THE MANCHU-KOREAN WAR IN 1636:

BACKGROUND AND RESULT

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The Manchu-Korean War in 1636: Background and Result

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Abstract

It has been argued numerous times that Chosŏn’s sinocentrism resulted in its anti-Qing and pro-Ming sentiment, which ultimately led to two humiliating defeats during the Jurchen-Korean war (1627) and Manchu-Korean war (1636). However, there are also some external reasons in need of further study. Using both Chinese and Korean primary sources, this thesis will examine the development of Chosŏn’s hostility towards the Qing and nostalgia for the Ming years. It will also analyze the historical developments that fostered Chosŏn’s anti-Qing and pro-Ming sentiment from the perspective of Ming-Qing-Chosŏn relations from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century. These external influences, such as pre-existing perceptions of the “barbaric” Jurchens reflected from the border conflicts, the inevitability of the Manchu invasions of innocent Chosŏn, the Manchus excessive requests to Chosŏn after the wars and a sense of gratitude toward the Ming inculcated during the Imjin War had a profound influence on Chosŏn’s sentiments. These points need to be examined to comprehensively understand the Manchu-Korean War and Sino-Korean relations in the seventeenth century.
The Manchu-Korean war\(^1\) in 1636: Background and Result

East Asia had been mired in conflict since the late sixteenth century. Because of internal and external unrest, the power of the Ming Empire, which has been the regional hegemon, started to decline. Emperor Jiajing (1521-1566) was a tyrant and an ineffective ruler. He spent most his days idly with the women of his harem and wasted energy and resources in search of immortality. His concern for court issues was minimal, and corruption and disorder were pervasive in the Ming court. Furthermore, clashes with neighboring states were rampant due to the government’s incompetence in border security. The Japanese and the Mongols frequently attacked the Ming. People were suffering in an unstable society.

Meanwhile, Japan was finally unified after a long and brutal civil war under the leadership of Oda Nobunaga. However, Nobunaga was assassinated shortly after unification and one of his ambitious generals, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, emerged as the second “unifier” of Japan. While working under Nobunaga, Hideyoshi stated that his life goal was to use Chosŏn’s troops to attack the Ming, and to unify the Ming, Chosŏn, and Japan. Nobunaga responded, “Hideyoshi has started bragging again.”\(^2\) Regardless of whether or not Hideyoshi was boasting at the time, he invaded Chosŏn in 1592. In the end, Hideyoshi’s troops were defeated through an alliance of Chosŏn and Ming forces. Hideyoshi died in 1598, before the end of the war. His aggressive ambition achieved nothing but misery for Chosŏn Koreans. However, the war helped another leader to fulfill similar ambitions. This person was the leader of the Jurchens, Nurhaci (1559-1626). The seven-year Imjin War caused significant losses for the state power of both the Ming

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\(^1\) The Manchu-Korean war is also called “the Manchu invasion.” For the sake of neutrality I use the “Manchu-Korean war” in this paper. Also, I use “Imjin War” instead of “the Japanese invasion of Chosŏn” in the later portion.

and Chosŏn. The Ming in the later years of the Wanling emperor (1572-1620) was a dynasty in desperation. Among all the powers in East Asia by the end of the sixteenth century, Nurhaci had unified the Jurchen tribes and founded the Later Jin, whose strength developed rapidly. Nurhaci noticed the declining Ming dynasty, and sought the right time to take over the throne of East Asia's long-respected imperial power. At the same time, he also realized the existence of a loyal ally of the Ming, Chosŏn, which would be an obstacle in his plan to attack the Ming. The Jurchen-Korean war (1627) and Manchu-Korean War (1636) occurred at this time. This paper will examine that Chosŏn’s anti-Qing and pro-Ming sentiment that arose in these two wars and through Sino-Korean relations in the seventeenth century.

Frequent raids by Jurchen tribes on the northern border caused Chosŏn to view them as barbaric. Since Jurchen tribes had been subjects of both Ming and Chosŏn, it was natural for Chosŏn to treat Jurchens as a junior state which should be obedient to the Ming and Chosŏn. Both Nurhaci and Hong Taiji (1592-1643)\(^3\) set the aim of creating an East Asian Empire. Soon, Chosŏn became a barrier for the Manchu’s goal of conquering the Ming. The Manchus’ stern demands after the war instigated Confucian officials’ hatred of the Manchus and an indebtedness to the Ming. The Manchus’ brutal conduct during and after the Manchu-Korean War developed Chosŏn’s antagonism towards the Qing. For Chosŏn, the Manchus were viewed as barbaric and it was impossible for Chosŏn to accept them as a senior state at that time.

**Introduction**

On January 30, 1637, King Injo (1595-1649) and about fifty Confucian officials and followers came out of Namhansan fortress, bowing to Hong Taiji to signal Chosŏn’s surrender.

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\(^3\) Son of Nurhaci, the first emperor of the Qing Dynasty.
The Manchu-Korean War had ended with Chosŏn’s defeat. In addition, Chosŏn was forced to accept the Terms of the Peace presented by the Qing. The terms included⁴:

Chosŏn should sever relations with the Ming, and should give up using Ming’s reign title and adopt that of the Qing. Furthermore, Chosŏn should also abandon the official seals and documents endowed by the Ming.

As hostages, Chosŏn should send two princes (the eldest son, Crown Prince Sohyŏnseja (昭顯世子, 1612–1645), and his younger brother, Pongnimdaegun (鳳林大君, 1619–1659)) and the sons or elder brothers of the officials of the Chosŏn court to the Qing.

Chosŏn should send troops to assist the Qing when they attack the Ming force in Kado.

Chosŏn should submit, as tribute payments, local specialties and other gifts to the Qing on holidays and other celebrations.

Chosŏn should release the Qing prisoners of war who intend to return to the Qing, or send all of the prisoners directly back.

Chosŏn should organize arranged marriages between Chosŏn officials’ families and Qing officials’ families.

⁴ Injo sillok, volume 34, Injo 15, 1, 28, mujin.
Chosŏn is not allowed to build any new fortress or replace old ones.

Chosŏn should allow the Tümen of Urianghan people to enter Chosŏn.

Chosŏn may have regular relations with Japan. However, it should present Japanese envoys to the Qing.

Chosŏn should cut trade relations with people who have escaped to the east of the Tümen of Urianghan. It would be considered a crime for any person to maintain relations with those people.

Chosŏn should submit all the required tribute to the Qing in a timely manner.

Although Chosŏn Koreans accepted the terms, they were reluctant to implement them. Chosŏn accepted the use of the Qing’s reign title, but secretly continued to use the Ming’s reign title and continued to communicate with the Ming. Chosŏn had adopted the Ming’s reign title in their calendar system to record meteorological phenomena at the time of the Imjin War (1592-1598), which occurred around four decades earlier. Also, as stated earlier, according to the Terms of the Peace, Chosŏn was forced to send two princes to the Qing as hostages. Considering the safety of the princes held as hostages by the Qing, the official Ch'oe Myŏnggil (崔鳴吉, 1586–1647) made the following statement to King Injo:

"As long as two princes are held as hostages, it is wise for us to meet every demand by the Qing in order to avoid any further suspicion about our loyalty. This is about the only
The way we can be assured that the princes will be sent back soon safely. We’ve already adopted their reign title in many of our court documents, therefore, it would not seem as humiliating if we use it once more in our calendar system.”

King Injo agreed to comply with Ch’oe’s suggestions, but still felt indebted to the Ming. On January 1, 1639, when the Chosŏn court performed the ancestor worship ritual, King Injo bowed in the direction of the Ming and wept silently. Even though Chosŏn had started using the Qing’s reign title in most diplomatic documents and had adopted the Qing’s reign title, Chosŏn continued to use the Ming’s for services to its ancestors. Chosŏn court officials recognized that King Injo’s tears were from his sincerity in respecting the tribute relations with the Ming. If this sincerity could be maintained, it was thought that Chosŏn could conquer the Qing to avenge the Ming. However, the humiliation Chosŏn experienced at that time was not so severe as to break their spirit.

During the Manchu-Korean War period, the Chosŏn court was divided primarily into two factions: the Resistance Faction (Ch’ŏkhwap’a, 斥和派) and the Peace Faction (Chuhwap’a, 主和派). Resistance Faction officials insisted on fighting the Qing to the end, regardless of the consequences of defeat. The official Kim Sangŭn (金尙憲, 1570–1652) exemplifies the Resistance Faction, having attempted suicide by starving himself for six days to express his unwillingness to submit to the Qing. His suicide was prevented by Na Man’ga (羅萬甲, 1592–1642), a civil official of the Chosŏn court. On the other hand, the Peace Faction consisted of

5 Injo Sillok, volume 35, 15, 8, kyesa, quoted in Jiaju Liu, Qingchao chuqi de zhonghan guanxi (Taipei: Wenshizhe chubanshe, 1986), 348.
6 Injo Sillok, volume 36, Injo 16, 1, ǔlch’uk
officials who, concerned with the security of the state, pressured King Injo into a humiliating submission as his act of surrender. Ch’oe Myônggil, the official mentioned above, was the leader of the Peace Faction. It was Ch’oe who convinced King Injo to surrender and accept the Qing’s oppressive requests.

Nevertheless, Ch’oe’s insistence did not necessarily indicate that he was siding with the Qing. The Peace Faction officials also remembered the humiliation Chosŏn had received from the Qing in the Jurchen-Korean war. Compared to the Resistance Faction, the Peace Faction proceeded on their policy more pragmatically, learning from the perseverance of Goujian (勾践，？－464 BC), the king of the Yue Kingdom. Peace Faction officials wanted to wait for the right time for revenge, when Chosŏn develop into a powerful state. Regardless of the divisions between the Resistance Faction and the Peace Faction, it is clear that both King Injo and the Confucian officials maintained an anti-Qing sentiment. Besides the reign title issue, there were other events reflecting Chosŏn’s antipathy for the Qing. When the Qing requested Chosŏn's assistance in attacking the Ming, Chosŏn sent an envoy to the Ming first, expressing Chosŏn’s dilemma. Why was Chosŏn recalcitrant in following the Qing’s demands, which it had previously agreed to? How did Chosŏn’s anti-Qing sentiment arise? Chosŏn's anti-Qing sentiment stemmed not only from King Injo ’s humiliating bow to Hong Taiji at the war's end, but from historical Chosŏn-Jurchen relations since the fourteenth century, and this rapidly developed due to the Jurchen-Korean war and the Manchu-Korean wars.

8 In 496 BC, the Kingdom of Yue was defeated by the Kingdom of Wu. Goujian, the King of Yue was forced to bow in surrender. Also, he was captured and sent to the Wu court as a hostage, serving Fuchai, the king of Wu. After three years, Goujian was sent back to his kingdom. In order to remind himself of the great humiliation he had suffered because of the Wu, he would taste bile every day. Goujian focused on fortifying the power of the Kingdom of Yue and sought opportunities for revenge. Ten years after he was sent back, the Yue took over the Wu. Nowadays, people use the phrase “woxinchangdan,” (臥薪尝膽) to refer the perseverance of Goujian.
**Literature Review**

Studies on the conflict between the Manchus and Chosŏn Koreans are rather limited. However, more research has been done by Korean academia than Chinese. Jiaju Liu’s work, *Qingchao chuqi de zhonghan guanxi* (清朝初期的中韓關係, Sino-Korean Relations in the early Qing Dynasty), published in 1986, was one of the earliest major works on the Jurchen-Korean war, Manchu-Korean war, and Manchu-Chosŏn relations. Primarily using Korean sources, Liu describes the processes of the two wars in detail. Liu also discusses Chosŏn’s reluctance in implementing the Terms of Peace after the war. It is an effective guide and valuable contemporary source for learning about that period, though some sections lack detail. Also, Liu did not examine the Ming’s role in the book, which is an important factor in analyzing the development of Chosŏn-Qing relations.

Myung-Gi Han is one of the major Korean scholars studying the Manchu-Korean wars and Sino-Korean relations. He compiled the book *Chŏngmyo Pyŏngja holan kwa tongasia* (정묘·병자호란과 동아시아, Studies of the Manchu Invasions of Chosŏn Korea in 1627 and 1636 with East Asian Perspectives). In his book, he argues that the major reason for the Manchu invasion of Chosŏn in 1627 was to take over the Ming position on Kado island, and that the Manchu-Korean War occurred later due to conflicts between the Later Jin and Chosŏn, which resulted from the Jurchen-Korean war. Han uses various sources in supporting his arguments, not only the major Korean primary sources, such as the *Injo Sillok* and the *Sŭngjŏngwŏn ilgi*, but also Chinese sources such as the *Qing Shilu*, and many anthologies compiled by Korean literati. However, he focused primarily on the reactions of King Injo’s government to the wars,
particularly during the Manchu-Korean war, and does not provide a comprehensive picture of the war.

Samsung Yi’s work *Tongasia chŏnjaeng kwa p’yŏnghw*a, (동아시아의 전쟁과 평화, War and Peace in East Asia) gives a broader view of the Wars, as he provides more background about the Manchu’s rise and the Ming’s decline. Besides primary sources, he cites and discusses contemporary scholars’ opinions on the wars. It is very informative to read other scholars’ points of view in one book. Yi argues that the Jurchen-Korean war and the Manchu-Korean wars should be discussed separately. He suggests that the Jurchen-Korean war was unavoidable because the Later Jin intended to invade the Chosŏn. However, he also suggests that the Chosŏn court applied appropriate diplomatic polices to avoid the Manchu-Korean war. Yi criticized the failure of the King Injo’s government in building a friendly relationship with the Later Jin after the Jurchen-Korean conflicts, which caused the Manchu invasion.

T’aegu Hŏ’s doctoral dissertation “Pyŏngja horan ŭi chŏngch’i kunsasajŏk yŏngu”(丙子胡亂의 정치·군사사적 연구, Studies on the Manchu-Korean war, from political and military perspectives) studies the Manchu-Korean War from the political and military perspective. Due to Chosŏn’s weak military power and the low possibility of any aid from Ming troops, he argues Chosŏn defeat was inevitable. He also points out that Chosŏn’s loyalty to Ming should be discussed separately from Chosŏn’s respect for the Chinese world order as many Confucian officials had already begun to recognize the decline of the Ming during the war. However, though certain Chosŏn court officials criticized the Ming’s decline, Chosŏn’s longing for the Ming’s glorious years did not cause their desire to keep Chinese traditions until after King Hyojong’s Northern expedition plan.
Most works discuss the influence of sinocentrism in forming Chosŏn’s anti-Jurchen and pro-Ming sentiment, which negatively affected the Chosŏn court's ability to form effective diplomatic strategies that may have prevented the Jurchen-Korean and Manchu-Korean wars. Admittedly, sinocentrism was one of the major reasons for Chosŏn’s pro-Ming and anti-Jurchen sentiment. Compared to the Koryŏ dynasty, sinocentrism was a more powerful element dominating the main ideology of Chosŏn society as Yi Sŏnggye (李成桂, 1335–1408), the founder of Chosŏn, had adopted Neo-Confucianism as the state ideology and set “serve the Great Ming” as a major diplomatic policy. However, Chosŏn’s anti-Jurchens sentiment also came from the border conflicts that the Jurchens provoked, in which the outrageous conduct of the Jurchens incited Chosŏn’s antipathy. In addition, Chosŏn’s anti-Jurchen sentiment further developed due to the Manchu’s excessive requests in concluding peace agreements after the two wars. These facts should be given the same attention as sinocentrism in analyzing the origins of Chosŏn’s anti-Jurchens sentiment. Also, the comparative analysis between how Manchu attacks on the Ming were “unavoidable” and the war between Chosŏn and Jurchens was “inevitable” should be discussed. To fully understand the Manchu-Korean wars, it is necessary to study historical Jurchen-Korea relations, and the circumstances of the East Asian region in order to analyze events comprehensively. The Chosŏn state faced internal issues leading to its failure in the war, but external reasons, such as the motivations and relative positions of the Jurchens and the Ming also need to be considered.

In the following sections, I will discuss the border conflicts and Jurchen-Ming-Chosŏn relations in the early Chosŏn period, Nurhaci and the development of Jianzhou Jurchens, the Imjin War, the Jurchen-Korean war and the Manchu-Korean war in chronological order.
Through these events, I will examine the development of Chosŏn’s hostility towards the Qing, its longing for the Ming and analyze the unavoidable historical developments that fostered Chosŏn’s anti-Qing and pro-Ming sentiment, from the perspective of the Ming-Qing-Chosŏn relations from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century. In order to comprehensively understand Chosŏn’s anti-Qing sentiment, it is necessary to examine the historical development of Chosŏn’s relations with both the Ming and the Qing.

The Rise of Chosŏn’s anti-Qing and pro-Ming sentiment

1. Border conflicts and Chosŏn-Jurchen relations

   1.1. Jurchen tribes, and the barbarians

   The predecessors of the Qing were the Jurchen tribes that appeared on the northern border of China and Korea, and were referred to as Manchus starting in the 1630s. The Jurchens founded the Jin dynasty in 1115, but it was overrun by the Mongols who established the Yuan dynasty in 1271. Jurchens had been driven to the north of China, gathering in different tribes governed by Mongolian military garrisons. Jurchens were forced to submit extensive taxes, various materials such as gold and silver to the Mongols. This was one of the primary reasons for the Jurchens’ antagonism towards the Mongols in later years. In 1368, the Yuan dynasty collapsed and the Ming began their domination of China. Considering the high military cost and limited benefits of taking over the Jurchen communities, the Ming chose to build harmonious tributary relations with the Jurchen tribes. The Ming organized Jurchen territories with military garrisons and loosely governed them using their commandery system. Jurchen tribes achieved tremendous growth in a very short time.

The Jurchens lived mostly by hunting and fishing, with very limited agriculture. Due to the culture and life style differences, nomadic tribes such as the Jurchens and Mongols, were referred to as barbarians in historical Chinese and Koreans sources. In the third century B.C.E., traditional Chinese scholars referred to China and its societies in its ecumene with the same politico-cultural values as “Hua.” All other societies were called “non-Hua” and their people were treated as outsiders or as less than fully human. This idea developed in parallel to and was adopted by Confucianism, which dominated the ideology of East Asia for centuries. Early Ming texts recorded that the Jurchen tribes were “wild” people skillful in riding and shooting. Influenced by Confucianism, Chosŏn Korea also held a barbaric image of the Jurchens. The Koryosa contains records of King T’aeko’s command to build garrisons outside of the border cities to safeguard against the Jurchen attacks.

“The people from the North had a human face but barbarian heart. They came to China asking for food when they got hungry, and left after being fed. They did not care about their humiliation as long as they benefitted. Although they were our subjects at that time, there was always the possibility that they might betray us at any moment. We should therefore build defenses outside the city in case they cross the boundaries and prepare for their possible sudden attack.”

Also, according to the Koryosa, in 1115, there is a record of the founding of the Jin Dynasty, in which the Jurchens were described as barbaric, like the Xiongnu people. It was also written that although the Jurchens founded the Jin state, they still lived on remote mountains, and had no

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11 Rossabi Morris, The Jurchens in the Yüan and Ming, 6.
12 Koryosa, volume 2, sega 2, T’aeko 14, 11.
established cities or written language. Influenced by Confucianism and based on cultural differences, Koreans had an impression of the Jurchen tribes as primitive and uncivilized. In particular, their perception of the Jurchens as having “human” faces but “barbarian hearts” was a characterization passed down through generations. Many literati in Chosŏn used similar expressions describing Jurchens in different works.

1.2. Conflicts on the border

Besides the Confucian influence from China, the Koreans’ image of brutal Jurchens also stemmed from the conflicts Jurchen tribes had provoked on the northern border of Korea. Since the early twelfth century, Jurchens had been attacking Korea and persecuting Korean envoys sent to the Yuan on tribute missions. At the beginning of the Ming dynasty, when they had developed into a formidable military power, Jurchen tribes had even tried to expand their territory beyond the border with Korea. In the end, the tension was eased by the foundation of subject relations between the Jurchen tribes and Korea. For a while, Korea-Jurchen relations were peaceful.

By the fifteenth century, most Jurchen tribes had established tributary relations with both China and Korea. The chieftains of the Jurchen tribes submitted tribute to the Ming and were granted seals and patents. They received titles and salaries when they visited Chosŏn. From 1395 to 1554, there were 675 Jurchen tribesmen who had received titles from Chosŏn. Jurchen tribes received agricultural products and other living resources from China and Korea through

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13 Koryosa, volume 14, sega 14, Yejong 10, 1.
14 Rossabi Morris, The Jurchens in the Yuan and Ming, 10.
15 Ibid., 18.
these tribute relations, but there was little interest in adopting the Confucian ideology. From the perspective of Chosŏn, this fact easily indicated the superiority of Chosŏn to the Jurchens. The way in which Jurchens refused to accept Confucianism stands out as a major difference between the Jurchens and Chinese or Koreans, emphasizing the “outsider” characterization of the Jurchens.

Jurchen civilization rapidly developed throughout the Ming period, and three major tribes were established; the Jianzhou Jurchens, Haixi Juchens, and Yeren Jurchens. Peaceful relations among the Ming, Chosŏn, and Jurchen tribes did not last long, however. Issues started with the Jianzhou Jurchens. In January 1433, Li Manzhu, the chieftain of Jianzhou Jurchens, invaded Chosŏn territory with 400 soldiers. Based on the record of the *Kukcho chŏng’o rok* (Records on the Expeditions of Chosŏn), Li Manzhu had physical characteristics similar to a hedgehog with fire, which vividly reflected his outrageous character. His troops captured numerous Koreans and took away livestock. When Chosŏn negotiated with him, he lied and sent back only sixty-four Koreans he had captured. To free the remaining Koreans, King Sejong sent 10,000 troops to pursue the Jianzhou Jurchens.

In fact, this fighting was related to Li Manzhu causing conflicts on the border of Chosŏn as well as the Ming. In 1424, 1429, and 1436, Li requested permission from the Ming to move his people to China. After being rejected, Li moved to the border of Chosŏn and invaded Chosŏn first. In the end, Chosŏn defeated Li’s troops and they moved further to the Suzi river valley.  

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17 *Kukcho chŏng’o rok* recorded Chosŏn’s expeditions of Chosŏn. There were seven wars in total, from the Kihae Eastern Expedition in 1419 to the Samp’o war in 1510. Two of the seven expeditions were to Japan, and the remaining five were to the Jurchen tribes.

18 Rossabi Morris, *The Jurchens in the Yuan and Ming*, 41-42.
This was just the start of friction among the Jianzhou Jurchens, Chosŏn, and the Ming. In the following years, Jianzhou Jurchens continued causing trouble on the border, and the Ming, along with Chosŏn, cooperated in dealing with this menace. On April 29, 1467, several Chosŏn border officials and their followers were hunting around Mountain Taech’ang, on the border of Chosŏn and Jianzhou Jurchen territory and were attacked by the Jurchens. Most followers were killed or captured. Additionally, in September of the same year, Jianzhou Jurchens plundered settlements on the borders of Ming territory. The Ming Emperor requested Chosŏn’s assistance in attacking the Jurchens. Based on these two reasons, Chosŏn initiated an expedition into Jianzhou Jurchen territory. With more than 10,000 soldiers, under the commands of four Chosŏn generals, the expedition achieved a significant victory. Li Manzu, the chieftain of Jianzhou Jurchens was captured, and Chosŏn armies took almost no losses. Chosŏn celebrated their victory, and the Ming awarded silver and silk to the Chosŏn generals in appreciation.\(^\text{19}\)

Due to the early conflicts the Jurchens caused on the border, Chosŏn Koreans naturally formed a hostile image of the Jurchens. Koreans always named Jurchens as an enemy in their historical records. On the other hand, the Ming always cooperated with Chosŏn. In many situations, Chosŏn received commands from the Ming to fight with the Jurchens. At that time, Chosŏn had already sided with the Ming against the Jurchens.

Many Chosŏn literati express their hatred toward the Jurchens in their works. Ch’aesu (蔡壽，1449–1515) wrote, “Jurchens have a human face, but they have brutal hearts like the wild beasts. Thanks to the Ming, requesting Chosŏn to invade the Jurchen territory, the captured Koreans were returned. The successful invasion should be praised and we should celebrate the

\(^{19}\) Gu-Bok Jeong, “*Kukcho chŏng’o rok ūi saryojŏk sŏnggyŏk*”, *Changsŏgak* v.9, Seoul: tŏksŏngmunhwasa, (September 2003), 220–221.
Chosŏn Confucian officials looked down on Jurchen tribes, particularly before the seventeenth century when Jurchen tribes had not yet formed into an independent state and still lived on supplements from the Ming and Chosŏn. In Ku Samaeng’s (具思孟，1531–1604) opinion, Jurchens had been Chosŏn’s subject, receiving materials and benefits for centuries. However, they rejected the benefits received from the powerful suzerain, killed Koreans and plundered villages in our country; they are a bunch of despicable beings.” Chosŏn’s officials firmly believed in Chosŏn’s superiority to the Jurchens, and the Jurchens abusive behavior and their disregard for Chosŏn’s generosity certainly did not help assuage Chosŏn officials’ discontent with the Jurchens. The Jurchens’ image as brutal and uncultured was deeply fixed in their minds.

The Jurchens’ brutal attacks on the border of Chosŏn ensured Chosŏn’s recognition of the Jurchens as a group of half human beings that were highly uncivilized. This corresponded to the traditional concept of “barbarians.” The barbaric image of Jurchens to the Chinese and Koreans had not changed, but had been strengthened over time due to border conflicts.

2. Nurhaci and the Imjin War

2.1. Manchu’s rise and Nurhaci’s ambitions

Although conflicts occurred on the borders between the Jurchen tribes, the Ming dynasty and Chosŏn, the Jurchens continued to benefit from the subject relations they had built with the Ming and Chosŏn since the fourteenth century. The Jurchen tribes continued to increase their military power despite their growing demand for resources due to population increase.

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20 Ch’aesu (蔡壽，1449–1515), Najajeip [極齋集], volume 1, quoted in Myŏng-gi Han, Chŏngmyo pyŏngja holan kwa tongasia (Seoul: P’urŭn yŏksa, 2009), 366.
21 Ku Samaeng (具思孟，1531–1604), P’algokchip [八谷集], volume 3, quoted in Myŏng-gi Han, Chŏngmyo pyŏngja holan kwa tongasia (Seoul: P’urŭn yŏksa, 2009), 368.
Furthermore, during the fifteenth century, East Asia experienced a minor ice age which caused a drastic climate change, which brought about insufficient agricultural harvests resulting in a lack of food and other resources needed for survival. This led to rival groups across the northeast fighting with each other to obtain more resources for their own communities. This too was a reason for the wars among East Asian states during this time.

Several Jurchen documents record the “Legends of Nurhaci”. He was described as the “Son of Heaven” sent to unify the Jurchen tribes. Nurhaci’s hostilities for the Ming originated with his grandfather and father’s death. By the end of the sixteenth century, conflicts arose between the three Jurchen garrisons. They became separated and formed new tribes, and each had differing relations with the Ming. The tribe led by Wang Gao (王杲, 1575) was the most powerful, and was strongly opposed to the Ming authority; they attacked Liaoyang and killed many Ming generals and officials. In February 1583, General Li Chengliang led the Ming troops to invade Wang Gao and killed him in the war. To avenge his father, Wang Gao’s son Atai (阿台, 1583) continued fighting against the Ming. However, Ming troops were stationed in Atai’s territory soon after and thus forced Atai into a precarious situation. It should be noted that Atai’s wife was Nurhaci’s cousin and Nurhaci’s grandfather did not want to see his granddaughter die during the war and tried to convince Atai to submit to the Ming. However, the Ming launched an invasion of Atai’s tribal territory on the day Nurhaci’s grandfather and father were visiting Atai. Many Jurchens were killed by the Ming in the invasion, including Nurhaci’s

22 Tae-jin Yi, “Neo-Catastrophism and a New Global Interpretation of History” (paper presented at the second congress of the Asian Association of World Historians, 2012.)
23 Historical documents, such as Sanchao lioshi shilu (《三朝辽事实录》), Mingshi chaolve·Lichengliangzhuan (《明史钞略·李成梁传》), Qing kaiguofanglve (《清开国方略》) had records about the legends of Nurhaci, quoted in Chongnian Yan, Nurhachizhuan (Biography of Nurhaci), (Beijing: Beijing Publisher, 1983), 20.
24 Qingshigao Wanggaozhuan, Zhonghuashujubiaodianben, volume 222, 9124, quoted in Chongnian Yan, Nurhachizhuan, 23.
father and grandfather. This incident shocked Nurhaci. He suffered immense sorrow over his grandfather's and father’s deaths. He asked the Ming border officials directly for the reason of his father and grandfather’s death, but the answer was that they were killed because they were misidentified as Jurchens from Atai’s tribe.\textsuperscript{25} Nurhaci had a noble family background. Many of his ancestors had been tribal leaders, working under the Ming. Although the prosperity of Nurhaci’s family experienced a great decline during the generations of Nurhaci’s father and grandfather, the Ming could not ignore this famed Jurchen family, and tried to make up for the mistaken killing of Nurhaci’s father and grandfather. In order to placate Nurhaci, the Ming granted him thirty special permits, thirty horses, and also assigned him as the commander.

Although the Ming tried to placate Nurhaci’s discontent towards the Ming, it was difficult for Nurhaci to recover from the sadness of losing his father and grandfather. In addition, the Ming was greatly supporting the development of another Jurchen tribe, led by Nikan Wailan, which had assisted the Ming in attacks on Atai's tribe. Nikan Wailan’s tribe quickly became the strongest among Jurchen tribes. Nikan Wailan gained power largely at the expense of Nurhaci’s authority within his tribe, as many members had left and joined Nikan Wailan’s community. Those facts intensified Nurhaci’s hatred of the Ming. However, at that time, Nurhaci’s power was too limited to challenge the Ming.

Nurhaci was a shrewd leader and did not expose his ambitious plan until the right time. Understanding that thorough preparation is half the battle, Nurhaci made strengthening the Jianzhou Jurchens’ power his first step. He took lessons from his ancestors’ failures. Nurhaci realized that only a unified Jurchen state would be able to challenge the Ming. He tried to unify

\textsuperscript{25} Manzhou Shilu, volume 1, 8.
other Jurchen tribes to extend Jianzhou Jurchen’s strength. The major diplomatic strategies that Nurhaci had used were marital alliances and conquest. He used military power to conquer neighboring tribes and intermarriage to build close relations with other tribes to further Jianzhou Jurchen’s influence.  

Entitled as Chieftain of Jianzhou Jurchens by the Ming in 1583, Nurhaci maintained tribute relations with the Ming, as well as with Chosŏn. Jianzhou Jurchens learned agricultural skills from the Chinese and Koreans. They also mastered making iron tools and weapons by themselves. In addition, they continued to trade with the Ming, by selling ginseng, furs, and pearls, obtaining numerous amounts of gold and silver in return. All of these laid the foundations for Nurhaci’s plan of attacking the Ming.

Chosŏn watched the growth of the Jurchens under the leadership of Nurhaci, and realized that the Jurchens would become a threat both to itself and the Ming. Nurhaci did not make a good impression on Chosŏn. In the Sillok’s record, Nurhaci’s name was often shortened as “old chieftain” (老酋, noch’u) or even “old thief” (老賊, nojŏk). In 1588, Nurhaci defeated the East Jianzhou Jurchen tribe and completed the unification of all the Jianzhou Jurchen tribes. By that time, Nurhaci had extended his territory to the Yalu River, bordering Chosŏn. The next year, one official from P’yŏngando submitted a statement to King Sŏnjo, stating that there was a crisis in the border regions and that Nurhaci would become a source of major trouble for Chosŏn. Chosŏn Korean’s brutal image of Jurchens had been passed down since the early years, which impeded the development of harmonious Chosŏn-Jurchen relations. On the other hand, Jurchens’ development started threatening the Ming and Chosŏn’s state safety.

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26 Sam-sŏng Yi, Tongasia chŏnjaeng kwa p’yŏnghwâ, (Seoul: Hankilsa, 2009), 521.
28 Sŏnjo sillok, volume 23, Sŏnjo 22, 7, 12, chŏngsa
2.2. Chosŏn-Ming relations during the Imjin War

The Imjin War at the end of the sixteenth century was a significant milestone in East Asian history. It challenged China’s leading position in East Asia, and gave the Jurchen tribes an opportunity to develop into a major state. The Ming, Chosŏn, and Jurchen relations all experienced crucial changes. The Chosŏn-Ming relation grew closer.

On April 12, 1592, following the first Japanese troops led by Toyotomi Hideyoshi, around 90,000 troops later invaded Pusan, a major harbor city on the south of Chosŏn. This invasion was a massive shock to Chosŏn. Lacking well-prepared troops to defend itself, Pusan was soon taken by Japan. On May 2, Hansŏng, the capital of Chosŏn was seized by Japan. King Sŏnjo moved the capital to P’yŏngyang, however, on June 13, P’yŏngyang was taken over as well. Japanese troops continued attacking other Chosŏn cities, and after a few days, they occupied the majority of the Chosŏn cities. King Sŏnjo fled to the northern part of Chosŏn with great fear. On his way, he wrote a letter to the Ming for assistance. The state power of the Ming started to decline at that time, and thus, many court officials disagreed with sending troops to assist Chosŏn. However, based on Confucian belief, as the suzerain state, Ming had the responsibility to protect its vassal states. In addition, assisting Chosŏn was also a way for the Ming to protect itself. The Ming understood that there was a large possibility that the Japanese would invade them after taking over Chosŏn. For many years, Ming-Chosŏn relations had been compared to that of teeth and lips. Like a fence, Chosŏn stood outside, maintaining the Ming’s border security.  

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29 Today’s Seoul
In January 1593, the Ming General Li Rusong (李如松，1549－1598) led 40,000 troops departing for P’yŏngyang. Ming’s first campaign achieved tremendous success, and the valiant performance of General Yi Rusong in sea battles made him a hero of the Korean people. Soon after arriving at P’yŏngyang, Yi issued a command to besiege the city first, as a way to block the road for the Japanese retreat. Then he formed a dare-to-die corps to attack the Japanese by secretly crossing the city wall. However, the enemy noticed Ming’s dare-to-die corps as they climbed up the city wall. Then Admiral Yi ordered the use of gunpowder and noxious fire to distract Japanese troops’ attention. Yi displayed great bravery in the war; when his horse died after being shot, he quickly switched to another horse and continued fighting. All the Ming soldiers fought valiantly in the war. The Japanese were beaten by the combined Ming and Chosŏn forces. P’yŏngyang was returned to Chosŏn.31

The triumph in P’yŏngyang dramatically changed the tide of the war. King Sŏnjo was grateful to the Ming, and claimed that the Ming emperor’s favor to Chosŏn was infinite, and Chosŏn would never forget the Ming’s help.32 The return of P’yŏngyang, the state’s temporary capital, signified the start of a second life for Chosŏn, a rebirth from the defeat of Japan’s past invasions. Also, Chosŏn made a stele and built a temple for the Ming General Li Rusong, extolling his significant contribution to Chosŏn,33 The P’yŏngyang battle not only reversed Chosŏn’s passive position in the war, but also evoked Chosŏn’s indebtedness to the Ming.

2.3. Chosŏn-Jurchen relations during the Imjin War

31 Feifei Jiang, Hanjungwan’gyesa, Translated by Kim, Sŏng-il, (P’aju: Pŏmsa. 2005), 431.
32 Sŏnjo sillok, volume 34, Sŏnjo 26, 1, 9, kapcha.
33 Sŏnjo sillok, volume 35, Sŏnjo 26, 2, 2, chŏnggae.
Nurhaci noticed the crucial role Chosŏn would play if the Jurchens were to conquer the Ming in the future. Since Jianzhou Jurchens still had limited power during those years, rather than attacking Chosŏn, Nurhaci attempted to build an alliance with Chosŏn to strengthen the Jurchens’ power. Therefore, he also offered military assistance to Chosŏn during the Imjin War in order to further this plan.

Nurhaci expressed his willingness to assist Chosŏn in order to thwart Japan’s planned future invasion into Machuria\(^{34}\) area after Chosŏn was to be defeated. Nurhaci said it was necessary for the Jurchens to assist Chosŏn in order to fight the Japanese and win the support of the Ming Empire. However, considering the friction the Jurchens provoked on the border in the fifteenth century, Chosŏn doubted the sincerity of Nurhaci’s kindness and Nurhaci’s generous offer of assistance was not accepted by the Chosŏn.\(^{35}\) On the other hand, the extension of Jurchen power made Chosŏn apprehensive, and Chosŏn wrote to the Ming in September 1592:

\begin{quote}
“The Jurchens have strong resentment towards the Ming and Chosŏn because we treated them as a junior state. Although they are brutal, savage, and ignorant, they are waiting for the day when they are strong enough to attack and may even eliminate us. Chosŏn and the Ming should stop sending any further aid to them in order to foil their scheme of attacking us.”\(^{36}\)
\end{quote}

These words made Chosŏn’s position plainly evident.

Nevertheless, Nurhaci continued to pursue his goal of forming an alliance with Chosŏn. In 1595, Nurhaci sent back to Chosŏn fourteen Koreans who had escaped to the Jurchen territory

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\textsuperscript{34} Nowadays, Manchuria is usually referred as Northeast China, which includes Heilongjiang, Jilin, and Liaoning Province.
\textsuperscript{35} Seung Bum Kye, \textit{Chosŏn sidae haeoe p’ahyôngwa hanjunggwan’gye}, (Seoul: P’urŭn yŏksa, 2009), 152.
\textsuperscript{36} Sŏnjo sillok, volume 30, Sŏnjo 25, 9, 17, kapsul.
\end{flushright}
During the Japanese invasion war further expressing his willingness to assist Chosŏn militarily in the Imjin war again. Chosŏn again rejected this offer under the rationale that, in order to avoid unexpected troubles, Chosŏn could not involve its subjects in the war. Instead, to pacify Nurhaci’s discontent with Chosŏn’s rejection, King Sŏnjo prepared a big banquet in the border region to express Chosŏn’s appreciation for Nurhaci’s offer of assistance. One of the reasons for Sŏnjo’s decision was the Jurchens’ intolerable conduct, including stealing food and materials, wounding and killing Korean people, which had occurred in around the border regions in previous years. Chosŏn had almost no confidence in the Jurchens as an ally. Also, Sŏnjo did not want to create further issues with the Ming. Although some Jurchen tribes had subject relations with Chosŏn, frequent communication between the Jurchen tribes and Chosŏn was not viewed favorably by the Ming as a Jurchen-Chosŏn alliance might compromise the Ming state's safety. Nevertheless, Chosŏn did not want to create hostile relations with the Jurchens. Therefore, Chosŏn used the banquet to pacify Nurhaci’s discontent.37

However, Nurhaci was unsatisfied with Chosŏn’s response with a mere banquet and continued to create issues to increase communication with Chosŏn. In July, a number of Jurchens crossed the border and stole ginseng from Chosŏn’s territory. They were captured by the local residents and border soldiers, and a violent conflict arose. Twenty-seven Jurchens were killed during the conflict.38 It expected punishment for Jurchens who crossed the border without permission and stole resources, would be execution by the Chosŏn soldiers. Chosŏn had the authority to maintain its own border’s security, and thus usually, Jianzhou Jurchens were not involved in solving these conflicts. However, this time, Nurhaci initiated negotiations with

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38 Sŏnjo sillok, volume 65, Sŏnjo 28, 7, 27, musul, 28, 11, 20, nuja.
Chosŏn, with the excuse that a large number of Jurchens died in the conflict. Also, he mentioned
the friction on the border had become a diplomatic problem, negatively affecting Chosŏn-
Jurchen relations.39 Chosŏn realized that Nurhaci was intent on causing tensions between the
Jianzhou Jurchens and Chosŏn in order to get revenge for Chosŏn’ rejection of his offer for
military assistance. However, at that time, Chosŏn was fighting with Japan and had no ability to
give serious attention to any other diplomatic issues.

In order to avoid further trouble for the state, after getting the approval from the Ming,
Chosŏn decided to send an official, Sin Ch’ungil (申忠一, 1554-1622), to the Jianzhou Jurchens
to negotiate the border conflict. After returning, Sin compiled a collection of paintings
illustrating his observations of the Jianzhou Jurchens with annotated descriptions. This collection
was made into two volumes of picture albums, entitled Kŏnju kisŏng togi (建州記程圖紀,
Paintings on visiting the Jianzhou Jurchens). Sin’s works recorded the lifestyle and community
development of the Jianzhou Jurchens in detail. They were valuable documents for studying
Jurchen tribes and the history of Chosŏn-Jurchen relations.

Chosŏn Koreans’ general image of the uncivilized Jurchens was reflected in Sin’s trip.
Like other Chosŏn Confucian officials or literati, Sin addressed the Jurchens as barbarians and
described their behavior as uncultured. Conversations between Sin and the Jurchens revealed
misunderstandings between one another that were caused by their cultural differences. One of the
Jurchen officials had asked Sin why average Korean people and the soldiers did not dress as
lavishly as members of the royal house when they celebrated national events. Sin answered with
disdain: “In our state, people’s social status is indicated by their attire. Average Koreans wear

39 Sŏnjo sillok, volume 65, 28, 8, 13, kyech’uk, 28, 9, 21 kyŏngin, 28, 11, 7, ūlhae, 28, 10, 7, pyŏngu.
ordinary clothes to show their respect to the king and the people in higher positions. It is not like your state where (people were not educated, and thus) people are not aware to respect the ancestors." Without Confucian influence, Jurchens believed that they should all dress in the same manner and celebrate together when festivities occurred. However, in a Confucian society, it was forbidden to wear the same attire or sit with someone in a higher position without explicit permission. These cultural disputes caused conflicts to erupt easily between Chosŏn and the Jurchens.

Koreans believed that China and Korea were more civilized and advanced than any of the Jurchen communities. Therefore, when Nurhaci suggested an alliance between Chosŏn and the Jianzhou Jurchens, the Koreans were not interested, as they did not want to lower themselves to the same level as the Jurchen tribes.

On the other hand, Sin was also surprised by the rapid development of the Jurchens. They used furs to exchange agricultural products with the Chinese and Koreans, and stored grains in preparation for wartime. Although when viewed from a Confucian perspective, the Jurchens' agricultural capacity remained in a primitive stage, Sin could not help but notice the prosperity of the community. In addition, many other tribes had joined the Jianzhou Jurchens, and Nurhaci already possessed a strong military by then. The rapid development of the Jianzhou Jurchens became a great concern for Chosŏn Koreans. They began to recognize the threats posed by the Jurchens. But at the same time, it easily demonstrated that the barbaric images of Jurchens from the early years’ border conflicts were never changed in Chosŏn Koreans’ mind, which became

the reason for misunderstandings between the Chosŏn people and Jurchens. Some future conflicts stemmed from here as well.

3. The initiation of the Jurchen-Ming Wars and Chosŏn’s Reaction

3.1. Nurhaci’s Seven Grievances to the Ming

The Ming-Chosŏn alliance achieved success in ending the Imjin War. However, long-term fighting badly affected the state power of Chosŏn and the Ming, as both states suffered severe economic and military losses. In addition to the civilian rebellions, the Ming became too weak to hold back outside attacks. Nurhaci watched the decline of the Ming and Chosŏn, and became more confident in achieving his ultimate goal of creating his vast empire. In 1598, he offered 20,000 troops to assist Chosŏn again.\(^{42}\) However, this time, rather than Nurhaci trying to ameliorate the Chosŏn-Jurchen relation, he sought to boast arrogantly the strength of the Jianzhou Jurchen state, which had become strong enough to challenge the Ming and Chosŏn.\(^{43}\) Following this, he continued to expand Jianzhou Jurchen territory aggressively. By the seventeenth century, Jianzhou Jurchens conquered and unified all of the Jurchen tribes to the west, and its territory reached to the Mudan river area in the east.\(^{44}\)

This was when Nurhaci chose to challenge the Ming. In 1608, Nurhaci sent a tribute mission of 800 people to the Ming. Instead of sincerely submitting the tribute and receiving the rewards from the Ming, they complained that the amount of the silver awarded by the Ming was insufficient. This was the last time Nurhaci sent tribute to the Ming. This major undertaking demonstrated the Jianzhou Jurchens’ confidence in their military power and also signaled the beginning of Nurhaci’s plan of conquering the Ming.

\(^{42}\) Sŏnjo sillok, volume 97, Sŏnjo 31,2,28, gyemi, volume 98, Sŏnjo 31, 3, 9, kabo.

\(^{43}\) Seung Bum Kye, Chosŏn sidae haeoe p’abyŏng wa hanjung kwan’gye, 152.

\(^{44}\) Ibid, 156.
In 1616, Nurhaci founded the Later Jin region by claiming himself as the “bright khan.”

On April 13, 1618, after which the Jianzhou Jurchens began their invasion of Ming territory, Nurhaci wrote a letter, titled “The Seven Grievances” to the Ming. The first of these was vengeance:

“My father and ancestors who had not tried to take over an inch of the Ming’s territory were killed by the Ming in the border conflicts. The Ming killed my father and grandfather. This is the first grievance.”

However, with the exception of the third grievance, the remaining ones were all about the Ming’s discriminatory attitude towards the Jurchen tribe under the lead of Nikan Wailan. In fact, one of the purposes of the “Seven Grievances” was to express the discontent of the Jurchen nobles, and particularly Nurhaci’s personal hatred towards the Ming. Nevertheless, Nurhaci also tried to use the attack on the Ming to distract the Jurchen population away from the internal conflicts of the Later Jin dynasty. Northeast Asia suffered a severe natural disaster in the early seventeenth century. Many Jurchens died from starvation. Chosŏn records state that Jurchens were crossing the border and begging for food more frequently during the drought. Chosŏn expended a large amount of resources to meet the Jurchens’ needs. Some Jurchens came seeking food without any clothing as a result of the harsh conditions. Although the Jurchens were pitiable, Chosŏn realized that they could not send an unlimited supply food to aid the Jurchens as the

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46 Many historical documents have the records on Nurhaci’s seven grievances. For example, *Manwen laodang* (滿文老檔), *Qingtaizu shilu* (清太祖實錄), *Manzhou shilu* (滿洲實錄), *Mingshenzong shilu* (明神宗實錄), and *Chosŏn wangjok sillok* (朝鮮王朝實錄). But each record has a few differences with each other. Quoted in Chongnian Yan, *Nurhaci zhuan*, 173.

47 Chongnian Yan, *Nurhaci zhuan*, 175.

48 Refer to page 15, footnote 19.
natural disaster had also heavily affected Chosŏn territory. Therefore, Chosŏn strengthened the border security to reduce any further conflicts that could occur due to the Jurchens' lack of resources. Obviously, after the Jurchen conduct on the border in the previous years, Chosŏn was correct in anticipating that the Jurchens might initiate further invasions, and Chosŏn therefore prepared for its defense.

3.2. Kwanghaegun (光海君, 1575–1641) and King Injo’s policy towards the Later Jin.

Realizing the threat of the Jurchens, the kings of Chosŏn had tried to implement new diplomatic strategies that could avoid further conflicts between the Later Jin and Chosŏn. In March 1608, the second son of King Sŏnjo, Kwanghaegun, succeeded to the throne. Young and intelligent, and having contributed to the struggle against the Japanese invasion, Kwanghaegun impressed his father so much that King Sŏnjo chose to pass the throne to his second son. Kwanghaegun was well aware of the disadvantages of Chosŏn’s geographic location and the situation beyond its borders, particularly the ascendency of the Jianzhou Jurchens and the decline of the Ming. Therefore, he chose a neutral policy towards both the Ming and the Jurchens to maintain state security.

In February 1618, when Nurhaci initiated his campaign to invade the Ming, the Ming sought assistance from Chosŏn. Kwanghaegun knew that Nurhaci had been preparing to invade the Ming for a long time. If the Ming accepted Nurhaci’s challenge, initiating the war,

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49 Kwanghaegun ilgi, volume 112, Kwanghaegun 9, 2, 13, musin.
51 Kwanghaegun ilgi, volume 128, Kwanghaegun10, 5, 2, kich’uk.
Kwanghaegun knew that the Ming would most likely lose the war due to the severe decline in their power, and that Chosŏn would also be negatively impacted, prompting Chosŏn to send troops to assist the Ming. Kwanghaegun did not want to see his people suffer, but based on its 200-year tributary relationship, Chosŏn had an obligation to assist its suzerain and to follow the Ming’s requests. In addition, the Ming’s generous assistance during the Japanese invasion had made many Chosŏn Confucian officials feel indebted to the Ming, and thus they insisted that Chosŏn assist the Ming fighting against the Later Jin. They compared the Ming-Chosŏn relationship to that of father and son and argued that it was the son’s obligation to respect the father and always follow the father willingly.

Kwanghaegun was not optimistic about the expedition, but to fulfill a vassal’s responsibility, in February 1619 he assigned Kang Hongnip as general, dispatching 10,000 troops to assist the Ming. Nevertheless, before sending out the troops, Kwanghaegun reminded Kang Hongnip to follow three principles during the campaign: 1) to make sure there were strong troops in the back, prepared for a sudden invasion from the Jurchens; 2) not to follow all the orders of the Ming, and the most important thing was to make sure Chosŏn troops would not be defeated by the Jurchens; 3) not to reveal the real number of Chosŏn troops’ and their military equipment to the Jurchens. Although Chosŏn agreed to dispatch 10,000 gunners, sending out 4,000 in the real battle was deemed to be enough. These words evidence that Kwanghaegun put the state’s safety as priority; on one hand, he tried to satisfy the Ming’s request in the war, on the other hand, he tried to reduce the possible injuries and deaths of Chosŏn soldiers, and to avoid further conflicts between Chosŏn and the Later Jin as well. In March 1619, the Ming and

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52 Kwanghaegun ilgi, volume 127, Kwanghaegun 10, 4+ 27, uryu.
53 Kwanghaegun ilgi, volume 137, Kwanghaegun 11, 2, 2, byŏngjin, Kwanghaegun 11, 2, 3, chŏnsga.
Chosŏn allied forces were defeated by Nurhaci’s troops in the battle of Sarhu⁵⁴. After losing two camps, General Kang Hongnip surrendered to the Jurchens.

Despite Kwanghaegun’s adverse reactions to the Ming’s request for assistance in the war, this did not mean he disrespected the Ming. In fact, although Chosŏn was defeated in the war, which placed it in a disadvantageous position, Kwanghaegun firmly refused Nurchaci’s suggestion of building a Chŏson-Later Jin alliance for the purpose of fighting against the Ming together.⁵⁵ He emphasized that Kang Hongnip’s surrender did not indicate Chosŏn would side with the Later Jin.⁵⁶ Just like former Kings of Chosŏn, Kwanghaegun respected the Ming as the suzerain state, but growing Jurchen power made him feel insecure. In order to avoid any further conflicts between the Later Jin and Chosŏn and to maintain the state’s safety, Kwanghaegun implemented a neutral policy towards the Ming and the Jurchens; Chosŏn did not strongly support the Ming in the war, yet also refused to build a close relationship with the Later Jin. He obeyed the principle of sinocentrism, respecting the Ming, but considering the state’s safety overall. Kwanghaegun was a great leader of Chosŏn, as he had tried his best efforts to maintain a safe state for Chosŏn Koreans, however, his sagacity has not been recognized until recently.⁵⁷ As a second son succeeding the throne, which was against Confucian tradition, Kwanghaegun could never receive strong support from Confucian officials in the Chosŏn court.

One day in spring 1623, with the support of many royal relatives and Confucian officials of Chosŏn court, Prince Nŭngyang⁵⁸ launched a coup and dethroned Kwanghaegun. Because

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⁵⁴ The Battle of Sarhu was a crucial fight between the Ming and the Later Jin. The Later Jin defeated the Ming and got the initiatives in the following wars with the Ming.
⁵⁵ Qingtaiju shilu, volume 6, 4, 3, kapchin.
⁵⁶ Kwanghaegun ilgi, volume 139, Kwanghaegun11, 4, 11, kapcha.
⁵⁸ Ibid., 267.
Kwanghaegun persecuted Prince Nungyang’s mother and applied a neutral policy towards the Ming, most Chosŏn officials and the yangban society identified him as an immoral leader who betrayed the Confucian moral principles and disturbed the normal political order. Kwanghaegun had weak support within the Chosŏn court, and he was easily deposed when the coup took place. The throne was passed to prince Nŭngyang soon after the coup, who became the next king, King Injo.

However, the Ming did not recognize King Injo’s authority and refused to grant legitimacy at the beginning of his throne. King Injo was identified as an usurper in several Ming documents. Also, King Injo needed to build good relations with the Confucian officials who had supported him in the coup in order to maintain his position. Therefore, implementing a pro-Ming policy became one of the best strategies for King Injo to strengthen his authority. He criticized Kwanghaegun’s compromise with the Jurchen barbarians, and even stated that Chosŏn troops would join Ming’s expedition against the Later Jin. However, these championed causes were only tools that Injo used to strengthen the legitimacy of his reign. As a King obtaining the throne through a political coup led by court officials, Injo was not confident in his authority. The only means for him to fortify his power was to get the Ming’s trust, and to receive legitimate patents as soon as possible.

Although Chosŏn did not take any real hostile action towards the Later Jin after King Injo attained the throne, a pro-Ming policy would have definitely caused the Later Jin’s special attention, or even discontentment towards Chosŏn. Like the court official Chŏng Kyŏngse (鄭經世，1563–1633) said “even though the Chosŏn court had only whispered the word of

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59 Detailed explanation about the coup, refer to Seung Bum Kye’s dissertation “In the Shadow of the Father: Court Opposition and the Reign of Kwanghaegun in Early Seventeenth-Century Chosŏn Korea”, 255-284.
60 Myŏnggi Han, “17·8 segi hanjunggwan’gyewa injobanjŏng”, han’guksahakpo 13, 2002, 9.
cooperating with the Ming in fighting with the Later Jin, these words would pass to the Jurchens, and they would not just stay in peace (and might invade Chosŏn one day)." The Later Jin did not pay much attention to Chosŏn’s pro-Ming policy during the Nurhaci time, as he focused on fighting with the Ming at that time, and also still carried the intention of building an amicable relation with Chosŏn as he had since the previous years. However, not every leader of the Later Jin turned to be as “nice” as Nurhaci towards Chosŏn. Hong Taiji, the eighth son of Nurhaci, succeeded the throne after Nurhaci died in the Battle of Ningyuan with the Ming in 1626. King Injo’s pro-Ming policy, in particular, Chosŏn’s assistance to Mao Wenlong (毛文龍，1576—1629) on Kado draw Hong Taiji’s attention. Chosŏn became a big concern for Hong Taiji.

Chosŏn maintained a peaceful state during the Kwanghaegun period, benefiting from his neutral policy towards the Ming and the Later Jin. However, this policy was not favored by the Confucian court officials and yangban society of Chosŏn, and so Kwanghaegun was dethroned in the 16th year of his reign. King Injo applied a pro-Ming policy, which met the satisfaction of the Confucian officials and also assisted King Injo to gain credit from the Ming, however, it soon caused the Later Jin’s discontentment towards Chosŏn, which led to two tragic defeats for Chosŏn.

4. The Jurchen-Korean War in 1627

4.1. The beginning of the war

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61 Injo sillok, volume 1, Injo 1, 4, 25, kapisin.
62 Mao Wenlong was an important Ming general. He had led the Ming troops defeating the Later Jin at the battle of Zhenjiang, which had been a significant triumph for the Ming troops. Mao received high compliment from the Ming Emperor, and since then he led troops stationed at Kado, preventing the Later Jin’s further activities towards the Ming. However, many scholars criticized to Mao, due to the corruption he led on Kado.
63 Shaoying Shi,'Renju shidai chaoxian dui houjin jiaosheshi yanjiu”, 24.
After Nurhaci died in the Battle of Yingyuan in 1626, his son, Hong Taiji succeeded the throne, and decided that it was time to attack the Ming. Invading Kado was the first step in Hong Taiji’s plan of conquering the Ming. Kado is a small island located at the estuary of the Yalu River of China, next to Ch’ŏlsan County of today’s North Korea. It was Chosŏn territory, but had by then been controlled by Ming troops for decades. Kado was next to the Later Jin. To the west and east of the island were territories of the Ming and Chosŏn, respectively. From this location, the Ming and Chosŏn could cooperate and converge to attack the Later Jin in a pincer attack. Also, Kado played a crucial role in transportation and communication between the Ming and Chosŏn.

Since the battle of Sarhu, the Later Jin had achieved continuous successes in several battles in the Liaodong area. Afterwards, Hong Taiji took over the Liaodong peninsula and successfully cut off the land route for communication between the Ming and Chosŏn. However, through Kado, the Ming continued to receive assistance from Chosŏn via marine transport. Ming general Mao Wenlong exercised total control over Kado and all of its trade, obtaining great resources from Chosŏn. In order to stop the Ming and Chosŏn’s maritime communication route, Hong Taiji made the decision to take over Kado thereby initiating an invasion of Chosŏn.

War between the Later Jin and Chosŏn seemed inevitable. Due to its special geographic location, Chosŏn had to be involved if there was a war between the Ming and the Later Jin. Chosŏn was a tributary state of the Ming, and therefore, would be asked to assist Ming military regardless of which side initiated the fight. In that situation, the Later Jin would be stuck between the Ming and Chosŏn troops, and easily defeated by the Ming-Chosŏn alliance, as it would be difficult to fight on two fronts simultaneously.\(^6^4\) This was one of the main concerns for Hong

\(^6^4\) Jiaju Liu, *Qingchao chuqi de zhonghan guanxi*, (Taipei, Wenshizhe Publisher), 2.
Taiji and the reason for his decision to attack Chosŏn while he was planning the Kado invasion. However, Hong Taiji’s main purpose of this invasion was not targeting Chosŏn. Having recently attained the throne, Hong Taiji needed time to maintain a strong state first in order to validate his leadership. Additionally, since Jurchens already had the great enemies of the Ming and Mongols at that moment, it would be better to establish an alliance with other states to reduce state enemies and avoid more border conflicts.65

At that time, it was more crucial for the Later Jin to conquer Mao Wenlong’s troops on Kado than to invade Chosŏn. A general of the Later Jin, Amin sent a letter to King Injo, with four reasons leading to the invasion before he led troops into Chosŏn. Of the four, there were two reasons about the Ming troops on Kado. When the Later Jin defeated Chosŏn and suggested a negotiation for peace, they again sent Chosŏn a letter with seven reasons for initiating the war. Of these, three reasons were associated with Mao’s troops on Kado. The close proximity between Kado and the Later Jin, separated by only about eighty miles, was a source of danger to the Later Jin’s security.66 Mao Wenlong had stationed Ming’s troops on Kado for years, and treated the people of the islands, including Koreans, inhumely, which caused local Korean discontent with him. However, Mao’s troops on Kado nonetheless played a significant role in the Ming’s defenses. Because the distance between Ming territory and Kado was short and the waterway easily navigable, Ming could quickly send troops there to attack the Later Jin from the rear. Kado’s important military location made it a “must conquer” place for Hong Taiji.

Clearly, Hong Taiji’s target was the Ming, and there were not direct conflicts between Chosŏn and the Later Jin. However, Chosŏn became the barrier for the Later Jin to attack the

65 *Qingtaizong shilu*, volume 2, Qingtaizong 1,3, 14, sinsa.
66 *Mingshi·Yü Chonghuan Zhuan*, volume 147, 6715.
Ming because of Kado and the specific geographic location of Chosŏn. In addition, the suzerain-vassal relation between the Ming and Chosŏn raised Hong Taiji’s concerns with Chosŏn. Therefore, Hong Taiji initiated the Jurchen-Korean war, with the main purpose of taking over Kado. The war took place not because of any conflicts between the Later Jin and Chosŏn. However, it became a trigger point in causing further problems for both states.

4.2. Negotiating the Peace

On January 8, 1627, Amin, one of the Later Jin’s generals, departed Fanyan, the capital, leading Jurchen troops in an effort to invade Chosŏn. Amin’s army successfully took the cities of Yizhou, Dingzhou, and Anzhou, and also inflicted serious losses on Mao Wenlong’s troops on Kado. On January 26, the Later Jin’s army arrived in P’yŏngyang, and were preparing to attack Hansŏng, the capital of Chosŏn. Amin’s army was aggressively brutal as they killed those officials and soldiers who refused to submit, and also captured numerous Chosŏn and Ming soldiers as hostages. Chosŏn suffered one loss after another for days, and Chosŏn soldiers’ morale was totally broken. As their losses mounted, Injo planned to escape to Kanghwa Island.

On February 2, the Later Jin sent a letter to Chosŏn, suggesting peace negotiations. There were four major points in the letter from Later Jin: Chosŏn was to sever all the ties with the Ming; Chosŏn was to build a brotherly relationship with the Later Jin, in which the Later Jin would be the elder brother, should the Ming attack Chosŏn in the future. It was very difficult for Injo and many Chosŏn Confucian officials to accept the request that Chosŏn sever all ties with the Ming. Respecting Ming as the fatherly state, Chosŏn would never forget the Ming’s benevolence, in

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67 Many anthologies in the Chosŏn period had records describing the Later Jin’s invasion of Yizhou, such as the Ch’u’np’adangirwŏllok (春坡堂日月錄), Pyŏchalok (丙子錄), Sokchammok (續雜錄). The Chinese work Manzhoudang yizhu (滿洲檔譯註) also has records of this invasion.
particular, the Ming’s aid in the Imjin War towards Chosŏn. However, to avoid further attacks from the Manchus, Injo and the Peace Faction initially decided to accept the peace agreement. As long as the Later Jin agreed to withdraw their army, Chosŏn was willing to accept the brotherly relations at that moment. Nevertheless, Injo and all of the officials still respected the Ming as the suzerain state. Chosŏn still used the Ming reign title in their responses, and also required that the Later Jin officials to bow to Chosŏn’s officials as part of a diplomatic protocol. Chosŏn’s actions incensed Amin, and he wrote to Chosŏn:

“... the Later Jin tried to negotiate a peace with Chosŏn, however, Chosŏn did not accept this in good faith and, instead, prepared the troops for fighting against the Later Jin again. The later Jin initiated this war because of the Ming, and would withdraw its troops after the peace agreement. But Chosŏn still uses the Ming’s reign title in their letters, and also required the Later Jin’s officials to bow to Chosŏn’s officials. Do you really want to achieve a peace agreement? In this case, the Later Jin’s troops would stay in Chosŏn for one year, it would be too late if Chosŏn were to change their position and will regret their serious mistake.”

Chosŏn here faced a major dilemma. If it did not agree with the Later Jin’s peace agreement, the whole country could be overrun with barbarians; if it submits to the Later Jin’s proposal, it would be against the Confucian tradition, and the Ming would question Chosŏn’s sincerity of respecting its suzerain state. Obviously, Chosŏn would be in a disadvantageous position whether it had conflicts with the Later Jin or the Ming. In Chosŏn’s opinion, revering

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68 Injo sillok, volume 15, Injo 5, 2, 4, sinch’uk
69 Injo sillok, volume 15, Injo 5, 2, 7, kapchin.
70 Injo sillok, volume 15, 5, 2, 8, úlsa.
the Ming and building peaceful relations were both important for the state. Both of these obeyed its own principles, which should not have caused any conflicts. Chosŏn gave the following reply to the Later Jin:

“Chosŏn sincerely hopes the two states could achieve a peace agreement. However, Chosŏn has already served the Ming for 200 years. The tribute relationship has been set, how could we suddenly destroy it? Although Chosŏn was a weak state, it had been known as “a state of rites.” If Chosŏn disobeys the rites it had kept for 200 years, how would the Later Jin see Chosŏn as a state with good rites? Chosŏn and the Later Jin achieving a peace today and becoming good neighbors is one issue, Chosŏn severing its relations with the Ming as its suzerain is another. These two things should be discussed separately.”

Amin read Chosŏn’s letter and thought Chosŏn was a state with high credibility, which was worth building good relations. If Chosŏn had kept good relations with the Ming for 200 years, it would also maintain a good relationship with Later Jin. At this time, the Later Jin’s army had been stationed in the field at P’yŏngyang for days and it was very difficult for them to stay longer due to the lack of food and terrible living conditions. So Amin accepted Chosŏn’s proposal and decided not to force Chosŏn to follow the first request of “cutting down” relations with the Ming.

Although the biggest conflict during the process of achieving a peace agreement seemed to have been resolved, other unexpected issues arose, causing the delay of the date in which Chosŏn and Later Jin would declare brotherly relations. The first problem was reign titles. Although the

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71 Injo sillok, volume 15. Quoted in Jiaju Liu, Qingchao chuqi de zhonghan guanxi, 10.
72 Injo sillok, volume 15, 5, 2, 10, chŏngmi.
Later Jin indicated that they would not require Chosŏn to lower its the relationship with the Ming, they were displeased and offended that Chosŏn was using the Ming’s reign title. In their opinion, Chosŏn should adopt the Later Jin’s reign title in order to show their close brotherly relation. But adopting a new reign title was not as simple as the Jurchens thought. From Chosŏn’s perspective it was the most important way to express their respect to the Ming. It would be the same as rejecting the tribute relation with the Ming if Chosŏn refused to use the Ming’s reign title. Clearly, as a state that had never received any great Confucian influence, it would be highly unlikely that the Later Jin would understand this feeling on the part of Chosŏn.

Another issue concerned the performance of rites in achieving the agreement. In order to validate the agreement, the Jurchens requested that Injo attend a special ceremony, vowing with seven Jurchen generals to show Chosŏn’s willingness to establish brotherly relations with the Later Jin. Also, the ceremony had to follow the rites of Jurchen traditional culture, killing a white horse and a black cow as sacrificial animals to worship heaven and earth. This request was excessive for Injo, as it was humiliating for a king to make a vow with seven generals of the Later Jin. Also, following the Confucian principle, Injo was forbidden to kill any animals for three years, as his mother had just passed away. In the end, after a negotiation, the Later Jin agreed that Injo could only worship heaven, so some Confucian officials were sent to make the vows with the Later Jin generals at the ritual ceremony.73

Nevertheless, the Later Jin general Amin was dissatisfied with King Injo’s performance during the ceremony, and he sought revenge against Chosŏn again. Soon after signing the peace agreement, Amin declared that he would allow his troops to plunder Northwest Chosŏn for three

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73 *Injo Sillok*, volume 15, Injo 5, 3, 2, kisa.
days. This action was obviously contrary to the peace agreement, which signified equal relations between Chosŏn and the Later Jin. Even Amin’s subordinates suggested that Amin not do so, as it breached the peace argument. Furthermore, the number of captives Later Jin army held was already beyond their capability to sustain and any additional hostages would be too much of a burden. However, Amin replied that since the Chosŏn king did not directly make vows with him, it did not matter if he initiated another act of plunder. Amin and his troops plundered for three more days in Chosŏn soon after establishing the brotherly relations pact between the Later Jin and Chosŏn. Amin’s unwarranted acts were in direct contrast to the peace agreement. This would cause great difficulty for the maintenance of brotherly relations between Chosŏn and the Later Jin in the ensuing decades. In addition, the Chosŏn people’s image of the Jurchens was confirmed by the Jurchen military's actions. From that point on, it was impossible for Chosŏn to accept a friendly relationship with the Later Jin.

4.3. The End of the War

Although the Later Jin acquiesced to Chosŏn’s desire to maintain the tributary relationship with the Ming, due to the lack of understanding of the Confucian cultural context, their excessive requests to Chosŏn still made Injo feel that he was being forced to be disloyal to the Ming and side with the Later Jin. Injo and Chosŏn officials believed that using the Ming reign title and performing sacrificial rites were both obligatory tasks by a vassal state. A typical tributary relation between states was reflected through such performances. However, the Later Jin believed the Chosŏn should follow the Manchu’s rites since the Later Jin was the elder brother to whom Chosŏn should pay respect. If Chosŏn refused to follow the Later Jin’s requests from the outset of settling brotherly relations, how could they maintain the peace agreement in
the future? Cultural differences made it difficult for Chosŏn and the Later Jin to understand each other’s concerns. The Later Jin’s excessive requests aggravated Injo’s indebtedness to the Ming and antagonism towards the Later Jin. Considering the state’s safety, Injo eventually accepted the Later Jin’s request and the brotherly relations. However, rather than alleviating the tensions between the two states, building the brotherly relations led to further conflicts in the future. Through Amin’s extreme abuses after signing the peace agreement, Chosŏn Koreans realized the Later Jin’s insincerity in building brotherly relation, which only created a more outrageous image of the Later Jin in the eyes of the Korean people.

The Later Jin achieved multiple benefits in the Jurchen-Korean war. At first, the war delivered a devastating blow to Mao Wenlong’s force on Kado. The brotherly relationship prohibited Chosŏn from supplying materials to Mao’s troops. In addition, being the elder brother of a state which is the Ming’s closest tributary, greatly enhanced the Later Jin’s regional position in East Asia. The Later Jin flaunted its “elder brother position” to the Ming and Chosŏn several times. When Hong Taiji met the Mongolian envoy, he bragged of the Later Jin’s triumph in the Jurchen-Korean war. He claimed the Later Jin had received assistance from Heaven and defeated Chosŏn. The King of Chosŏn and the general Amin had bowed together, establishing brotherly relations between the two states. He then wished to send the news of such triumphant achievement to neighboring states.74 In May 1627, when Hong Taiji was preparing for the invasion of Jinzhou, he told the Ming envoy that the Later Jin had killed the Chosŏn hostages who were against him and spared the ones who followed. The Later Jin emphasized their brotherly relations with Chosŏn to the Ming, demonstrating their strength.75

74 Qingtaizong shilu, volume 3, Qingtaizong 1, 4, xinhan.
75 Qingtaizong shilu, volume 3, Qingtaizong1, 5, dingchou.
Besides the political and military achievements, the Later Jin also received economic benefits due to the resumed border trade with Chosŏn, which, in fact, was the primary reason for the Later Jin in choosing to make a peace arrangement with Chosŏn rather than taking over Chosŏn entirely. Due to the deterioration of the Ming-Later Jin relations, the Ming cut off the border trade with the Later Jin and also prohibited trade between Chosŏn and the Later Jin. However, the brotherly relations reopened the trade between the Later Jin and Chosŏn. In 1627, the Later Jin had a severe resource shortage. The price of rice was skyrocketing, and it is recorded that people killed one another for food due to the shortage.\(^{76}\) Reopening trade relations with Chosŏn changed the situation completely. The Later Jin not only was able to obtain food, clothes and medicines from Chosŏn, but also started to trade with the Ming and Japan, using Chosŏn as an agent.

Chosŏn did not benefit as much as the Later Jin from the brotherly relationship. In fact, Injo received numerous complaints from the Ming about the peace agreement, as well as great pressure from the Ming. Building brotherly relations with the Later Jin forced Injo and many Confucian officials’ to reconsider their indebtedness to the Ming.

Under these uncertain circumstances, the agreement on brotherly relations was not sufficient to maintain peace as frequent conflicts occurred on the border. Chosŏn Koreans' discontent with the Jurchens originated with the border conflicts in previous years, but it also came from the Jurchen armies’ brutality during the Jurchen-Korean war.

In order to maintain the state's safety, Chosŏn reluctantly accepted the Later Jin’s suggestion of building up a brotherly relationship. It was a very disadvantageous position for Chosŏn to be between the Ming and the Later Jin. In fact, Chosŏn could not even maintain its

\(^{76}\) *Qingtaizong shilu*, volume 3, Qingtaizong1, 6, xuwu.
tribute relationship with the Ming. Considering its own state and military power, when the Ming and the Later Jin started fighting for the title of the East Asian imperial power, Chosŏn had to choose one side in order to maintain its own safety. Time and location determined Chosŏn’s destiny. Even though Kwanghaegun showed Chosŏn’s neutral position during the Ming and Later Jin conflict, and Injo tried to avoid any conflicts between Chosŏn and the Later Jin, the tribute relations between the Ming and Chosŏn made Hong Taiji feel insecure. He had to solve this problem before invading the Ming territory. From this point, no matter how Chosŏn tried to balance its relations between the Ming and the Later Jin, as long as Chosŏn maintained tribute relations with the Ming, the Later Jin would never feel comfortable with Chosŏn’s decision. With a 200-year suzerain-vassal relationship between the Ming and Chosŏn and Ming assisting Chosŏn militarily during the Japanese invasion, Ming had established solid respect from Chosŏn. Such a strong bond would be difficult to break by any military force in a short time.

5. The Manchu-Korean War

5.1. The beginning of the war

Unfortunately, Chosŏn could not win much trust from the Ming and the Later Jin after the Jurchen-Korean war. Instead, more tensions were created. Although the Later Jin strongly attacked the Ming’s force on Kado, it could not take over the territory completely. After the battle, Kado was still dominated by the Ming forces. The Ming was not pleased with Chosŏn’s “brotherly relations” with the Later Jin and used its military forces on Kado to prohibit the envoy communications between the two states.77 The Later Jin also harbored discontent towards Chosŏn. There were several complex reasons behind this discontent. Conflicts in trade could be

77 Myŏng-gi Han, Chŏngmyo byŏngja holan kwa tongasia (Seoul: P’urŭn yŏksa, 2009), 153-154.
one reason, but what should beg more attention was that the Later Jin failed in removing the Ming forces on Kado, which had been the main purpose for the Later Jin to initiate the Jurchen-Korean war. Therefore, in order to overtake Kado, the Later Jin had to invade Chosŏn once again. Furthermore, by that time, the Later Jin had conquered the Mongols and defeated the Ming in several battles, almost becoming the most powerful force in the Northeast Asian region. It would be much easier for the Later Jin to defeat Chosŏn than the previous years.

On April 11, 1636, Hong Taiji held a ritual-ceremony, where he renamed the Later Jin to the Qing and changed the reign title from Tiancong (天聰) to Chongde (崇徳). At the same time, he titled himself as the “Son of Heaven.” From then on, the Later Jin became a state with the same regional status as the Ming, and Hong Taiji gave himself a position comparable to that of the Ming emperor. However, it was absurd for Chosŏn to accept this promulgation. In the Confucian world order, only one person could be respected as the “Son of Heaven,” and this is the Chinese emperor. Hong Taiji’s announcement of becoming a new emperor also changed the relation between Chosŏn and the Qing. Since Chosŏn had to respect the “Son of Heaven,” the brotherly relations between the Manchu and Chosŏn naturally changed to a tribute relation. This was a fact both Chosŏn court officials and Korean people would never accept.

In order to increase his eminence, prior to holding the ritual ceremony to announce the new reign title of the state and his position as monarch, Hong Taiji sent envoys to Chosŏn, inviting them to celebrate this gala event together. However, a big debate arose among the Chosŏn court officials regarding this issue. Most officials refused to accept Hong Taiji as the new emperor. In the end, the Later Jin’s envoy delegation could not receive any response from Chosŏn to their invitation before they left. Adding to the insult, Korean children threw stones at
the delegation on their way back. By then, not only the Chosŏn Confucian officials and literati, but also the common Korean people bore enmity toward the Manchus. For Chosŏn Confucian officials and the literati, it probably was the influence from the sinocentrism that caused this sentiment. For the common Korean who could not receive much Confucian education, however, it was the brutality of the Manchus in wartime that caused their discontent.

The tension between Chosŏn and the Manchus was increasing. At the ritual-ceremony celebrating the establishing of the Qing, two officials from Chosŏn refused to bow to Hong Taiji as a new emperor of East Asia. This reignited all of Hong Taiji’s anger with Chosŏn. He was ready to initiate another war of revenge.

5.2. The war unfolds

On December 2, 1636, Hong Taiji once again invaded Chosŏn with about 4,000 troops. This was the start of the Manchu-Korean war. Unlike the previous attacks, the Qing used a “thunder” strategy, using their skill in shooting arrows while on horseback and suddenly attacked and plundered Chosŏn’s villages. Before Chosŏn armies were able to muster any significant defense forces, the villages had already been taken over by the Qing. Hong Taiji only used around 4,000 soldiers against Chosŏn in this campaign, but achieved great success.

The Manchu-Korean war was a disaster for Chosŏn Koreans. Frightened by Hong Taiji’s “thunder” attack, the people fled in large numbers, blocking roads due to their sheer numbers. Regardless of age and gender, their tragic cries of horror and sadness were pervasive throughout

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78 Injo sillok, volume 32, 14, 2, 26, sinch’uk.
79 Byŏngjalok, v. 3, quoted in Jiaju Liu, Qingchao chuqi de zhonghan guanxi (Taipei: Wenshizhe chubanshe, 1986), 104.
80 Jiaju Liu, Qingchao chuqi de zhonghan guanxi, 107.
the affected area. Namhan haewirok recorded the following harrowing story of the Chosŏn court escaping to the Namhansan fortress:

“The prince rode in the front, and his followers painfully followed. People were struggling when they arrived at the city gate, which was too small to allow all the many people to enter. Mothers, children, husbands, and wives’ cries rose to heaven. Numerous elders and vulnerable people were dead on the road... It was very difficult to march forward at night, in particular, when they came across rivers. Most court officials fell behind, and only several people could follow the prince.”

Most of the members of the royal house escaped to Kanghwa Island, however, due to the miserable road conditions after a heavy snow, King Injo could not physically endure walking in the snow and had to stop marching. He stayed in the Namhansan fortress temporarily. Thousands of people followed the king; there were around 12,000 troops, 200 court officials, 200 members of the royal house and their royal doctors, 100 followers, and 300 court official followers. However, the food they carried could only last one month. Even in that situation, when compared to the 4,000 Qing troops, it seemed that the 12,000 Chosŏn troops might still have had the advantage in battle. However, the Qing’s “thunder” strategy of attack significantly demoralized the Chosŏn soldiers. None of the Chosŏn generals were willing to lead a force to

81 Ibid.,108.
82 Namhan haewirok is a diary book written by Chosŏn official Sŏk Chihyŏng (石之珩, 1610~?). When the Qing invaded Chosŏn in 1636, Sŏk had escorted King Injo to the Namhansan Fortress. He recorded everything he observed during the war in his diary, which also included the negotiation on the terms of peace, the process of sending the princes sent to the Qing, and the problems solved after the war.
83 Choyagimun (朝野紀聞), volumn 5, pyŏngjayŏn, 12, 15, quoted in Jiaju Liu, Qingchao chuqi de zhonghan guanxi, 135.
84 Injo sillok, volume 33, Injo 14, 12, 14, kapsin.
strike back against the Qing. In addition, there had been debate between the Chosŏn court’s Peace and Resistance factions since the beginning of the war. The Chosŏn court could not immediately decide how to deal with the Qing troops, as the two factions could not achieve any agreement between them. Chosŏn missed their best opportunity to fight back due to the two faction’s debates.

The longer the war lasted, the more disadvantageous the situation became for Chosŏn. Because of the lack of food, the soldiers had to kill their horses to relieve their hunger. There was also great demand for firewood in the fortress. Chosŏn soldiers had to come down from the fortress to look for firewood, and many of them were captured by the Qing army, which was stationed outside of the fortress. The Qing used the captured Chosŏn soldiers in battle against Chosŏn troops. They set the captured Korean soldiers at the front of the Qing battle formations as a supplement to the limited number of Qing troops. The harsh winter weather was also another handicap for the Chosŏn troops. It was difficult for the Chosŏn soldiers to endure the extremely cold conditions of the battlefield, and by the end of the war, numerous Korean soldiers were captured or had escaped from the fortress. In another major defeat, the relief forces sent to assist the king were defeated by the Qing on their way to the fortress. It was hopeless for Chosŏn to fight back. Due to the lack of food and the miserable environment, and after being stuck in the Namhansan fortress for forty-six days, Injo came down and surrendered to Hong Taiji. Chosŏn was also forced to sign the Qing’s Terms of Peace.

5.3. The end of the war

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85 Ŝǔngjŏngwŏn ilgi, volume 54, Injo 14, 12, 19, kich’uk.
86 Ŝǔngjŏngwŏn ilgi, volume 54, Injo 14, 12, 21, sinmyo.
87 See page 3-5.
Following the terms of peace, the Qing took the princes as hostages, using them to compel Chosŏn to implement the terms. Injo’s first and second sons, Prince Sohyŏnseja and Pongnimdaegun, as well as numerous court officials’ sons were sent to Shenyang, capital of the Qing dynasty. It was a sorrowful day, as hundreds of hostages left for the Qing with the princes. Families and relatives wept while they sent the princes away. The Qing did not show any respect to the princes and other royal house hostages. Chŏng Myŏngsu (鄭命壽, ?–1653), who worked as a translator for the Qing, snapped his whip and shouted to press the hostage troops to march faster. No royal house hostages were allowed to take a sedan. Soon after their arrival, they were left in a hostage village. Life in the hostage village was miserable. Most of the resources they brought were left along the way due to the Qing’s pressure for a rush trip. They lacked food, clothes, and all other resources, and had to ask Chosŏn for support. The poor living conditions were not changed until the Qing provided land to the hostage village and allowed them to farm. The princes were watched closely. When the princes were sick, the Qing sent doctors and also asked if he was pretending. The Qing also threatened the princes to push Chosŏn into sending troops to attack the Ming. The princes both psychologically and mentally suffered in the hostage village. This suffering influenced the princes’ to view the Qing as their enemy.

Besides taking the princes as hostages, the Qing also made more than ten requests in the Terms of Peace which Chosŏn was forced to follow. A new tributary relationship was also established between the Qing and Chosŏn. However, to Chosŏn this new suzerain state was not as generous as the previous one. The Qing’s harsh requests once again recalled Chosŏn’s longing

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88 In 1618, Kang Hongnip dispatched 10,000 Chosŏn troops to assist the Ming fighting with the Later Jin. Chŏng Myŏngsu was one of Kang’s followers. After his defeat, Chŏng followed Kang and surrendered to the Manchus. While being a hostage in the Later Jin, Chŏng won Hong Taiji’s trust. He became a pro-Qing activist after he was released to Chosŏn. In 1636, he had assisted the Qing generals in the Qing’s invasion of Chosŏn.

89 *Injo sillok*, volume 34, Injo 15, 2, 5, ūrhae.
for the Ming’s kindness in the Imjin War. The terms of peace were not only a great burden to Chosŏn’s state economy, but also acted as a tool for the Qing with which they could interfere with Chosŏn’s domestic affairs. This forced a clear comparison to the former period when the Ming and Chosŏn had suzerain-vassal relations. During the Imjin War period, the Ming not only provided military assistance to Chosŏn, but also sent food, materials, gold, and silver to save Chosŏn’s economy and people’s livelihoods. According to General Ch’ŏnmalli (千萬里, 1543–?)’s Saamsilgi (思庵實記), the Ming sent around 234,000 troops, 540,000 dan of grain, 534,000 liang of gold, and 159,000 liang of silver during the Imjin War period. However, after the Manchu-Korean war, the Qing not only required Chosŏn to submit a variety of tribute, but also required gifts on holidays and special celebrations, which obviously were encumbrances to Chosŏn’s weakened state power. In addition, although the Ming had sent troops to the Chosŏn territory during the war, the Ming had never thought about interrupting Chosŏn’s internal affairs and they withdrew their troops soon after the war. Emperor Shenzong made sure that the troops were withdrawn right away after the war. In contrast, as a new suzerain state, the Qing forced Chosŏn troops to attack the Ming, forbade Chosŏn to build castles and monitored Chosŏn’s diplomatic communications with Japan and other states. Chosŏn lost autonomy and pride under the tributary relationship with the Qing. Following the Qing troops’ unrestrained conduct during the war, Chosŏn’s hatred of the Qing grew to a higher level. The Qing’s outrageous requests led to Chosŏn’s longing for the Ming.

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90 100 dan is equals to 50kg, one liang is equal to around 37g.
92 Jiaju Liu, Qingchao chuqi de zhonghan guanxi 130.
Conclusion

This thesis examines the rise of Chosŏn’s anti-Qing and pro-Ming sentiment in the seventeenth century. Brutal conduct of the Jurchen tribes in border conflicts confirmed and intensified the barbaric image of Jurchens to Chosŏn Koreans. Around the twelfth century, Jurchen tribes began initiating conflicts on the northern border of Korea and in the fifteenth century, Jurchen attacks on the border areas of the Ming and Chosŏn became more frequent. Regardless of their disputes, the Ming and Chosŏn cooperated in their defense of the border and fought back against the Jurchens together. Through the expedition into Jurchen territory, the Ming and Chosŏn formed an alliance, making the Jurchens a mutual enemy of Chosŏn and the Ming.

Nurhachi started plotting his ambitious plan after the Jianzhou Jurchens experienced rapid development in the late sixteenth century. Chosŏn, due to its specific geographic location and its traditional tribute relations with the Ming, soon became an obstacle in the Jurchen plan to invade the Ming. In 1627, with the purpose of overtaking the Ming general Mao Wenlong’s position on Kado Island, Hong Taiji launched the first invasion of Chosŏn. Kado was Chosŏn territory but had been dominated by the Ming for decades. Therefore, without any direct conflict between Chosŏn and the Later Jin, the Jurchen-Korean war occurred. Based on the Jurchens’ demands, Chosŏn entered into a brotherly relations treaty with them. Nevertheless, the Jurchens’ excessive requests and brutal actions during the process of establishing the brotherly relations treaty only aggravated Chosŏn’s hatred towards the Later Jin. Meanwhile, the event recalled Chosŏn’s indebtedness to the Ming, which originated with the Ming’s generous assistance granted to Chosŏn during the Imjin War. Tensions between Chosŏn and the Later Jin continued to rise after the Jurchen-Korean war, and another war became inevitable.
In December 1636, after several successes in the war with the Ming, the Manchus initiated the second invasion of Chosŏn. During the Manchu-Korean war, the Qing attacked and plundered Chosŏn mercilessly. It was a disaster for Chosŏn Koreans, many of whom were killed or taken hostage during the war. In order to save the whole state, Injo of Chosŏn bowed to Huang Taiji at the end of the war, indicating Chosŏn’s surrender. In addition, Chosŏn was forced to sign the terms of peace requested by the Qing. The seventeenth century was a significant period in East Asian history. The change of regional power in East Asia accompanying the fall of the Ming and the rise of the Qing made it impossible for Chosŏn to avoid the conflict.

In 1644, after seven years as a hostage, the two princes of Chosŏn were sent back. With the sudden death of the Crown Price Sohyŏn, King Injo’s second son, Pongnim Taegun, inherited the throne of Injo. He was to be the next king, Hyojong. Seven years of humiliation living in Shenyang caused King Hyojong to develop an immense hatred of for the Qing. Based on his Confucian beliefs, he did not think the uncivilized Qing state would last long. However, the Ming had perished, which was a major shock to Chosŏn. For more than 200 years, Chosŏn had received its legitimacy from the Ming, as the Ming was the only state that carried the mantle of legitimacy in the Sinocentric world order. With authorization from the Ming, kings of Chosŏn received and maintained their legitimacy. Chosŏn in the mid-seventeenth century was in weakened condition. Seven long years of war with Japan, and being utterly defeated twice by the Qing not only negatively affected Chosŏn’s state power, but also severely lessened Korean people’s confidence to their own state. The state's situation at that time did not provide much

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93 On February 18, 1645, after a long journey from the Qing, Crown Price Sohyŏn and Pongnim Taegun arrived in Chosŏn. However, influenced by Catholicism, Crown Price Sohyŏn criticized that Neo-Confucianism as backward. Soon he was recognized as siding with the Qing and poisoned. His enemies also killed his wife and two sons following his death.
stability for the start of a new reign. In order to preserve Chosŏn’s legitimacy in the Sinocentric world order. King Hyojong made plans for an expedition to confront the Qing, with the hope of restoring the Ming dynasty. Planning for the Northern expedition had a great impact on the later Chosŏn society, which would be an area worthy of further studies in the future.

Chosŏn’s defeats in the Jurchen-Korean war and Manchu-Korean war indicated the need for practicality in constructing foreign policy. Had Kwanghaegun not been dethroned and his neutral foreign policy remained, Chosŏn might have maintained peace in the 1620s and 1630s. However, applying Kwanghaegun’s neutral policy was not an option for yangban society, which viewed the policy as a betrayal of Confucian tradition. This view was one reason leading to Kwangheagun’s dethronement. The fall of Kwanghaegun also indicated the relative powerlessness of Chosŏn kings during these times. The Chosŏn court, particularly in the seventeenth century, appeared to be a unique bureaucratic system. The yangban of the Chosŏn court played a definitive role in constructing the foreign policy in the seventeenth century. Even national interest could be overridden for the sake of prioritizing Confucian ideology in international relations. During the period of the Jurchen-Korean war and Manchu-Korean war, the Resistance Faction of the Chosŏn court indicated that it preferred death while preserving the legitimacy the Ming had granted them to saving the state while losing their ideology. Even though King Injo surrendered to the Qing in the end, taking the Peace Faction’s suggestions, Chosŏn still secretly respected the Ming and even prepared an expedition to avenge the Ming after the Manchu-Korean war.

Considering national interests, Kwanghaegun applied a neutral foreign policy in dealing with the Ming and in Later Jin relations, maintaining a safe state. The neutral policy might be seen as in violation of Confucian tradition and sinocentrism theory, but it guaranteed a peaceful
state for Chosŏn Koreans. King Injo consolidated his position by implementing a pro-Ming policy, but this policy caused more than twenty years’ of suffering for Chosŏn Koreans. It is not necessary to follow the state’s idealistic ideology when constructing foreign policy, especially as the international environment changed in a variety of unexpected ways (such as the surprise seizure by the Jurchen in seventeenth century). Chosŏn’s defeats in the Jurchen-Korean war and Manchu-Korean war were the result of a foreign policy based on Confucian tradition and cultural disdain for the Jurchens not national interest.

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