>16</sup> This incident became the precedent for the Ming’s strict prohibition of Chosŏn envoys purchasing banned books. Even so, book-buying was never entirely suppressed: in 1614, Hŏ Kyun 許筠 (1569-1618), serving as chief envoy, managed to acquire more than 4,000 volumes in Ming China.<sup>17</sup> This Ming policy of maintaining only a superficial tribute relationship with Chosŏn – while in practice refraining from intervening in Chosŏn’s intellectual life and even forbidding its envoys from purchasing historical works – was subsequently continued by the Qing government.

<sup>14</sup> *Chungjong sillok* 中宗實錄 vol. 23, 10th year of Chungjong, 11th month, 4th day, cyclical day pyŏngsul 丙戌, entry no. 4.

<sup>15</sup> Ri Ch’unhŭi 李存熙, “Chosŏn chŏn’gi ŭi taemyŏng sŏch’aek muyŏk – suryummyŏn ŭl chungsim uro” 조선전기의 대명 서책무역 – 수입편을 중심으로, *Chindan hakpo* 44 (1977): 72.

<sup>16</sup> 本國陪臣到燕, 舊無防禁. 嘉靖初年譯士金利錫踞坐書肆, 要買大明一統志, 主客郎中孫存仁適赴早衙, 取其書而觀之, 驚怪曰: “此非外人所當買也.” 因閉館門, 俾本國人一切不得出入, 遂成故事. Ŏ Sukkwŏn 魚叔權, *P'aegwanjapki*.

<sup>17</sup> Kim Yŏngjin 金榮鎮, “Chosŏn hugi Chunguk sahaeng kwa sŏch’aek munhwa” 조선후기 중국 사행과 서책 문화, in *19-segi Chosŏn chisikin ŭi munhwa chihyangdo* 19 세기 조선 지식인의 문화지향도 (Seoul: Hanyang taehak ch’ulp’anbu, 2006), pp. 595-599.

With the advent of the Qing dynasty, in contrast to its earlier active embrace of Ming artifacts, Chosŏn's reception of Chinese material culture underwent several shifts. In the seventeenth century, *taemyŏng-ŭiriron* 對明義理論 “Discourse on Moral Principles Concerning the Ming” and *hwairon* 華夷論 “Discourse on Civilized-Barbarian Distinction” prevailed; in the eighteenth century, the rise of *Puk'ak* 北學 “Northern Learning” shaped new intellectual priorities; and by the nineteenth century, Chosŏn increasingly embraced Chinese culture along with Western learning transmitted through China. At each stage, the demand for Chinese books varied, and the scale of book acquisition differed accordingly. In terms of scale, the eighteenth century is particularly illustrative. In 1720, I Kichi 李器之 (1690-1722), who traveled to the Qing as a junior official in the mourning-and-memorial mission, recorded over thirty works he purchased, including the *Mingshi benmo* 明史本末, *Hanshu* 漢書, *Shiji* 史記, *Yuzhi guwen* 御製古文, *Zuozhuan* 左傳, *Jingang jing* 金剛經, *Jingang lingying lu* 金剛靈應錄, *Badajia wencao* 八大家文抄, *Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經註疏, *Ershiyi daishi* 二十一代史, *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑, *Zhuji gangmu* 朱子綱目, and *Dushi xiangzhu* 杜詩詳註. In the same year, I Ŭihyŏn 李宜顯 (1669-1745), chief envoy of the triennial tribute mission, listed in his *Kyŏngja yŏnhaengjapchi* 庚子燕行雜識 more than fifty titles acquired, such as the *Cefu yuangui* 冊府元龜, *Chuci* 楚辭, *Han-Wei liuchao baiming jiaji* 漢魏六朝百名家集, *Quan Tang shi* 全唐詩, *Song shi chao* 宋詩鈔, *Shanhaijing* 山海經, and *Mingshi jishi benmo* 明史紀事本末. On his second mission in 1732, I Ŭihyŏn recorded thirty-nine further titles, including the *Songshi* 宋史, *Sanguozhi* 三國志, and *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記. Later, in 1765, Hong Taeyong 洪大容 (1731-1783), who accompanied his uncle Hong Ōk 洪億 (1722-1809), vice-envoy of the triennial tribute and thanksgiving mission, noted in his *Tamhŏnyŏn'gi* 湛軒燕記 fifty volumes obtained, such as the *Kangxi zidian* 康熙字典, *Manzhou yu sishu* 滿洲語四書, *Sishu jiangyi* 四書講義, and *Wujing* 五經.<sup>18</sup> Although Chosŏn envoys continued to face restrictions on book purchases, the scale of acquisitions in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries far surpassed those of the seventeenth. Works formally prohibited by the Qing could still be brought into Korea, smuggled past gate inspections through illicit channels.

Although the examples above highlight Chosŏn's proactive book acquisitions, it is worth recalling Zhang Bowei's 張伯偉 observation that “before the twentieth century, the circulation of books in East Asia largely took the form of diffusion toward surrounding regions... The channels of transmission included purchase, importation,

<sup>18</sup> Ok Yŏngjŏng 玉泳叢, op. cit., pp. 18-22.

reprinting, and gift exchange.”<sup>19</sup> Owing to limitations of space, this article does not further examine works that entered Chosŏn through gift exchange or related means.

Beyond books, material objects from China also entered Chosŏn. With the establishment of *sadae* diplomatic relations with the Ming and *gyorin* relations with Japan, Ryukyu, and other states, Ming porcelain and other Chinese goods began to flow into Korea. It is well known that the formation and development of *paekcha* 白瓷 “Chosŏn white porcelain” was profoundly influenced by Ming porcelain. In particular, cobalt pigment for blue-and-white ware had to be imported from Ming China, and thus Chosŏn–Ming diplomatic relations deeply shaped the production of Chosŏn ceramics.

According to the research of Korean scholar Hyun-Jung Lee, Ming porcelain imported into Chosŏn can be divided into three stages. The first stage, from 1392 to 1450, corresponds to the early years of the dynasty, when relations with the Ming were not yet stable and porcelain imports were relatively few. By the fifteenth century, however, both the *Chosŏnwangchosillok* (Veritable Records of the Chosŏn Dynasty) and the *Ming Xuanzong shilu* 明宣宗實錄 “Veritable Records of the Ming Xuanzong” record Ming envoys bringing porcelain into Korea. These items consisted primarily of white porcelain and celadon. Examples include pink-sand ware (white porcelain) and wine vessels in 1408; a painted cup (blue-and-white) and a tea cup with incised floral decoration (white porcelain) in 1417; large and small blue-and-white dishes in 1428; and, in 1450, painted white cups, decorated bowls (blue-and-white), plain blue small bowls, and plain blue wine ewers (monochrome glaze). The decorative styles included incised floral designs and gilt painting. Because the early Ming strictly prohibited the export of official-ware patterns, these porcelains were most likely products of the *Jingdezhen* 景德鎮 private kilns, though crafted at a level approaching the quality of official ware.

The second stage, from 1450 to 1500, contains fewer recorded instances of Ming porcelain entering Chosŏn than the first stage. Nevertheless, private trade began to emerge during this period, and with the growing taste for luxury goods within Chosŏn, large quantities of Chinese blue-and-white ware and other objects continued to enter the peninsula illegally. At the same time, Chosŏn white porcelain began to reflect the stylistic influence of Ming models. Yet this influence appeared with a delay: Chosŏn wares of this period primarily imitated the designs of the earlier Yongle 永樂 (r. 1402–1424), Xuande 宣德 (r. 1425–1435), and Zhengtong 正統 (r. 1435–1449; 1457–1464) reigns. It is also noteworthy that not all Ming porcelain reaching Chosŏn came directly from China; some arrived via Japan and Ryukyu. This suggests that in the early Chosŏn period porcelain imports operated along two tracks: under the *sadae* relationship, Ming China was the principal source, but under *gyorin* relations,

<sup>19</sup> Zhang Bowei 張伯偉, “Dongya Hanwenxue yanjiu de xin zhantuo” 東亞漢文學研究的新展拓 in *Dongya Hanwenxue yanjiu de fangfa yu shijian* 東亞漢文學研究的方法與實踐 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 2017), p. 74.

porcelain also entered through Japan and Ryukyu. The *Rekidai Hōan* 歷代宝案 “Precious Documents of Successive Generations”, the official diplomatic record of Ryukyu, even preserves a tribute to the Chosŏn court listing “twenty white-ground blue-and-white dishes, twenty white-ground blue-and-white bowls, twenty green dishes, fifty large blue bowls, and one hundred small blue bowls.”

The third stage, from 1500 to 1592, contains relatively few documentary records of Ming porcelain entering Chosŏn. Nevertheless, evidence from the use of Chinese goods at the time, repeated bans on private trade, and references in the Veritable Records to the prevailing taste for Chinese luxuries all indicate that large quantities of Ming porcelain continued to enter through unofficial channels.<sup>20</sup> The styles that circulated in this period were largely private-kiln wares of the Zhengde 正德 (r. 1506–1521), Jiajing 嘉靖 (r. 1522–1566) reigns. In terms of Chosŏn white porcelain, potters absorbed the stylistic features of second-stage Ming wares while at the same time narrowing the time lag, so that their products also reflected the designs of contemporary, third-stage Ming porcelain. This trend was closely linked to the domestic vogue for Chinese-style ceramics.<sup>21</sup> From this three-stage division it becomes clear that the Ming court was never especially active in bestowing porcelain on Chosŏn – much like its attitude toward the bestowal of books. By contrast, driven by the popularity of Chinese luxury goods, Chosŏn relied heavily on private trade to obtain porcelain in substantial quantities.

Under the Qing, Chosŏn’s reception of artifacts followed the same trajectory as its acquisition of books: initial rejection, limited acceptance, and eventual broad adoption. The Japanese invasions of 1592 and 1598 and the Manchu invasions of 1627 and 1636 devastated local kilns, while disdain for the Manchu regime cut off imports of cobalt for blue-and-white porcelain. After reforms to the *punwŏn* 分院 “kiln bureau” under Sukchong (r. 1674–1720), production shifted toward iron-painted white porcelain, which became widely fashionable. In the eighteenth century, despite gradual changes in attitude under Kangxi 康熙 (r. 1661–1722), Yongzheng 雍正 (r. 1722–1735), Qianlong 乾隆 (r. 1735–1795), Qing artifacts remained less welcome than books: the latter carried Confucian functions, while objects reflected Qing taste and clashed with *hua-yi* discourse.<sup>22</sup> Only by the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, with the shift from *pukpŏl* 北伐 “Northern Expeditions” to *puk’ak* 北學 “Northern Learning”,

<sup>20</sup> 鐵鈞又啓曰: “平安之民, 貿易唐物, 其弊不貲, 此弊不祛, 則誠非細故. 赴京行次, 護送軍馬, 多載已物, 因此疲困, 至不能載持軍器, 甚爲未便. 我國好用唐物, 故其弊如此. 古人云: ‘有財此有用.’ 本國所產, 可以支用, 何必唐物乎? 方今競尚奢侈, 衣服皆用紗羅綾段, 器具盡用畫器, 宮室極麗, 雖士庶之家, 亦皆飾以華襪.” Chungjong sillok 中宗實錄 vol. 12, 5th year of Chungjong, 9th month, 26th day, cyclical day kimyŏ 己卯, entry no. 2.

<sup>21</sup> Lee Hyun-Jung 이현정, “15–16-segi Chosŏn paekcha e poinŭn Myŏngdae chagi ūi yŏngnyang” 15–16 세기 朝鮮 白磁에 보이는 明代 磁器의 影響, *Misulsahak yŏn’gu* 270 (2011): 125–158.

<sup>22</sup> Pang Pyŏngsŏn 方炳善, “17–18-segi Tong-Asia tojagyoryusa yŏn’gu” 17–18 세기 동아시아 도자교류사 연구, *Misulsahak yŏn’gu* (2001): 132.

did acceptance broaden. As imperial kilns declined, *falangci*, once restricted to the Qing court, spread to private workshops, entered Chosŏn through trade, and became a status symbol for elites, even appearing at royal banquets.<sup>23</sup>

The foregoing discussion, using books and porcelain as representative cases, has briefly outlined the transmission of material culture in Chosŏn's relations with the Ming and Qing. What emerges is that, although Chosŏn and imperial China maintained a tributary and investiture relationship, it was above all the Chosŏn government that actively sought to absorb Chinese books and artifacts (with the exception of the Ming–Qing transition). By contrast, the Ming and Qing governments rarely responded to Chosŏn's needs, and at times even prohibited its envoys from acquiring books through private trade for political reasons. Nishijima Sadao's model of East Asia as a political system centered on the Chinese emperor's domination of foreign rulers thus calls for reconsideration. The following section turns to the *Tongmunhwigo*, supplemented by the *Chosŏnwangchosillok* and related sources, to examine the gifts bestowed by the Qing emperors upon Chosŏn.<sup>24</sup>

#### An Overview of Qing Imperial Gifts

Under the diplomatic framework of *sadae* and *gyorin*, the Chosŏn government dispatched envoys to China annually. Upon their return, envoys were, in principle, to submit day-by-day mission records to Sŭngmunwŏn 承文院, where they were transcribed; every three years they were to be block-printed by Kyosŏgwan 校書館, with copies deposited in Yungmullu 隆文樓, Yungmuru, 隆武樓, Ŭijŏngbu 議政府 Hongmun'gwan 弘文館 Sŏnggyun'gwan 成均館 Chunchugwan 春秋館, and at the chief cities of the provinces.<sup>25</sup> Over time, these regulations lapsed and the diplomatic dossiers were poorly preserved. In 1784, recognizing the need to reorganize documentation of *sadae*–*gyorin* relations, Chŏngjo 正祖 (r. 1752–1800) ordered senior officials of Sŭngmunwŏn, Chŏng Ch'angsun 鄭昌順 (b. 1727) and I Sungho 李崇祐 (1723–1789), to compile *Tongmunhwigo*. By 1788, the first compilation<sup>26</sup> – 60

<sup>23</sup> Kim Ŭn'gyŏng 김은경, “Chosŏn hugi Ch'ŏngdae Pŏmnang chagi suyong yŏn'gu” 조선 후기 청대 법랑자기 수용 연구 (Ph.D. dissertation., Korea University, 2018), pp. 230–232.

<sup>24</sup> Francesca Orsini, “How to Do Multilingual Literary History? Lessons from Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century North India,” *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 49, no. 2 (2012): 231.

<sup>25</sup> 承文院每三年印藏本衙門議政府及史庫○書狀官逐日紀事, 回還後啟下承文院謄錄○凡印書冊別藏於隆文隆武樓, 又於議政府弘文館成均館春秋館諸道首邑各藏一件. “Ch'unch'ugwan sijŏnggi” 春秋館時政記 in *Kyŏngguk taejŏn* 經國大典 (Seoul: Kyujanggak Han'gukhak yŏn'guwŏn, 1997), p. 290.

<sup>26</sup> *Tongmun hwiko* 同文彙考 of Han'guk saryo ch'ongsŏ 24 (Seoul: Kuksa p'yŏnch'an wiwŏnhoe, 1978), p. 1.

volumes in 129 volumes – was completed, and Chŏngjo himself wrote the prefatory essay.<sup>27</sup>

The initial compilation of *Tongmunhwigo* consists of four parts: *wŏnp'yŏn* 原編 “the General Compilation”, *pyŏlp'yŏn* 別編 “the Separate Compilation”, *Pop'yŏn* 補編 “the Supplementary Compilation”, and *pup'yŏn* 附編 “the Appendix”. The *wŏnp'yŏn* (37 volumes) comprises *sadae* documents addressed to the Qing, organized under *pongjŏn* 封典 “Investiture Protocols *pongjŏn*”, *chinha* 進賀 “Offerings of Congratulations”, *chinwi* 陳慰 “Messages of Condolence”, *mun'an* 問安 “Inquiries of Well-Being”, *chŏlsa* 節使 “Seasonal-Envoy Missions”, *chinju* 陳奏 “Memorials/Submissions”, and *p'yojŏnsik* 表箋式 “Models/Templates for Memorials and Notes”. The *pyŏlp'yŏn* (2 volumes) contains *sadae* documents to the Qing from the Chongde era (1636–1643), arranged under *pongjŏn*, *chinha*, *chinwi*, and *chŏlsa*. The *Pop'yŏn* (5 volumes) preserves records submitted by envoys to the Chosŏn king, including *sasinpyŏltan* 使臣別單 “Envoys’ Separate Lists/Inventories”, *sahaengnok* 使行錄 “Envoys’ Travel Diaries”, and *sadaemunsŏsik* 事大文書式 “Templates for *sadae* Documents”. The *pup'yŏn* (16 volumes) covers *gyorin* documents with Japan, including *chinha*, *chinwi*, *kogyŏng* 告慶 “Notifications of Celebration”, *kohwan* 告還 “Notifications of Return”, and *t'ongsin* 通信 “Correspondence”. After the 60 volumes first edition was printed in 1788, materials in the General, Supplementary, and Appendix sections continued to be accumulated and edited; by 1881 there had been at least nineteen subsequent installments or reprints, producing the Continued Compilation of *Tongmunhwigo* totaling 36 volumes.<sup>28</sup>

Imperial gifts from the Qing emperor, conveyed through *yebu* 禮部 “the Board of Rites”, are recorded chiefly in *Tongmunhwigo* under the *sadae* dossiers headed *chinha*, *chinwi*, *mun'an*, *chŏlsa*, and *chinju*. A survey of *Tongmunhwigo* shows that in the early Qing the gift lists for the Chosŏn king and for envoys were not yet fixed; the formula *Ŭngsojŏngryesangsa* 應照定例賞賜 “to award in accordance with established precedent” appears only in 1734. Thereafter, gifts to envoys were granted by fixed regulation, while gifts to the Chosŏn king did not become standardized until the late eighteenth century. Additional bestowals appear as ad hoc awards at banquets and feasts, and, in some cases, as newly bestowed volumes following emendations to official histories undertaken at Chosŏn’s request.

## Conclusion

<sup>27</sup> Chŏngjo 正祖, “Tongmun hwiko” 同文彙考 vol. 129 in *Hongjaejŏnsŏ* 弘齋全書 of Han’guk munjip ch’onggan 267 vol. 184 (Seoul: Minjok munhwa ch’ujinhwe, 2001), p. 582.

<sup>28</sup> See Kim Kyŏngnok 金敬福, “Chosŏn hugi Tongmun hwiko ŭi p’yŏnch’an kwajŏng kwa sŏnggyŏk” 조선 후기 동문회고의 편찬과정과 성격, *Chosŏn sidae sahakpo* 32 (2005): 185-226; Liu Bo 劉波, “Tongwen huikao shiliao fenlei shuyao” 同文彙考史料分類述要 (Master’s thesis, Jilin Dongbei Shifan Daxue, 2011).

This study has centered on *Tongmunhwigo* and, with reference to *Chosŏnwangchosillok* and *Yŏnhaengnok* 燕行錄 (A collection of travelogues recorded by Korean envoys who traveled to Beijing during the Koryŏ and Chosŏn dynasties from the 12th century to the 19th century), collated the records of gifts bestowed by the Qing emperors upon Chosŏn. The findings are clear: relative to Chosŏn's substantial demand for books and material goods from imperial China, imperial bestowals were sparse. Chosŏn therefore relied on private trade and purchases by embassy missions, practices that in turn provoked stringent prohibitions from the Qing government. Research on the "Sinosphere" has often followed Nishijima Sadao's framework, which posits an East Asian order centered on the Chinese emperor and extending control over foreign rulers through the investiture system. Yet the documentary record suggests otherwise: the Qing court showed little intention to intervene in the intellectual and material development of neighboring polities such as Chosŏn, and its policies could even operate as impediments to that development.

In books, driven by the need for works related to Zhu Xi and for keeping abreast of scholarship in imperial China, Chosŏn actively acquired texts through private trade; by contrast, the Ming – and later the Qing – repeatedly forbade Chosŏn envoys from purchasing books. In material culture, amid seventeenth-century loyalism to the Ming and the rise of the *huayi* discourse, Chosŏn's demand shifted from heavy reliance on Ming goods, to brief rejection during the Ming–Qing transition, and then to renewed admiration for Qing artifacts by the late eighteenth century. The Qing court's extremely limited bestowals could not satisfy domestic demand: palace wares—especially *falangci* – were used mainly for official banquets, court display, and funerary accompaniment, and thus exerted only minimal influence on Chosŏn's material life. The very scarcity of imperial gifts invites us to reconsider the actual scope of Chinese imperial power over neighboring polities.

Translator: Jianan Shen, Nanjing University