INFORMATION TO USERS

This material was produced from a microfilm copy of the original document. While the most advanced technological means to photograph and reproduce this document have been used, the quality is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original submitted.

The following explanation of techniques is provided to help you understand markings or patterns which may appear on this reproduction.

1. The sign or "target" for pages apparently lacking from the document photographed is "Missing Page(s)". If it was possible to obtain the missing page(s) or section, they are spliced into the film along with adjacent pages. This may have necessitated cutting thru an image and duplicating adjacent pages to insure you complete continuity.

2. When an image on the film is obliterated with a large round black mark, it is an indication that the photographer suspected that the copy may have moved during exposure and thus cause a blurred image. You will find a good image of the page in the adjacent frame.

3. When a map, drawing or chart, etc., was part of the material being photographed the photographer followed a definite method in "sectioning" the material. It is customary to begin photoing at the upper left hand corner of a large sheet and to continue photoing from left to right in equal sections with a small overlap. If necessary, sectioning is continued again — beginning below the first row and continuing on until complete.

4. The majority of users indicate that the textual content is of greatest value, however, a somewhat higher quality reproduction could be made from "photographs" if essential to the understanding of the dissertation. Silver prints of "photographs" may be ordered at additional charge by writing the Order Department, giving the catalog number, title, author and specific pages you wish reproduced.

5. PLEASE NOTE: Some pages may have indistinct print. Filmed as received.

University Microfilms International
300 North Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106 USA
St. John's Road, Tyler's Green
High Wycombe, Bucks, England HP10 8HR
PARK, Seong Rae, 1940-
PORTENTS AND POLITICS IN EARLY YI KOREA,
1392-1519.

University of Hawaii, Ph.D., 1977
History, Asia

Xerox University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106
PORTENTS AND POLITICS IN EARLY YI KOREA,
1392-1519

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN HISTORY
MAY 1977

By
Seong Rae Park

Dissertation Committee:
Hugh H. W. Kang, Chairman
Adrian Kuzminski
Glenn D. Paige
Minoru Shinoda
Tien-yi Tao
ABSTRACT

Unusual natural phenomena were seen as ominous or auspicious portents in all pre-modern societies. The record of such portents are particularly abundant in the traditional East Asian historical sources. Through the analyses of 15,500 such portents recorded in the Samguk sagi, the Koryo-sa, and the Yi dynasty Sillok (The Veritable Records) covering the period from the Three Kingdoms period to the year 1519 A.D., this study makes an attempt to discern the historical significance of this neglected subject.

First of all, the records show high fluctuations in the distribution of different portents in different times. Although this seems to suggest some degree of unreliability of the data as scientific material, this study finds no reason to suspect any intentional fabrication in the recording. Rather this fluctuation reflects the changing attitudes toward portents---thus the changing intellectual climates---in the different periods of Korean history.

The changing attitudes toward portents are delineated here into three types---religious, political, and ethocratic. These three types are also identified in the study with the three stages of political ideology in Korean
history: pre-Confucian, Confucian, and Neo-Confucian. Up to the very end of the Koryo dynasty, the dominant intellectual outlook in Korean Confucianism remained that of Tung Chung-shu, and not of Chu Hsi.

It is a well-known fact that the new intellectual climate toward the end of the Koryo dynasty helped the founding of the new dynasty in 1392. This new intellectual outlook, typified by that of the new scholars like Chong Tojon, is viewed by modern scholars today to be Neo-Confucian in orientation. Yet the Confucians' argument was mainly directed to the flagrantly superstitious exorcisms of portents in the period, instead of trying to search new directions toward Neo-Confucian politics. In view of its resemblance to Han Yu's diatribe against the dominance of Taoism-Buddhism in T'ang China, this study relates the portentology of Chong Tojon and others to the stage of Confucian political portentology, not of Neo-Confucian ethocratic portentism.

Throughout the early reigns of Yi Korea, Confucian portentology had developed steadily with increasing political relevance of portents to statecraft, particularly under the reigns of Kings T'aejong and Sejong during the first half of the fifteenth century. Although reactionary movement was not unknown like the case of King Sejo, who tried to reverse such development of political portento-
logy, portentology by the time of King Sŏngjong in the last quarter of the fifteenth century had risen to the level of ethocratic portentism of Neo-Confucian teachings.

It was at this juncture of Korean history that we witness for the first time an explicit expression of anti-portentology in the ideas of Im Sahong (? -1506) and King Yŏnsan (r. 1495-1506). The major political upheavals during the reigns of Kings Sŏngjong and Yŏnsan are seen in their relations to the changing attitudes toward portents held by different groups of scholar-officials of the times. This study views some of the political events of the period from the perspective of portentology-in-transition, so as to suggest a revision of the nature of Confucian tradition in the early years of Yi Korea. This study, therefore, contends that Neo-Confucianism became politically significant only from the latter half of the fifteenth century in Yi Korea, and the changing attitudes toward portents in the period were a major feature in Korean Confucianism of the times.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER I. PORTENTOGRAPHY IN KOREA</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. The <em>Samguk sagi</em></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. The <em>Koryo-sa</em></td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. The <em>Sillok</em></td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER II. PORTENTS: A DESCRIPTIVE SURVEY</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Omens</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) Solar Eclipses</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Lunar Eclipses</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Solar Haloes and Others</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Two Suns and Three Suns</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) Daytime Darkness, Hazy Sun, and Sun-Spots</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) Other Lunar Omens</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7) Stars Observed in the Daytime</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(8) The Five Planets</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(9) Comets and Novae</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(10) Meteors</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(11) Lightning and Thunder</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(12) Earthquakes</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(13) Droughts</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(14) Locusts</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(15) Fires</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(16) Hen-turned-Cocks</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(17) Dragons</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Auspices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) Triplets, Quadruplets, and Quintuplets</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Albino Animals</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Auspicious Stars</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Auspicious Grain</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) Sweet Dew</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) Sarira</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
C. Recapitulation • • • • • • • • • ••

149

CHAPTER III. FROM PORTENTS TO CONFUCIAN
PORTENTOLOGY • • • • • • •
153
A. Portentology in Chinese Philosophy. 155
Tung Chung-shu • • • • • • • • 155
Han Yu
• • • • • • • • • • • 159
Ohu Hsi • • • • • • • • • • • 162
Tradition of Anti-Portentology 166
B. Portents and Politics in Koryo
Oonfucianism • • • • • • • • • • •• 169
C. Traditional Exorcisms in the
Early Yi Period • • • • • • • • • • 194
D. Portents and Korean Kingship •• • • 219
0

•

••

CHAPTER IV.
A.

B.

C.
D.

E.

PORTENT POLITICS AND THE RISE
OF NEO-CONFUCIAN PORTENTISM • • • • • 237
Growth of Portent Politics.
The Reigns of Kings T'aejong and
Sejong • • • • • • • • • • • • • •• 239
Reaction to Confucian Portentology.
The Reign of King Sejo • • • • • •• 265
The Birth of Neo-Confucian Portentism.
The Reign of King Songjong • • • •• 278
Violent Reaction to Neo-Oonfucianism.
The Reign of King Yonsan • • • • •• 304
Victory of Neo-Confucianism.
The Reign of King Chungjong • • •• 325

CONCLUSIONS
NOTES

• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • 351

• • • • • • • •

• • • • • • • • • • • • • • 362

GLOSSARY • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • 414
BIBLIOGRAPHY •

• • • •

• • • • • • • • • • • • • • 424

vii


LIST OF TABLES

1. Dated Entries in the *Samguk sagi* ............ 13
2. Drought, Locust, Famine and Rain Prayers in the Three Kingdoms Period .............. 95
3. Drought-Free Years for the Yi Reign Periods, 1392-1506 ........................................ 101
4. Hen-turned-Cocks before 1550 ................. 128
5. Records of Dragon before 1550 ................. 132
6. The Lineage of Neo-Confucian Scholarship .... 282
LIST OF FIGURES

1. Portents in Korean History:
   10-Year Distribution from
   The Ancient Period to 1520 .................. 8

2. Portents in the Three Kingdoms Period:
   50-Year Distribution .......................... 14

3. The Volume of Records and the Number of
   Portents: From Silla Annals of the Samguk Sagi 16

4. Solar Eclipses:
   50-Year Distribution, 900-1500 ............... 44

5. Lunar Eclipses:
   50-Year Distribution, 900-1500 ............... 44

6. Solar Haloes and Lunar Portents, 918-1500 .... 51

7. Annual Distribution of Solar Haloes in
   the Early Yi Period, 1392-1510 ............... 53

8. Planet-Observed-in-the-Daytime and
   Other Planetary Portents:
   50-Year Distribution, 918-1500 ............... 64
INTRODUCTION

Man in pre-modern society often viewed unusual phenomena in nature as ominous or auspicious portents carrying certain messages to him from the unknown. The traditional historical sources of East Asia have abundant records of portents such as solar eclipses, unusual movements of planets, and strange animals. According to my compilation about 15,500 portents are listed in the major sources of Korean history up to 1500. In spite of such abundant records, little is known about these portents as no serious historical study has yet been made.¹ The present study attempts to fill this gap in historical knowledge and by so doing hopes to develop a new perspective for the understanding of Korean history.

For the purpose of this study, three types of responses to portents in different periods of Korean history are considered: religious, Confucian, and Neo-Confucian. In the first stage of religious response, roughly covering the Three Kingdoms period, every portent was perceived as a phenomenon independent of every other. The same portent was often interpreted in two different ways at two different times. Consequently, despite the apparent religious significance of portents, historians have
generally assumed that portents in this period had no definable function in the political or any other area of society.

With the growth of Confucian influence, but still under the dominance of religious "exorcisms," a new mode of response developed in the Koryo period (918-1392). In this second type of response, which became a dominant feature by the end of Koryo, the ultimate cause of all portents was reduced to the failure in government. For the first time, portents were given a theoretical framework with a definable function in the Confucian politics of the nation. According to this new perception of portents—or "portentology"—every single portent could be seen as a sign of a certain political blunder. The Confucian type of response, therefore, can be defined as "political portentology."

The last of the three types of response to portents, Neo-Confucian, became increasingly significant during the latter half of the fifteenth century. Originally an integral part of Confucian portentology, Neo-Confucian responses were also political, just as were Confucian responses. What made Neo-Confucian portentology different from the "political" responses of the earlier period was its strong emphasis on the moralistic interpretation of portents which attributed portents to the moral failure
of government, especially of the throne. With the growth of Neo-Confucian "ethocratic" portentology, portents seem to have become a significant check against the exercise of royal power in Yi Korea. This third type, the Neo-Confucian response to portents with its political and "ethocratic" applications, is called "portentism" in this study.

If we are to transform the record of portents into a new instrument for the study of Korean history, historical patterns must be discerned and applied to the explanation of historical developments. This means that the changing attitudes toward portents in different periods of Korean history must be established. The first half of this study (Chapters I and II) demonstrates the existence of three types of response in three different periods of Korean history. A quick look at the major sources of portents in Korean history, and an attempt to establish their degree of reliability, is followed by a descriptive survey of various portents in Chapter II. A computer analyses of 15,500 portents demonstrated that some portents became gradually more important to the Koreans while others lost importance over time. No previous effort has been made either to compile or to analyse the data for the purpose of discerning any patterns.

The second half (Chapters III and IV) of this study
utilizes the findings from the descriptive survey of portents to explain or reinterpret political developments in the Confucian and Neo-Confucian phases of Korean history. Before discussing political portentology in Yi Korea, it is necessary to understand its background in Chinese portentology, the Confucian development in pre-Yi Korea, and the plight of religious responses (exorcisms) in the Confucian culture of Yi Korea. What do changing attitudes toward portents have to do with the political development of Korean history? Can these findings help explain historical changes in Korean statesmanship or shed any light on traditional Korean government and politics? Are the findings in the first half of the study and the resulting insights important enough to establish a new historical perspective?

Against this background, Chapter IV attempts to reassess the intellectual climate of the first century, 1392-1519, of Yi Korea, scrutinizing political and intellectual events of the period. The facts of political and intellectual events are familiar ones---from the anti-Buddhist movement of late Koryó Confucian scholars to the literati purge of 1519. Yet the resulting interpretation of the old issues are new and fresh, demonstrating that a study of portents can provide us a new perspective in Korean history.
CHAPTER I
PORTENTOGRAPHY IN KOREA

The total number of portents for the entire period of traditional Korean history, if they were compiled completely, will be somewhere around 40,000. About 1,000 portents are recorded in the Samguk sagi for the Three Kingdoms period (57 B.C.-A.D. 935) and about 6,500 in the Koryŏ-sa for the Koryo period (918-1392). Compilation from the Sillok (Veritable records) of the first eleven Yi dynasty kings (the 127 years between 1392 and 1519) indicate another 8,000 portents. This chapter attempts to analyze those portents from ancient times to the early sixteenth century in order to delineate their characteristics and to determine their authenticity. Before we examine the details of how these portents were incorporated in the three major sources of Korean history mentioned above and what meanings we can derive from them, let us briefly survey the other available sources for Korean portentography.

For the Three Kingdoms period, there is one additional source, the Samguk yusa (ca. 1285). This is an important supplement to the Samguk sagi on the question of Korean attitudes toward portents in the period, but it has little to add to the roster of portents I compiled
from the Samguk sagi. A third source, the Samguk-sa chōryo (ca. 1460's), has entries almost identical to the Samguk sagi, with only minor additions taken from the Samguk yusa.

The 6,500 portents in the Koryŏ period are compiled in the monographs on astronomy and on the five elements which comprise six of the 139 chapters of the Koryŏ-sa. The same book, however, has another part---the annals---from which we can compile another list of portents. Unfortunately, of all the portents listed in the monographs of the Koryŏ-sa, less than one fifth are found in the annals. The Koryŏ-sa chōryo (1452) records an slightly smaller number of portents than the annals of the Koryŏ-sa, but the list is not exactly a selected copy of the 6,500 portents in the Koryŏ-sa monographs. These discrepancies seem to indicate that each compilation was made by different scholars, possibly from different original sources. Be that as it may, these discrepancies are negligible when we consider them in statistical terms.

Other sources can be studied to enhance our understanding of portentography as it changes throughout Korean history, but few portents can be added to those already recorded. As in the Yŏsa chegang (1667) for the Koryŏ period and the Tongguk t'onggam (1484) for
pre-Yi Korea, later historians wrote their histories by repeating familiar stories, reducing the number of portents in proportion to the volume of their presentations. To understand why later historians retained certain portents while dropping others would be both interesting and illuminating but must remain outside the scope of this study.

One of the best histories of Yi Korea was written by Yi Kūngik in 1806. His Yŏllvŏsil kisul records 1,656 portents, in its monograph section, for the first 327 years of Yi history, 1392 to 1719 (Sukchong 45). However only about 300 of these portents are listed for the period of our immediate concern, 1392-1519, whereas my own compilation from the Sillok shows about 8,000 portents for the same period. Furthermore, Yi Kūngik does not record the remarkable peaks in the distribution of portents in the reigns of T'aejong, Sejong, and Chungjong, nor the valley in the reign of Songjong. (See Fig. 1) Of all the traditional compilations of portents, the Chungbo munhŏn pigo, in Chapters 4 through 12, has the best list of portents covering all of Korean history up to the end of the last century. Though all the portents we find from the histories of the Three Kingdoms and Koryŏ are neatly classified here, the paucity of data in the Yi period, particularly for the
Fig. 1. 10-Year Distribution of Portents: Koryo and Yi Korea.

Number of portents

Koryo Period

Yi Period

A.D.
first half of the dynasty, makes it hardly a better
source than the Yŏll'yŏsil kisul.

The early efforts by modern scholars to study por­
tents were geared to analyses of the data for possible
scientific interest, both meteorological and astronomei­
cal. A representative product of such efforts was
Chŏsen kodai kansoku kiroku chōsa hōkoku (1917) by Wada
Yuji and others of the Weather Bureau of the Government
General of Korea. These pioneering efforts, however,
were not very productive in terms of portentography,
largely because they depended upon secondary sources
such as Ch'ungbo munhŏn pigo instead of tackling the
original source, the Sillok. For example, Wada's data
include only six earthquakes for the period 1392-1519,
while from my compilation the Sillok records more than
250 accounts of quakes for the same period. In 1928
the Government-General of Korea published a small book
that includes major calamities in Korean history.
This book, Chŏsen no saigai, has chronological lists of
seven kinds of calamities, including droughts, floods,
earthquakes, and fires. Again, the list is as incom­
plete as those of Ch'ungbo munhŏn pigo or Wada's.

This is where we stand now as far as the compila­
tion of portents in Korean history is concerned. Let
us now look more closely at the three major sources of
portents in Korean history.

A. *Samguk Sagi*

Reliability Questioned

This history of the Three Kingdoms period of Korea was compiled by Kim Pusik in 1145, almost five centuries after the end of the Three Kingdoms period proper, and more than two centuries after the fall of Unified Silla. Furthermore, no historical record written prior to the *Samguk sagi* had survived. The authenticity of some of the *Samguk sagi* records has been challenged, and the single most important point in raising doubts about the reliability was Iijima's demonstration that the solar eclipses in the *Samguk sagi* are exact copies of those from Chinese dynastic histories.¹

The reliability of the *Samguk sagi* has been a problem in the study of early history of Korea, as the following comment by a historian demonstrates:

There are grounds for doubting that any historical records were kept in Korea prior to the fourth century, which inevitably invalidates Kim Pusik's entire chronology for this period. Much of Kim Pusik's account of the first three and a half centuries of the three states is taken up by material which has been copied out of the Chinese dynastic histories. Some of
this is information specifically dealing with Korea, but records of eclipses and other astronomical phenomena are also taken over and inserted into the Samguk sagi--apparently to fill up an otherwise blank series of years. (Thus in the annals of Silla, Kim Pusik records the occurrence of an eclipse at a date corresponding to 23 August, 34 B.C. The record is derived from Pan Ku's Han-shu--in fact, there was no eclipse anywhere on that date!) Apart from the Chinese material, Kim Pusik's record of the early centuries of the three kingdoms consists mostly of supernatural events, names of ministers, and stories which may well have some historical bases, but which have clearly been misplaced in time.  

This view is shared by many historians, although some scholars in Korea seem to be less critical.

My own analyses of the portents in the Samguk sagi seem to add other doubts for two reasons. First the Samguk sagi records unusual movements of the Five Planets and mentions of the lunar mansions (su in Korean, or hsiu in Chinese)--about twenty of them--in the early three centuries of the Three Kingdoms period. Since scholars agree that this was the period of oral tradition in Korean history, it is quite impossible to accept such records of portents without evidence of some degree of advanced astronomy. Secondly, one can question the peculiar way of dating the entries in the Samguk sagi.
My own investigation shows, as in TABLE 1, that 74 portents are listed under date-headings in the Samguk sagi (56 of them are solar eclipses) before the unification of Silla. On the other hand, of all the other entries in the Samguk sagi only five are listed under date-headings. In other words, information on portents is much more exact than other historical events recorded in the Samguk sagi, which lists most of its entries under monthly or even seasonal headings only.

The Distribution of Recorded Portents in Samguk Sagii

Before we take up the problem of the reliability of portentography (and of historiography in general) of the Samguk sagi, let us try some intrinsic data analyses of the recorded portents. In Fig. 2 we have fifty-year distribution of portents compiled from the Samguk sagi, which shows two low-frequency points in the periods of 301-350 and 551-600. These low points in frequency of portents are more clearly observable in Fig. 3, where the dotted line shows the low points of portent distribution in Silla for the periods of 301-350 and 501-600. Here the solid line is used to denote the number of lines in the Samguk sagi (Silla portion) to show the volume of records for the same intervals of time. The extraordinary space allotted for the period of 651-700
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Dated Entries in the Samguk Sagi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year Range</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101-150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>151-200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>201-250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>251-300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301-350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>351-400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>401-450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>451-500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>501-550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>551-600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>601-650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>651-700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>701-750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>751-800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>801-850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>851-900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>901-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13
Fig. 2. 50-Year Distribution of Portents:
The Three Kingdoms Period
in Silla history is understandable when we consider that the process of unification and post-unification struggles between Silla and T'ang are described in more detail in the *Samguk sagi* and consequently occupy most of the space for the period.

Disregarding the detailed description of the unification period, we find one more discrepancy between the two lines in Fig. 3. While we can unmistakably notice the plunging of the number of lines for the period of 301-350 in Silla history, which corresponds remarkably with the dip of portent distribution for the same period, the lowest point of portent distribution is not matched by any notable decline in the number of lines for the period of 501-600. In other words, Silla history can be divided into two periods--before and after 300 A.D.--in terms of the space allotted in the *Samguk sagi* for different periods of Silla history, or it can be divided into three periods--pre-300, 300-500, and post-500--in terms of the number of recorded portents.

A tri-periodization of Silla portentography is corroborated by TABLE 1, which divides the Silla period into three distinct portions according to the number of the dated portents registered for pre-300, 300-600, and post-600. How then can we explain the existence of three periods in Silla portentography, while historic-
Fig. 3. Volume of Records and Number of Portents: Silla Period (from the *Samguk sagi*)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of lines</th>
<th>Number of portents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>600</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>700</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>800</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Volume of Records for Silla in the *Samguk sagi*

50-Year Distribution of Portents in Silla

A.D.
graphy seems to show only two periods? Why is the amount of information low for the period 301-350?

To take the year 300 A.D. as the dividing point in Silla history is in a way well-received theory among scholars: it was the watershed marking the end of pre-history and the beginning of the records of state affairs. Therefore, when historians tried to set an exact time for certain events, all they could do was to "dump" the obscure ones known to them through oral traditions to the pre-300 years of Silla history. The result of this "dumping" is the concentration of all the oral traditions of, say, one thousand years of Silla prehistory, into the 350-year period of pre-300 Silla.

The first period of Silla portentography reflects exactly the periodization of historiography discussed above, thus corroborating the periodization of Silla history. Then how can we explain the second dip in the distribution of portents in the sixth century? I suggest that this second dip is the real beginning of Silla portentography, the first dip being only the reflection of the beginning of history in Silla.

The theory of portents, or portentology, as it developed in Han China, reached Silla gradually during the two centuries between 300 and 500, to be for the
first time applied to their own society from the sixth century. Portentology as a philosophy of nature was apparently in the realm of a higher culture—a foreign culture which required time for absorption. Therefore we have to review the portents recorded for Silla in the Samguk sagi with more discriminating eyes for the different periods.

(1) The first period up to 300 A.D.--- Both the nature and the time of occurrence of the recorded portents are unclear.

(2) The second period of 301-500--- The time of the recorded portents are more reliable, but the nature is still dubious.

(3) The third and last period from 501--- More reliable both in time and the nature of the recorded portents.

This rule, however, should not be uniformly applied to the portents recorded for Paekche and Koguryō. Paekche, in particular, was far more advanced in the earlier centuries in the introduction of Chinese culture, and I believe even some of the solar eclipses recorded for Paekche for the period 301-600 in TABLE 1 might have actual observations made by the people of Paekche.

Unreliable but Authentic
Then did Kim Pusik "pad" his history with the portents recorded in Chinese histories, as many modern scholars would suggest? The question of the reliability of Kim Pusik's Samguk sagi was first raised by Iijima's analyses of the solar eclipses, and I myself tried to delineate the different degrees of the reliability of the portents recorded in the Samguk sagi in the preceding pages. Nevertheless, the theory concerning padding of the records of the Three Kingdoms period by Kim Pusik or others, is a hasty jump to an erroneous conclusion based on the doubts raised by Iijima's study alone.

The case supporting Kim Pusik can be built up from several angles. First of all, he was a distinguished scholar of his time, and until Iijima's study no one had cast any doubt on his integrity as a historian. To be sure, criticism had been made on his method from the Koryo period on. But criticism was of his ways of selecting materials for the Samguk sagi and the format of his presentation; never was he accused of fabrications or faulted for insertions from Chinese histories. So Kojong wrote the history of the Three Kingdoms period three hundred years later, with the comment that Kim Pusik "either supplemented or verified from various records of the Chinese histories." So it was no secret that Kim Pusik borrowed information from Chinese histories.
as far as it is Korea-related, and such practice was nothing new with him.

Yet this does not mean that he borrowed the records of portents from Chinese histories simply for "padding." The extremely unbalanced distribution of portents betrays any argument of padding, for the higher concentration of the dated portents, for example, in the earlier period, as shown in TABLE 1, would not have escaped the notice of any intelligent compiler. Thus we have to conclude that Kim Pusik's portentography is unreliable both in nature and time for those before 300, and unreliable in nature for those before 500, but they are still authentic records that provide a picture, though highly garbled, of the ancient Koreans.5

Then how was it possible that such unreliable yet authentic records of portents were transmitted to us through Kim Pusik's Samguk sagi? The data available for Kim Pusik or any other historians before him must have had some portents of a very obscure nature and time, and often related to highly superstitious practices. What Kim or other historians before him could do with such portents was, first of all, to identify the nature of the portents. Some of them must have been simply discarded, while some were identified as solar eclipses perhaps from the simple and wide-marking phrase such as,
say, "darkened day." After interpreting the primitive traditions into more civilized terms such as "solar eclipses," the historians then must have tried to verify them, if possible and desirable at all, from the Chinese records. Whatever they could identify from the Chinese records, they could have the entries under exact date-headings according to the Chinese sources, thus developing an array of dated portents as shown TABLE 1.

Then the next step the historians took was dissection of the portent-event continuum, retaining the portent part but usually discarding the superstitious event to which it was originally related. The net outcome is the continuous occurrences of portents in some parts of the earlier history in the Samguk sagi without any intervening events. For example, compare the record of the appearance of two suns in the Samguk sagi with that in the Samguk yusa. Though the incident is recorded for different years, 760 (in Samguk yusa) and 766 (in Samguk sagi), these records probably refer to the same original event. The Samguk yusa records how a portent of two suns was exorcised by Teacher Wölmyöng, while the Samguk sagi simply records the portent without any story of Wölmyöng or exorcism. Kim Pusik dropped this tale, as he did many of the folk traditions whenever they failed to reach his rational standard. This is
the main reason why we have an unbalanced portentography in his *Samguk sagi*.

B. Koryŏ-sa

**The Process of Compilation**

After several versions appeared in the early Yi period, the *Koryŏ-sa* (History of Koryŏ) was finally compiled in 1451 (Munjong 1) in the format of traditional Chinese dynastic historiography, with annals, monographs, and biographies. The thirty-nine chapters of the monograph section include six chapters on portents, three chapters on astronomical portents and three chapters on portents of the Five Elements. With about 6,500 portents in these six chapters, the monograph section of the *Koryŏ-sa* serves as the source of the statistical analyses attempted for Koryŏ portents in this study.

Several scholars might have been involved in preparing the final version of the portion on portents for the book. Records show that Pyŏn Kyeryang, whom we shall meet later in our discussion of Korea's worship of Heaven, prepared in 1420 a list of portents for the Koryŏ period to submit to King Sejong as a part of the older version of the *Koryŏ-sa*. Pyŏn could not have prepared the list out of nothing, and we do know that there were many occasions when such lists might have
been made during the Koryŏ period. Earlier historians, including Yi Chehyŏn (1287-1367), had compiled a Koryŏ dynasty history with a monograph section that probably included a section on astronomy and the Five Elements. The *Koryŏ-sa* itself records an earlier list of Koryŏ period portents in the biography of a scholar named Kwŏn Kyŏngjung (fl. 1227). This rather long document in the biography section is actually not a biography of the man, but a transcript of his report on portents submitted to King Kojong. In 1227 King Kojong ordered Yi Kyubo, Yu Sŏngdan, and Kwŏn, among others, to compile the veritable records for the reign of King Myŏngjong (r. 1171-1197). In his report Kwŏn tries to emphasize the significance of portentology by quoting from the Ch'ŏn-ch'iu (Spring and Autumn Annals), the Han-shu (History of Former Han), the monograph on portents from the Chin-shu (History of Chin), and others, and by presenting a classified list of portents for the four years of King Myŏngjong's reign. His list matches the one in the monograph section of the *Koryŏ-sa*, and comparison indicates that the four years he covered in his report are 1186 (Myŏngjong 16) through 1189 (Myŏngjong 19). Pyŏn Kyeryang's early list of portents, then, must have developed out of such previous records as Yi Chehyŏn's, Kwŏn Kyŏngjung's, and other similar lists for different
The Paucity of Data in the Tenth Century of Koryŏ

One thing is worthy of our attention at this point. As we will see repeatedly from our discussion of individual portents in the next chapter, there is a remarkable paucity of data for the first century of the Koryŏ period. I believe the reason for this lacuna can be found in the veritable records for that century. The veritable records of the first seven reign periods of Koryŏ, covering 918-1009, were compiled at one time in 1034 (Tokch'ong 3). Usually veritable records were compiled at the close of each reign. And the year 1009 coincides remarkably well with the beginning of more complete data of portents in the Koryŏ-sa. (Fig. 1) This inevitably leads us to conclude that the veritable records for the first seven reign periods of Koryŏ did not include any portents or any monograph on portents.

Still we must ask why there were so few portents in the veritable records of 1034, while the veritable records for the rest of the Koryŏ period included separate lists of portents that were to be utilized in the compilation of the Koryŏ-sa. Three answers can be considered: (1) Records of portents were not kept in the first century of the Koryo period; (2) Such records
were lost and were unavailable to the historians of 1034 or later; (3) Records did exist, but the historians of 1034 ignored them, and eventually they were lost and thus unavailable to the historians of 1451 who compiled the Koryo-sa.

Let us take the last possibility first. Such a thing would not have happened because the historians of 1034 were the intellectual product of the first generation after Koryo started an active introduction of Chinese institutions and culture and because this was perhaps the first time in Korean history that the Koreans tried to write their history in the fashion of Chinese veritable records. It is impossible to imagine that historians so trained, following such a model, would deliberately omit records of portents. The second case is plausible because the original project for the compilation of the veritable records was stimulated by the destruction of documents by the Jurchen invasions.11 The meager quantity of materials for the early period of Koryo, both in the number of portents and in the number of other entries, seems to support this second possibility. On the other hand, this fails adequately to explain the peculiar character of the portents that are recorded for the first century. Earthquakes, thunder, typhoons, and fires are recorded several times
each, and one comet and one nova are recorded also, along with some other earthly anomalies. But one significant element is missing. There is no single record of solar or lunar eclipses, nor are any of the Five Planets or any of the twenty-eight lunar mansions noticed during this period. There is such a total absence of more sophisticated portents in the period that it makes the second possibility improbable, leaving us with only the first possibility.

Thus we can conclude that few records were made during the first hundred years of the Koryo period. Why? Because the Koreans at that time were not very familiar with the theory of portents well developed in the Chinese culture. This, in turn, seems to suggest that the intellectual sinification of the Koreans was far from complete in the first century of the Koryo dynasty.

The Reliability of the Koryo-sa Portents

Though few modern scholars have attempted in-depth analyses of the historiography of the Koryo-sa, it is generally agreed that it is highly reliable as far as it goes. However, we must also say that it is a highly distorted history of Koryo because it omits important records apparently available to the historians.
of 1451. Most prominent of the omissions is the absence of any monograph on Buddhism and Taoism, an absence which portrays the Koryŏ period as more Confucianized than it actually was. Such omissions were not made in the case of portentography, as we can tell from the long sections in the monographs on portents.

Omissions were apparently made in every process of compiling portentography in all periods of Korean history. It is not hard to imagine that the astronomers in charge would readily suppress or even falsify any reports of portents which would endanger their own well-being. This pitfall was noticed by the early Yi scholars who wrote that:

Though the practices of the Koryŏ are not worth following, some deserve our praise—-the respect of remonstrators who did much for preserving the state and the establishment of astronomers who did no little in assisting the remonstrators' work. But from the middle of the dynasty, when the wicked took the helm of government, the route of communication was closed, leaving only astronomers. When the astronomers were punished for their correct reports, they were gagged and portents were not reported as they occurred.13

This criticism is made at the decline of remonstrance which occurred in the rise of the military regime in the late Koryŏ. It becomes especially noticeable with
Ch'oe Hang's effort to prevent the astronomers from voicing their opinions on the occurrences of unfavorable portents. 14

Like the astronomers, historians made additional omissions whenever their sense of historical relevance, which was a far cry from ours, so dictated. As the compilers of the Koryo-sa stated:

When a portent tallies with an event, no matter how small, it is recorded to show our awe of Heaven's admonishings. 15

Therefore, we cannot find the winter lightning and tree-frost of 1370 from the list of portents in the Koryo-sa, even though we do know they occurred that winter from the quotation of King Kongmin's words elsewhere in the Koryo-sa. 16

To see the historians' manipulating hands in portentography is not totally new; Wolfram Eberhard's study of the portentography of Han China noted the problem, and Yi Ik (1681-1763) suggested that such a possibility was one of the difficulties in reading history. 17 According to Yi Ik's view, the old-man star incident of 1170 in the Koryo-sa might have been misinterpreted by later historians who mistook the genuine old-man star for another ordinary star. 18 The reported event of old-man star might have actually occurred, but it was not followed by any auspicious happening but by
the rebellion of Chŏng Chungbu. This difficulty in matching a portent with an event, Yi Ik believed, forced the scholars later to doubt the observation of the auspice itself.

Yi Ik's suspicion might or might not be correct. And one can still question the reliability of the portents in the Koryŏ-sa on the ground that there are too many cases of realized predictions, a problem we will consider in our discussions in the next chapter. The answer to this question is suggested in that chapter's discussion of the process of the formation of legends such as the "Rain of King T'aejong" and the meteor presaging the death of Admiral Yi Sunsin. All in all, we have to conclude that the recorded portents in the Koryŏ-sa are highly reliable and authentic, reflecting faithfully the list of portents compiled contemporaneously for each reign period.

C. The Sillok of the Yi Dynasty

For the Yi period of Korean history, my major source is the veritable records for the first eleven reigns of the dynasty. Unlike the Koryŏ-sa, which is a dynastic history, the Sillok (Veritable Records) is more closer to original sources and considerably more detailed and richer in recording. The eleven sets of the Sillok
were compiled at the close of each reign by different
group of scholars. Yet the general process of com-
piling them remained more or less the same in this period
and every effort was made to guarantee objective histo-
riography. Then our question with the Sillok records
of portents is how to account for the dramatic configura-
tion in Yi portentography shown in Fig. 1.

First of all, the record of portents was primarily
determined by the original report of portents made to
the court by astronomers. The observation and reporting
of portents were highly appreciated by the throne in the
early Yi period, especially by Kings T'aejong and Sejong,
as we shall see in detail in the next chapter. On many
occasions King T'aejong punished astronomers who failed
to meet the throne's high standard of performance.
King Sejong was a well-known patron of astronomy whose
reign marked the highest point of astronomical develop-
ment in Korean history. During the first half of the
fifteenth century when these two kings reigned, astro-
nomers were never punished for reporting ominous portents,
but were reprimanded for failure to do so. 21

At the other extreme was King Yŏnsan (r. 1495-1506),
who made clear his dislike for any report of portents,
and finally banned any such reports two months before he
was ousted from the throne in 1506. 22 The diminishing
prestige of professional astronomers, who were gradually pushed into the sub-vangban social class called chungin ("middle people") during the early Yi dynasty, would hardly have stimulated their professional activities. Yet there is no way of telling what exactly the original reports of astronomers were in this early period of Yi Korea. Though some records of this kind survived into the early twentieth century, they disappeared thereafter. From circumstantial evidence we can say that the original reports by astronomers were considerably more detailed than what we can see today from the court diaries kept by the Royal Secretariat (Sungjong-won ilgi).

Reports of astronomers were copied in the diaries of the Royal Secretariat, and officials took note in their memoirs of the portents they deemed significant. Although the officials of major government posts were required to submit their memoirs to the Office of the Sillok Compilation at the close of each reign, it goes without saying that the diaries of the Royal Secretariat were far better than any other personal memoirs in portentography. Today we do not have the earlier portions of these precious diaries, but from what we have from 1623 on we discover that a considerable amount of trimming was done to the records of the Sungjong-won ilgi when they were transcribed into the Sillok.
Here are some samples from the earliest available records of the Sūngjong-wŏn ilgi in comparison with the corresponding records in the Sillok.

Sample 1---10/24/1625 (by lunar calendar)

Sūngjong-wŏn ilgi (1:427a)

At 5 in the morning, a meteor appeared from below the ch'ŏn'won star and went to the west side of the sky. It looked like a bowl; its tail was longer than 3 or 4 feet; it was red and bright enough to illuminate the earth. At 5 in the morning, the moon invaded t'aemi-wŏn.

Sillok (Injo) (10:32a)

At night the moon invaded t'aemi-wŏn.

Sample 2---10/28/1625

Sūngjong-wŏn ilgi (1:437d)

Foggy at 8 in the morning.
Venus was seen at 10 in the morning from the direction of south.
At 9 in the evening, a meteor appeared from below the pu star and went above ch'ŏn'gon star. As big as a fist, it was red-colored and its tail was longer than 2 or 3 feet.

Sillok (10:35b)

Venus was seen in daytime.
At night, a meteor appeared from below the kwi star and went above the ch'ŏn'gon star.
Sample 3---11/1/1625

Sungjong-won ilgi (1;441a)

Solar halo at 2 in the afternoon.
At 11 at night, the sky was like a burning flame in the direction of south-west.

Sillok (10;37a)

At night, the sky was like a burning flame in the direction of south-west.

Sample 4---11/3/1625

Sungjong-won ilgi (1;441c)

Solar halo in the hours of 10 to 12 in the morning.
At 9 in the evening, the sky was like a burning flame in the directions of east, south, and west.

Sillok (10;37b)

(None of above)

Sample 5---11/7/1625

Sungjong-won ilgi (1;443c)

Solar halo in the hours of 2 to 4 in the afternoon.
At 11 at night, a meteor appeared from the wi star and went below the pyök star. It was bowl-like, and its tail gradually curved. It was white-colored and was bright enough to illuminate the earth.

Sillok (10;39a)

(None of above).
Such comparisons are typical of thousands of cases for the Yi dynasty. The five samples above are enough to convince us that a great deal of the original information on portents was eliminated by the Sillok historians. The elimination of portents or the abbreviation of information on portents in the compilation of the Sillok was of course not done randomly or indiscriminately. After all, the historians of each Sillok were the main actors of the previous reign period and were assessing their own past, often with little change in their intellectual outlook. The elimination of certain portents then was done in view of relevancy as seen by the historians of the Sillok, and reflects contemporary views of portents.

Before we render final assessment of the reliability of Sillok portentography, let us consider mechanical errors often made in the process of transcription. From Sample 2 above, we can tell that the Sillok made a mistake in the transcription of the name of a star from nu to kwi. No doubt this kind of mistake was made frequently, though it may not be very serious. Yet more serious mistakes in the process of transcriptions from original sources are found in the instances of triple births during the reign of King Chungjong. Here are some:
Case 1-a.

9/25/1522 (lunar calendar) (Chungjong Sillok, 46;4a)

In Sŏnsan, Kyŏngsang Province, a temple slave named Torani (or Sŏgŭlbi) had triplet sons. It was ordered to give some grain to the family.

Case 1-b.

11/2/1522 (Chungjong Sillok, 46;25a)

In Sŏnsan City, a woman had triplet sons.

Case 2-a.

6/6/1524 (Chungjong Sillok, 51;1b)

In Hoedŏk County, Ch'ungch'ŏng Province, a commoner woman named Hanani had three sons at one birth.

Case 2-b.

7/23/1524 (Chungjong Sillok, 51;25a)

In Hoedŏk County, Ch'ungch'ŏng Province, a woman had three sons at one birth.

Case 3-a.

6/8/1526 (Chungjong Sillok, 57;12b)

In Kimhae City, Kyŏngsang Province, a woman had three daughters at one birth.

Case 3-b.

8/16/1526 (Chungjong Sillok, 57;36a)

In Kimhae, Kyŏngsang Province, a woman had three daughters at one birth.
In Ch'angp'yŏng County, Cholla Province, a commoner Ĭjultŏk had three sons at one birth.

In Ch'angp'yŏng County, Cholla Province, a commoner Ingjultŏk had three sons at one birth.

A closer look at these cases of triplets will be enough to raise question by any observers, for the eight cases are actually four pairs of almost identical occurrences. Since triple births are extremely rare phenomena—two cases for every 100,000 births, it is statistically impossible for any county to have two such cases within two months, let alone double triplets births repeated at least four times as in the 1522-1529 period.

These statistical impossibilities, I believe, are actually inadvertent mistakes made from transcriptions in the process of the Sillok compilation. These eight cases are double entries of four actual cases, the first recorded for the date of the actual occurrence and the second for the date of the report received in the capital. For instance, it took about two months for a report of a portent in Hamgyŏng Province to reach the capital in
1437, and closer areas could report it faster, as we can see from the above cases of triplet reports.

Stages of Portentography

From previous discussions we can delineate the following stages in the development of portentography.

(1) Observation of portents: This gradually became a professional matter as the Office of Astronomy developed as an independent office in bureaucracy in the Three Kingdoms period. It is hard to tell, and somewhat beyond the scope of this study, exactly when the professional astronomers took command observation of portents. But we know that they were well-established at least by the eleventh century, if not earlier. This, of course, does not mean that other officials were not allowed to observe portents.

(2) Report of Observed Portents: It is a sheer impossibility to observe all the portents that occur in nature; not every portent could be reported to the court by observers. When the throne was appreciative of such reports, as Kings T'aejong and Sejong of the early Yi period were, more reports were made, whereas fewer were reported when portents were frowned upon, as King Yŏnsan did in his later years. (See Fig. 1)

(3) Record of Reported Portents: Chroniclers in
court recorded those reported portents in their notes, along with other court affairs; these notes eventually became the basic materials for the compilation of history. Daily proceedings kept by major government offices were of this nature, and they include diaries of the Office of Astronomy, The Royal Secretariat, and many others. We can easily surmise that not every portent reported to the court was included in these daily records.

(4) Primary Historiography (Sillok): At the close of each reign, veritable records were compiled from the court records as well as from memoirs that all higher officials and historians of the period were obliged to submit. As far as the records of portents are concerned, the primary sources for this compilation include the Diary of the Royal Secretariat (Sŭngjŏng-wŏn ilgi). As we saw already, my comparison of the records in the Sŭngjŏng-wŏn ilgi with those in the Sillok of the late Yi period, revealed that Sillok historians were very selective in their portentography.

(5) Secondary Historiography: The list of portents in the Koryo-sa belong to this stage of portentography, as they were drawn from primary historiography. At this stage, historians could have further pruned the list according to their scholarly acumen. How much trimming
the compilers of the Koryo-sa actually did is an open question. All we can say is that all the records used to compile the veritable records in Koryo period might have been preserved intact in the Koryo-sa today, as our comparison of Kwŏn Kyŏngjung's list with that of the Koryo-sa showed above. However, we cannot say this for the list of portents for the Yi period, such as the one in the Yŏlvŏsil kisul. The process of its compilation was different from that of the Koryo-sa, for the list of portents in the Yi period in the Yŏlvŏsil kisul was made not from the Sillok but from other personal records.

At every stage of portentography, portents were simplified both in number and in content. Mistakes were also made in the process. But there seems to be no reason to suspect of any intentional fabrication or falsification of the data of portents. My conclusion is that the portents recorded in the Samguk sagi, the Koryo-sa, and the Sillok, faithfully reflect the combined result of the original reports made by astronomers and the trimmings added to them by scholar-officials of the period.

39
CHAPTER II

PORTENTS IN KOREA

The review of portents in this chapter is an attempt to provide background information about various portents in Korean history. Efforts are made to document as much information as possible about the different and changing attitudes toward different kinds of portents at different times. There are two kinds of changes worth noticing—(1) changes in the distribution of various portents in Korean history, notably those that occurred toward the end of Koryo period; (2) changes in the attitudes toward portents, especially those held by different kings of the early Yi dynasty. The changes in the distribution at the end of Koryo dynasty is rather sudden as we can see from Fig. 2 and Fig. 3, and this can be seen as an indication of the changing intellectual climate of the period. The different views held by different kings of early Yi period can be a crucial factor which influenced the distribution of portents in the period. This chapter is intended to simply demonstrate that such remarkable changes do exist; its findings will be used in the discussion in the following chapters to explain the political and intellectual history of...
Confucian Korea.

A good classification of portents in Korean history can be found in the beginning chapters of the Chungbo munhon digo, where almost one hundred categories appear. Most of them, however, can be considered minor portents because little response to them is recorded. This study ignores most of these minor portents, arbitrarily selecting only a few to illustrate certain points for later discussion. Thus, for example, the portents related to fixed stars, clouds, wind, rain, fog, hail, and others are excluded. Also omitted are strange phenomena related to mountains, rivers, lakes, fountains, and most animals. The final selection for present purposes includes only twenty-three kinds of portents; seventeen of these are ominous portents, and six are auspicious ones. It is worth recalling, however, that a portent is never clearly ominous or auspicious all the time. One and the same portent can carry different meanings to different people in different times. With the exception of drought, most of the important portents are celestial phenomena, so most terrestrial portents as well as portents of flora and fauna are eliminated in the discussion. The reason for this will be clearer at the end of this chapter when the findings from each section are recapitulated.
A. Omens

(1) Solar Eclipses

The Samguk sagi has sixty-seven entries of solar eclipses; three of them are duplicate records and one is abortive (a predicted eclipse that failed to occur), making the actual number sixty-three. Scholars have expressed doubts concerning their authenticity, because most of them seem clearly to be copies of the Chinese records, even to the degree that some errors in the Chinese records are also found in the Korean copies. ¹ It has been suggested, though, and it seems likely, that the ones from about the mid-seventh century, after the erection of Ch'omsong-dae (Star-gazing Tower) in Silla, are based on the Koreans' own recorded observations.² It is also probable that toward the end of the Three Kingdoms period Paekche and Koguryō might have observed and recorded their own solar eclipses, considering their more advanced cultures in comparison with the Sillans in this early period.

The immediate concern, however, is not whether the Koreans did or did not observe solar eclipses in the Three Kingdoms period. The important fact for us is that history is completely silent on their attitude toward these unusual phenomena, even though sixty-seven
are recorded. This absence of response, which seems to support their Chinese origin, continues until the eleventh century, to be exact, to 1012 (Hyŏnjong 3). According to my tabulation, there were 138 recorded solar eclipses in the Koryo period, and additionally forty-six for the early Yi period from 1392 to 1500. As Fig. 4 shows, solar eclipses during the five hundred years between 1000 and 1500 are evenly recorded. This seems to indicate that the Koreans had mastered the necessary skills in predicting and observing eclipses by the early eleventh century at the latest.

The first incident, or response, in relation to solar eclipse is found in 1047 (Munjong 1).

The Office of Inspector-General (ŏsa-daе) memorialized, "According to the practices of yore, the Office of Astronomy has to predict solar or lunar eclipses and report them in advance to the throne, so as to announce it nationwide. . . . Now Spring Section Chief (Ch'un'gwangjong) Yu P'aeng and Chief of Astrology (T'aeasung) Yu Tŭkso, as ignorant as they are of Heavenly phenomena, failed to report it in advance. We therefore recommend their dismissal."4

After a repeated request for their dismissal on the ground that the failure was human because "solar and lunar eclipses have certain regularities in occurrence,"
Fig. 4. Solar Eclipses:
50-Year Distribution, 918-1500

Fig. 5. Lunar Eclipses:
50-Year Distribution, 918-1500
they were removed. Throughout the period under discus-

sion, we have four more cases of punishing astrono-
mers for their tardy service in predicting solar ec-
lipses---three in the Koryo period and one in the early
Yi period---in 1101, 1289, 1383, and 1406. The nature
of punishment for the cases of 1101 and 1289 is not
given, except that it was "according to the laws." In
the case of 1383, an astronomer who predicted an
eclipse that did not occur was punished by a flogging
of sixty strokes. The last case of 1406, the only one
in early Yi Korea, occurred in the reign of T'aejong
when the Office of Censor-General requested the punish-
ment of Pak Yom, Deputy Director of the Office of Astro-
nomy, because his prediction was considered not accurate
enough. Pak was only banished temporarily.

In the late Koryo well-defined rituals were practised
as a sort of exorcism at the occurrences of solar or lunar
eclipses, and government employees took the day off on
such occasions. More interesting developments in the
late Koryo can be seen in a memorial submitted to King
Kongmin on the solar eclipse of 1373. In this memorial
Yun Sojong blames the eclipse on the evils of the deposed
strongman Sin Ton and considers the portent as an indi-
cation of "the dissipating principles of kunja (superior
man, chun-tzu) and the prospering ways of spin (amoral
This set the tone of what was to come in Yi Korean portentology, which we will discuss in Chapter IV.

Nominally, solar eclipses were considered "major portents," that would faithfully reflect whatever happened in human affairs. King Sejong, for instance, even though he knew very well that eclipses have mathematical regularities, expressed his belief that predicted eclipses would not come if the ruler cultivated his virtue for right governing. The predictability of natural phenomena undermined their portentousness, and solar eclipse was no exception. In 1629 King Injo asked at one of his royal lectures why solar eclipses were taken casually in his time, whereas they had been considered great portents before. The answer he got was that they were seen merely as an occasion of rituals in his time.

Contrary to popular belief, then, solar eclipses did not serve as a grave portent in Korean history. The recent observation by a Korean historian of science that many astronomers lost their positions—or even lives—because of their failure to predict accurately, is an exaggeration.
Lunar Eclipses

Lunar eclipses were taken more lightly than solar eclipses throughout Korean history. As Fig. 5 shows, we have no record of a lunar eclipse until 1009, but after that they were recorded with consistency. On three occasions in the Koryŏ period, astronomers were put under investigation for their failure to predict lunar eclipses—in 1026, 1156, and 1196. Whether some action was taken against them or not, we do not know. In Yi Korea we have two such occasions during the first one hundred and fifty years. In 1398 King T'aejo punished an astronomer for his abortive prediction of a lunar eclipse, only to pardon him the next month. In 1488 (Sŏngjong 19) a similar case invited an investigation, but no action is recorded.

King Yŏnsan's comment on lunar eclipse is a good example of why a lunar eclipse was seen only as a minor portent.

Solar and lunar eclipses have their mathematical regularities, thus can hardly be seen as anomalies. The sun as the essence of yang symbolizes the ruler. Therefore, if it is invaded by yin, that is an anomaly. But why does the moon, as the essence of yin, deserve our concern? So King Yŏnsan ordered astronomers not to bother to predict lunar eclipses. This order, I assume, partly
explains the sudden drop in the number of recorded lunar eclipses in the latter half of the fifteenth century. (See Fig. 5) More interesting is the extremely uneven distribution of lunar eclipses for different reign periods in the early Yi dynasty. For example, thirty-six lunar eclipses are recorded for the thirty-two year reign of King Sejong (r. 1418-1450), whereas only one is recorded in the fourteen-year reign of Sejo (r. 1455-1468) and four in the twelve-year reign of Yonsan (r. 1494-1506).

It is obvious that the lunar eclipses were not taken seriously at any time in Korean history and were becoming almost negligible in the Yi period. Nevertheless, the astrological importance of the lunar eclipse in the private life of Yi Korea was not quite negligible, as is demonstrated by a political memoir relating an incident of 1689. In the evening of the sixteenth of the fourth month, 1689, King Sukchong was just finishing one of his seasonal services at the altar of his dead mother,

Then suddenly a total eclipse of the moon occurred. Because it was completely unexpected, all the people thought it strange. Then on the twenty-first of the fourth month His Majesty expressed for the first time his intention to expel his queen.22
As the sun was the symbol of the king, the moon was the symbol of the queen to the Korean mind of the period, and the people saw in the lunar portent an omen for their queen.

(3) Solar Haloes and White Rainbow Piercing the Sun

Six solar haloes (irhun) are recorded in the Three Kingdoms and Unified Silla period—the first occurring in 383 in Paekche. In Koryo, records show a considerable increase in number, but only for two cases are responses recorded. In the winter of 1253 (Kojong 40) when solar haloes were observed, the astronomer in charge predicted it as a sign of "a certain plot by outsiders and insiders." In the first month of the next year Yi Hyŏn was executed for his role in inviting the Mongol invasion and others were banished for welcoming the invaders. In the second case in 1375 (U 1), the Office of Astronomy, in response to the portent, recommended to the throne that it stop the use of female musicians and that it employ men of wisdom.

We have a case of a white rainbow across the sun (paekhong kwani) in Koryo which was seen as auspicious. It occurred in 1380 (U 6) when General Yi Sŏnggye was on a battlefield, well before he became the founding father of the Yi dynasty. His diviner offered the
portent as a sign of his victory. 27

Solar haloes, white rainbows across the sun, and similar portents were seen as equally portentous on the principle that they were infringing upon the brightness of the sun, the symbol of the ruler. But some distinction seems to have emerged in the Yi period, when the white solar rainbow was seen as a sign for war, while others came to be signs for the blinding of royal wisdom. 28 Observation of this portent was greatly encouraged in the early Yi period, as we can see from King T'aejong's punishment of astronomers for their failure to make an observation of a halo in 1414. 29 This incident served as a small turning point in the history of the Office of Astronomy, for the king at this time ordered that one astronomer be posted in the palace at all times to watch the sky. The others remained in their main office outside the palace. 30 Later in 1451 King Mundong ordered the immediate report of this portent at the moment of observation. 31 In 1470 we find its significance being reiterated by King Sŏngjong. 32 (See Fig. 6.)

Solar rainbows thus seem to have been one of the more significant portents in Yi Korea. Unlike eclipses, however, the recording of these portents was greatly influenced by historiography, and the number of entries does not reflect actual observations. 33 So we can
Fig. 6. Solar Haloes and Lunar Portents, 918-1500

Number of portents

Solar haloes

Lunar portents
assume that the numerous record of haloes in the third month of 1402 (T'aejong 2) was aimed by contemporary scholar-officials at the king's indulgence in a newly recruited courtesan, who had kept the otherwise diligent monarch from work for a few days. Another example of the historiographical significance of this portent is found in the record-high number of solar haloes during the first year of King Sejong's reign, 1419, as shown in Fig. 7. The sudden eruption of this portent indicates that the new king was very "unkingly," for every important decision in the first year of the reign was made not by himself but by his retired father-king. Indeed this period was an era of "two kings (yangsang)," and the upsurge of haloes was an oblique criticism of the era by the Sillok historians as much as by contemporary scholar-officials who contributed the source materials for the Sillok compilation. (The importance of this particular record will be again discussed in Chapter IV.)

The case of the significance of this portent is made clear by another record. In the second month of 1568 (Sonjo 1), after the observation of a solar halo, the king's mother, who had been the caretaker after the death of her husband, returned power to her boy king, saying:

When a woman is in power, even if everything is
all right, the great principle is not right. And others are not significant enough to be considered. Furthermore what if I cannot do the best? The appearance of the solar portent is due to the widow's role in politics.35

Like eclipses reports of this portent to the throne were prohibited in the last months of Yonsan's reign.36 The restoration of King Chungjong in 1506, however, immediately brought haloes back as a significant portent, and a solar halo played a minor part in the purge of Cho Kwangjo's group in 1519, the third literati purge in Yi Korea which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter IV. On the day after the purge, an extraordinary solar halo was reported observed in several places in Cholla Province.37 When the reports reached the capital, two weeks later, the king took it with "extreme awe" and expressed his wish to seek advice from his officials.38 Chief State Councillor Ch'ŏng Kwangp'ŭl, who was advocating moderation in the purge, took the opportunity to note that "there were earthquakes recently, and now we have this portent. To make matters stranger, this happened on the very day these people were found guilty."39 King Chungjong, however, responded to him this way:

It is my fault that this matter was not handled earlier, thus the matter became worse now. Since these people were punished suddenly one morning, after they were given royal consent
... to do things, it is indeed understandable for people to have doubts. Yet the punishment was not because of their remonstrance. In doing things, they were too extreme, leaving no other choice but to punish them. Who in the government would not understand this?

Then the king tried to evade Chōng's attempt to relate the portent to the case by saying that though the two happenings coincided, "we cannot say that the portent points to any particular incident." Incidentally, a similar portent, a "white rainbow surrounding the sun," appeared on the day when the body of Cho Kwangjo was being carried from the capital the next month.

(4) Two Suns and Three Suns

When a European saw three suns in the sky in 1434, he predicted the approach of a great disaster, a prediction which seemed to some later observers to be fulfilled by the fall of Constantinople in 1453. Such optical illusions are recorded both in the East and the West, and the illusory suns are also called "mock suns."

Fewer than a dozen of this type of portents are recorded in Korean history, all before the Yi period. The first record is found in the story of Teacher Wolmyōng and his song, tosol-ga. According to the story, the portent of two suns occurred in the fourth month of
760 (Kyŏngdŏk 19). When it lasted more than ten days, an astronomer advised the throne to invite a monk to exorcise it by scattering flowers with incantations. Though Teacher Wŏlmyŏng was not a monk, he was selected to do the service, and he succeeded in doing away with the portent by singing a song (tosol-ga) he had composed. If there is historical truth in this legend, it may be that the portent is the same as that of the two suns reported in the Samguk sagi six years later, that is, in 766 (Hyegong 2). 46

Frequency is somewhat higher for this portent in the reigns of two Koryo kings, Injong and Kongmin. Possibly the three records of two or three suns in the reign of Injong---in 1125, 1129, and 1133---reflect the threat of the strongman Yi Chagyŏm and the rebellion of Myoch'ŏng. In the same way the three similar records in the reign of Kongmin---in 1356, 1367, and 1374---can be seen as reactions to the activities of the strongman of the period, Sin Ton. 47

All in all, however, we cannot claim too much from the meager evidence we have today. And this is one of those phenomena that quickly lost portentousness, as we can see from the incident of the two suns reported in 1520 (Chungjong 15). When the report was sent in from Chŏnju, Chŏlla Province, in the fourth month of the year,
almost all the high officials as well as the king himself expressed doubts about the existence of such a portent. The Royal Secretariat (Sŭngjŏng-wŏn) made it clear that it was mistaken from the solar haloes of the day, claiming they had observed the haloes themselves. Chungjong, saying that there were never two suns from the ancient times, wanted to verify the report on the grounds that the Office of Astronomy also had a different view on it. But Chief and Left State Councillors disagreed, because all the monarch had to do on such occasions was to be apprehensive and do self-cultivation. Left State Councillor Nam Kon went even further in opposing the king's wish to investigate, saying that only the throne's moral cultivation mattered, whether the report was true or false. The next day King Chungjong announced self-criticism and asked for counsel from his subjects without bothering to check a possible mistake in the observation of the portent.

This proceeding may sound strange to us today. But what mattered to the scholar-officials of early sixteenth century Korea was not exact observation of nature's anomalies, but the moral implications of those anomalies. In the following chapters we will find this attitude crucial to our proper understanding of the Neo-Confucian tradition.
(5) Daytime Darkness, Hazy Sun, and Sun-Spots

These are similar phenomena that can easily be confused with each other. We have only a few dozen of them in the period under consideration, mostly in Koryo. They are another example of portents with diminishing importance.

Sun-spots invited at least two responses in the Koryo period. When there were sunspots in the first three days of 1204 (Sinjong 7), the royal astronomer tried to suppress the report of it to the throne because he knew from Chinese records that a similar occurrence presaged an Emperor's death. The next month King Sinjong died. Another sun-spot incident occurred in 1370 (Kongmin 19), when a sunspot was observed along with Venus in the daytime. Since both of the portents were considered ominous to the king, the astronomer advised the throne to arrange adequate exorcism. King Kongmin's answer was:

As for the sunspots, blame is on myself and there is no way to exorcise this. As for Venus in the daytime, it reflects the rise of high officials and this must be exorcised.

Reports of hazy sun are more frequent than reports of sunspots. The first record of a hazy sun and moon occurs in the legend of a young couple of Silla who emigrated to Japan in 157, thus making the sun and the
moon lose their brightness. This legend in the Samguk yusa is not found in the Samguk sagi, which as a matter of fact does not even record the hazy sun. Another record is found in Koguryo in 640 and was interpreted 750 years later by Kwŏn Kūn as the sign of King Yongnyu's assassination by Yŏn Kaesomun, which happened two years after the portent.

This portent is often found in Koryŏ history in relation to the punishment of evil men. So we can find from the biographies of Im Yŏn, Cho Ilsin, and Kim Yong of Koryŏ that a hazy sun recovered its brightness and gloomy days became bright on the punishment of these "villains." Yi I's memoirs include another story about the hazy sun. According to Yi, there were several days with a hazy sun in the second month of 1580 (Sŏnjo 13), when a beautiful daughter of an interpreter was brought into the king's harem.

(6) Lunar Portents other than Eclipses

All the other lunar portents except eclipses are put together in this section, which covers lunar haloes, the moon's approach to or occultation of the five planets or any constellations, and any other unusual phenomena related to the moon. Among these, the most common in Koryŏ were the lunar occultations of constellations.
The first response to any of the lunar portents is found in 1179 (Myǒngjong 9). In the seventh month of that year, when the moon "invaded" Venus, the astronomer memorialized to the throne on the exorcism of this portent through Buddhistic services. Two months later a lunar invasion of a constellation was received with the same response. In 1199 (Sinjong 2) a certain Chōng T'ŏngwŏn predicted the death of a court lady when there was an occurrence of mutual occultation of the moon and Saturn. The prediction was fulfilled when Princess Suan died two months thereafter. The moon invaded Mars in 1219 (Kojong 6), upon which the astronomer predicted the death of a distinguished man in government. That man turned out to be Ch'oe Ch'unghŏn, the military strongman of the period, who died the day after the prediction.

Such portentous interpretations were challenged for the first time in 1250 (Kojong 37) with the appearance of the lunar occultation of a constellation. Ch'oe Hang, the military dictator of the time, did not like the portentous interpretation submitted to the throne by the astronomer.

At the time the king was on a visit to Chep'o Palace to meet the Mongolian ambassador. The astronomer's memorial was meant to stop the meeting by asking the throne for self-cultiva-
tion. Ch'oe Hang read this secret memorial and did not like the idea. So he had the Office of Inspector-General criticize the Office of Astronomy for recklessly presenting a memorial on a stellar anomaly. The Superintendant (p'ansa) and a Deputy (sŭng) of the Office of Astronomy were dismissed.

At the time, the route of communication was already closed, and only the Office of Astronomy was in a position to be able to submit memorials directly to the throne to urge self-cultivation on occasions of portents. After this incident, however, direct memorials by astronomers were prohibited.60

This episode alone amply suggests the important political role the Office of Astronomy played in the Koryŏ period, and particularly how it served during the Ch'oe military rule as the last bulwark of opposition to the Ch'oe house rule.61

It is also noteworthy that moral self-cultivation, instead of Buddhist rituals, were proposed in answer to this portent. This is a trend to be found more often in later responses, as in the case of the Martian occultation of the moon in 1279. At the occurrence of this portent, high officials made it clear that such a grave portent "can not be exorcised by feeding the monks and serving Buddha." King Ch'ungnyŏl therefore asked for his high officials' secret counsel and stopped all the
Lunar portents continued to be observed diligently in the early years of the Yi dynasty until the reign of King Sejong (r. 1419-1450). As Fig. 6 indicates, however, this portent rarely appeared during the latter half of the fifteenth century. One reason for such a change can be found in the great development of mathematical as well as observational astronomy in the reign of King Sejong, whose astronomers developed the skills necessary to predict such events. Again, no serious sense of portentousness can be attributed to phenomena that are subject to routine calculations for prediction. Perhaps King Munjong's decree of 1450 banning the report of any lunar haloes because they were not portentous in his opinion can be taken as a signal for such a change in attitude. More important, I believe, is the fact that from this time portents were increasingly considered in terms of their relevance to yin and yang. Those infringing upon yang, the symbol of the throne, survived, while those related to yin, the symbol of the queen or his subjects, lost portentousness rapidly. Lunar portents belong among the latter. Nevertheless, they survived in folk literature as well as in the personal memoirs of Yi politicians.
(7) Stars observed in the Daytime

There are seven reports of Venus observed in the daytime before Koryŏ, but no explanation was offered for any of them. In Koryŏ, a report of this portent appears in 1014, but we find no response thereto. In 1092 (Sonjong 9) when this portent was observed, the astronomer memorialized that "there will be a big funeral within three years." Two years later King Sonjong died.

In the early Yi period the occurrence of this portent increased almost five times, a considerable increase even though we know that the total number of portents recorded in the Sillok is larger than those in the Koryŏ-sa. Yet it is still difficult to find any specific responses to this portent in Yi Korea.

This dearth of direct responses, however, does not indicate in any way that this portent was negligible. On the contrary, this portent seems to have served well, and often it was combined with other portents, when scholar-officials wanted to make their points to the throne. In 1496 (Yonsan 2) the king announced an appeal for counsel in response to Venus in the daytime and solar haloes. It is one of many such examples, and this portent survived in Yi portentology because it implied, just like solar haloes, insufficient brightness of the sun, or the throne. (See Fig. 8)
Fig. 8. Venus-Observed-in-the-Daytime and Other Planetary Portents, 918-1500.

Number of records

Venus in daytime

Other planetary portents

64
(8) The Five Planets

When five stars, probably the five planets, gathered in the eastern sky in 149, an astronomer of Silla interpreted it as sign of the king's virtue. According to the Samguk sagi, the astronomer made a false report in fear of the king's wrath. Another legend has it that General Kim Yusin of Silla was born after his father had a dream of Mars and Saturn falling together towards him.

In Koryo this portent was considered very significant. In 1178 when Venus and Jupiter approached each other in the same constellation, the astronomer predicted that locust would come, and indeed they ravaged the eastern, western, and northern areas of the country the next year. In the twelfth month of the same year the astronomer observed a series of unusual movements made by three planets and predicted rebellion and military actions. Two months later rebels in the west, who were more or less under government control after an initial rebellion led by Cho Wich'ong, made another uprising against the government.

When Venus invaded a constellation in 1184, a diviner predicted imminent danger to the military. This led to a counter-maneuver by the military.

At the prediction, the military wanted to divert the misfortune to the civil officials. General
Yi Siyong and some thirty men went to the palace to present a false indictment of six civil officials, including Inspector (Kanŭi) Song Chŏ, Right Censor Ch'oe Kihu, and Historian Wang Hŏso, and requested their banishment. Though the king knew their innocence, he was weak and irresolute, finally giving in to the demand. They were banished to distant islands, and many people felt sorry for them. Yet Siyong and his followers were not satisfied in overcoming the portent by this. So they turned now against the guilt of Colonel (Chungnangjang) Kim Chagyŏk for his help to Kyŏng Taesŭng in the latter's invasion of the palace over the palace-wall. Kim was also banished to an island.73

In 1186 (Myŏngjong 16) when Jupiter was invaded by Saturn, the astronomer predicted a rebellion. To exorcise the prognostication, Buddhist rituals were carried out in two temples according to the astronomer's prescription.74 Nevertheless, ten months later Cho Wŏnjŏng rebelled. An unusual movement of Mars was noticed by an astronomer in the ninth month of 1195 (Myŏngjong 25). The astronomer saw in it a forthcoming military action, and he advised the throne to be watchful. In the twelfth month of the same year there was the same portent again, and the astronomer made the same prediction.75 Four months later Ch'oe Ch'unghŏn rose to military and political supremacy after a bloodbath.
With the rise of the Yi dynasty, this portent rapidly lost its portentousness, perhaps because of the increased predictability thanks to the rapid astronomical development. (See Fig. 8) In unofficial histories, however, tradition still was strong, and we find this portent being interpreted as the king’s escape to the north during the Hideyoshi Invasions. 76

(9) Comets and Novae

The comet was one of the most important of portents throughout Korean history, and the record shows rather even distribution. The nova was regarded as being as portentous as the comet, yet the number of novae for the whole period of Korean history under consideration, up to 1500, is only twenty, too few to have any statistical meaning. Novae were recorded in traditional historiography together with comets, thus the two are included together here.

The first record of a comet in Korea is found in a legend related to the reign of King Chinp'yōng (r. 579-631) of Silla. The Samguk yusa tells the story. When three hwarang were planning an excursion to Mount P'ungak (later Diamond Mountains), a comet showed itself in a certain constellation, forcing them to cancel their plan. However, when Teacher Yungch'ŏn composed a song
about it, the portent disappeared instantly. Furthermore the same portent forced the Japanese soldiers to retreat to Japan. Teacher Yungch'ón's "Song of the Comet (hyesǒng-ga)" changed the misfortune into a double blessing. This song is one of the small number of hyangga surviving today and is considered important in the literary history of Korea. The Samguk sagi, however, records no comet being observed in Silla at this time.

Another legend of magic related to comets is found in the Samguk yusa. In the reign of King Hyoso (r. 691-702) a comet appeared (probably in 695), and the astronomer memorialized that it occurred because of the government's failure to endow land and title to the auspicious flute which had already brought a series of miracles. When the advice was accepted, the comet disappeared soon. Here again there is no record of a comet during this period in the Samguk sagi.

The first legend we have about a nova, also from the Samguk yusa, is a story of a faked nova sometime in the seventh century. According to it, the origin of the name of a mountain in the Silla capital, Sōngbu-san ("star-floating mountain"), is explained like this:

A man was seeking a government post in the capital. He ordered his son to make a big
torch and go up the mountain at night to raise the fire high. That night the people of the capital saw the light and all spoke of the strange star appearing above the mountain. The king heard of it and became worried. He meant to ask the people how the portent could be exorcised, to which the father was planning to respond. But the royal astronomer memorialized to the throne, "This is not a grave portent. Merely it is a sign for the death of a son in a family and the weeping of his father." At last it was decided not to do any exorcising. That night the son was devoured by a tiger on his way down. 80

What these stories tell us about the comets and novae of the pre-Koryŏ period is that they were all seen as objects of magical exorcisms. Only in late Silla in the ninth century do we find for the first time a comet related, as they were to be hereafter, to political matters, this time to the forthcoming revolutionary turmoils. When rebels gathered around Chang Pogo in the winter of 838, waiting for revenge against the usurper king Huigang, a comet appeared in the west with its tail pointing to the east. The rebels congratulated each other, saying that this was a sign of eradicating the old and ushering in the new, and thus, they could expect success in their vendetta. 81

A nova in early Koryŏ was interpreted by Ch'oe Chимong as the sign of a rebellion, a prediction— which was
fulfilled by the abortive uprising of Wang Sŏng in 932. By the way, Ch'oe Chimong was the only one we know in Korean history who reached the very top of the political hierarchy by way of being a professional astronomer-diviner.

On new year's day of 1095 (Hŏnjong 1) an observation was made of solar haloes and comets on both sides of the sun. The astronomer predicted a rebellion by high officials and nobles. The boy king simply did not know how to prevent it by exorcism, so he merely played with several palace doctors. Only seven months before the portent the ten-year-old boy had succeeded his father on the throne in the middle of a fierce power struggle between Yi Chaŭi, leader of a powerful Yi clan that supplied most of the queens of the period, and the eldest uncle of the king. And it was only seven months after the portent that the struggle ended with a victory for the king's uncle and the boy king's abdication in his favor.

This story of King Sukchong's usurpation in the Koryŏ period bears a remarkable resemblance to what happened in another drama of an uncle's usurpation of the throne in the Tanjong's reign of the Yi period. Unlike the former story, however, the coup of Prince Suyang (later King Sejo) in 1453, was not presaged by a comet. But three
years later when the "six loyal subjects" tried an unsuccessful counter-coup against the usurper king, a comet was there to lead their way throughout the month of their intensive planning. Their destiny was sealed the next month by a betrayer among themselves, and they were summarily executed, leaving behind the best-known epic of loyalty in traditional Korean history. I could not establish whether the Sillok historians explicitly tried to relate the comet and the abortive coup. However, Yi Kungik in his Yollyosil kisul sees the comet as pre-saging the incident.

If the incident of the "six loyal subjects" was only implicitly related to a comet in the Sillok, the incident of General Nam I in 1468 (Yejong 0), only one month after King Sejo's death, is almost impossible to understand fully without a proper realization of the significance of the comet as a serious portent in the political thinking of the times. Nam I, son of King T'aejong's daughter and maternal uncle of the new nineteen-year-old king, Yejong, was a rapidly rising military hero during the reign of his cousin, Sejo. When King Sejo died in 1468, Nam I was Minister of Defence at the age of twenty-seven. Only one month after Sejo's death he was charged with treason by one of his junior officers. He was found guilty as charged and was executed. Of the interrogation
of the case we have the following from the Sillok:

Fourth Minister (Ch'amji) in the Ministry of Defence Yu Chagwang testified. . . . "In that evening Nam I came to my house by horse and said, 'The comet has not disappeared yet. Did you see it too?' I answered, 'No, I did not.' Nam said, 'Now it is in the middle of the Milky Way and all white-colored. So it is not easy to see.' I brought out Kang-mu (Chu Hsi's history of China) and he showed me the place about comets. A note there read, 'When the color is white, generals revolt and soldiers rise.' Nam said with emotion, 'This time there must be some correspondence.' After a while he continued, 'I shall raise the banner.'

Other testimony by a military officer narrates what happened on the night when Nam I and he were on night duty in the palace.

I went to visit Nam at his place of sleep. He was reading the Koryo-sa and when it came to the matter of Sin Ton and Sin U [King U], he sighed a real deep sigh and asked me, "Is the comet still there?" I answered, "Still there." Nam I said, "A Heavenly portent is not meaningless. Why does not it disappear? . . ." And he continued to tell me, "Now that the portent is as it is, there must be some wicked subjects planning an intrigue." I asked who the wicked were, but he would not answer. I asked insistently again, and then he said, "Taking advantage of the young king, Han Myonghoe is trying to monopolize power."
Later historians of the Yi period tend to emphasize the false testimony made against Nam I by Yu Chagwang. Yu apparently had many reasons to be envious of Nam's rapid rise. As a son of concubine, Yu had to fight formidable odds throughout his political career, which was long and often colored with controversies. In spite of his background, he was quite successful as we shall see more of his later activities in the coming chapters. Another factor in the incident was the changing power configurations at the beginning of a new reign period under the leadership of a representative of the old guard Han Myŏnghoe, who happened to be the father-in-law of the new king. Nam I, as the Sillok makes it clear, wanted to do something to stop Han Myŏnghoe.

Such an utterance of Nam I, however, might have been taken less seriously under ordinary circumstances. What made the circumstances extraordinary was that the comet was visiting Korea for more than a month. The appearance of a comet at this time created "mass hysteria," as every knowledgeable man from the king to low officials became apprehensive about the future. Those who were "in" were most eager to eradicate any inkling of insubordination, while those who were "out" were agitated to do something to upset the status quo---"To ward off the old and to ring in the new." This comet hysteria could
have pushed the prosecution of Nam I's treason.

Another excellent example of comet hysteria occurred in 1471 (Sŏngjong 2). At the report of the comet Sŏngjong announced an appeal for counsel, accompanied by a decree of self-criticism. A series of standard responses to portents was taken thereafter. But what makes this case special was that two special garrisons were ordered to take temporary stations at the two key positions in the capital. It was exactly what they would have done if there had been an actual military threat from outside. There was of course no such threat, and the action was taken solely in response to a comet. For this comet another apprehensive remark came from the king's mother, who was conducting government affairs for the boy king. In her decree, the queen mother analyzed the reason for the comet:

Untalented relatives of mine occupy many posts in the government and squander government salaries. I am afraid this portent is due to this reason. Embarrassed, I do not know what to do. Those wise and good who retreated into mountains and woods must be searched for and invited in.

King Yŏnsan's efforts to defy established portentology have already been shown in several sections above, and with the appearance of a comet in 1500 (Yŏnsan 6), there was no exception. His wish to suppress the portent
can be seen in his order that the news of the appearance of a comet "shall not be revealed, for if it be known to remonstrators, they will surely make much ado about it." His wish was soon to be betrayed, apparently because the comet was growing bigger everyday, thus becoming more clearly visible to everybody. The king could not but follow a series of well-established measures to respond to the portent. When the situation became more complicated with the report of a few other portents, King Yongsan had finally to acquiesce to the demands of his officials and he reopened his long-neglected royal lectures.

King Yongsan's anti-portentology seemed to have attained a final victory in the seventh month of 1506, when he ordered no portent to be reported to the throne or, as a matter of fact, to be observed at all. When the Office of Astronomy reported the appearance of a comet on the 20th day of the month, it was only two days after the king had directed that there be no reports of any "anomalies such as earthquakes."

Because the comet was growing bigger after its first appearance about ten days earlier, and because the comet was considered more portentous than other portents, the Office of Astronomy made the report and this made the king angry. King Yongsan immediately summoned high
officials to announce his decision to change the name of the Office of Astronomy to the Bureau of Calendar (Saryŏk-sŏ) and make it responsible only for time-keeping.97

The historical significance of King Yŏnsan's struggle against established portentology, of which the abolition of the astronomical institution was merely a part, will be discussed in Chapter IV. Suffice it here to point out that the comet of 1506 was directly responsible for triggering the abolition of the Office of Astronomy, the only occasion in Korean history on which this was done, although it was for only forty-one days—until the expulsion of the king himself.

After this interlude, comets and novae remained as portentous as ever. So Yi I writes that the appearance of a nova in 1572 presaged the death of Ki Taesŭng, a well-known scholar of the time.98 Perhaps the remark of Yi Chiham, better known by his pen name, T'ojŏng, one of the great clairvoyants in Korean history, sums up the significance of these portents in later Yi history.

In addition, Yi Chiham said, "The comet of last year, I think, was an auspicious star." I asked why. Chiham answered, "The minds of men and the ways of the world were extremely chaotic, thus making the situation vulnerable to any catastrophe of the future. Yet after the appearance of the comet, the people high and low became apprehensive and the minds of men changed
considerably, thus narrowly escaping actual catastrophic happenings. How is this not an auspicious star?" ... The words of Chiham may sound like a joke, yet men of intelligence took them as most pertinent.99

(10) Meteors

The distribution of meteors does not differ from that of other portents, except that the number of recorded meteors decreases considerably from the latter part of Koryó. Meteors made spectacular portents at night; the only trouble was that there were too many of them.

The first portentous meteor recorded in Korean history is the one in 398 which forced a king of Paekche to stop his Koguryó expedition only miles from the frontier because the star fell directly toward his own camp.100 A similar story is told of the Koguryó attack on Silla at Pukhan-san fortress in 661.

At the time the fortress had only 2,800 men and women. Tong T'ach'ón [chief of the fortress] could encourage his weak force to fight against the strong for twenty days. Yet when food ran out and people had become too tired, he asked Heaven for help with his utmost sincerity. Suddenly a big star fell to the Koguryó camp and lightning struck. Noe Ümsin [Koguryó commander] and others became afraid; thus loosening their siege, they retreated. Tong
T'ach'ŏn was promoted by the king to *tae nama* rank. When Kim Yusin first heard of the fortress being surrounded, he said, "Manpower is already dried up; we have to depend on gods' help." Thus he built an altar to pray, and it was after the prayer that this portent occurred. People all said that it was a response to his sincere prayer. 101

We have more of General Kim Yusin's role of being a master magician. In the uprising of Pidam in 647, a big star fell on the camp of the royal army. Taking it as sign of the forthcoming fall of Queen Sŏndŏk, Pidam and his followers rejoiced over the prospect, while the queen started to worry. Thereupon, General Kim Yusin made a big kite and flew it high at night with a big lantern attached to it. And he did not forget to spread word: that the fallen star of the night before had returned to the sky. 102 In the spring of 673 there were meteors and earthquakes in the Silla capital, which made King Munmu awe-stricken. But the general predicted that the portents were not meant for the state but for himself---he died later that year. 103

In Koryŏ period, we find many professional portent-tellers. At the meteor of 945 Ch'oe Chimong, one of the greatest of the trade, whom we have mentioned in the section on comets, predicted a plot against the royal family which soon materialized in Wang Kyu's plot against King
Hyejong's brother (later King Chŏngjong). Another "correct prediction" in the Koryŏ period was made for the meteor of 1182 (Myŏngjong 12), when imminent harm to a mistress of the palace and the coming of an ambassador were predicted. The next year the queen mother died, and six months later a Chinese ambassador arrived from the Chin dynasty.

In relation to meteor observations, I could find only one case of punishment. In 1406 when an astronomer failed to observe a meteor, King T'aejong ordered him to be flogged with sixty strokes. Already in the early Yi period, however, meteors seem to have lost much of their portentousness and by King Yŏnsan's time, they, along with the appearance of Venus in the daytime, were no longer reported.

However with the coup of King Chungjong the next year, the pendulum swung in the other direction with a strong revival of portentology. One session of the royal lectures illustrates the situation after the fall of King Yŏnsan.

His Majesty attended the evening royal lecture, the topic being from the Koryŏ-sa chŏryo. And they came to "A meteorite fell in Hwangju with a sound like thunder. The magistrate sent the stone to the palace. But the Ministry in charge of rites memorialized that it was an ordinary
matter which had nothing to do with an omen or auspice. They further said that this should not have been brought to the king's attention and requested that the magistrate be punished. The king agreed to this and returned the stone." Thereupon Participant Hō Wan commented, "The words of the Ministry of Rites are very inappropriate. Unharmonious ch'i brings omen and harmonious ch'i brings auspice. All the portents are due to human affairs. All from the king down to his subjects have to be apprehensive and continue self-cultivation. This is the right way. Nevertheless their words were like this. Here we see how small men (sōin) were guiding their rulers. . . . King Munjong was a wise king of Koryō, yet he followed the words of the Ministry of Rites in punishing the magistrate. This must have been due to the continuing peace, which brought laxity to them. This must be kept in mind."108

However, the revival of the meteor as a portent should not be overemphasized, for its importance in post-Yōnsan Korea was often derived from its being part of a cluster of portents.

Regardless of their political significance, meteors remained a serious portent in the popular culture of traditional Korea. One representative case is the story of a meteor related to the death of Admiral Yi Sunsin. When Admiral Yi was going to sea for his last battle against the retreating Japanese at the close of the Hide-
yoshi Invasions, his death was presaged by a meteor that appeared earlier in the evening. Yi died in 1598 and the legend of the meteor is found from his monument erected two hundred years later in 1794. But Yu Songnyong, a strong supporter of Admiral Yi, wrote in some detail in his memoir about the final battle and the death of Yi without any mention of a meteor. The story of a meteor in the death of Admiral Yi Sunsin, then, has to be seen as a legend that developed gradually in the intervening two hundred years. In contrast to this legend of a meteor with a death motif, we have an opposite motif in the birth legend of General Kang Kamch'an (948-1031).

(11) Lightning and Thunder

The flash of lightning, the roar of thunder, and the powerful strike of the bolt made a terrifying portent in the past. We have a long list of such portents commencing with the bolt that struck the south gate of the Silla capital in A.D. 3. The most dreadful of these was the thunderbolt that in a blink of time demonstrates the awesome power of the unknown. Although overall tabulation of these portents does not show any remarkable difference from that of other portents, except perhaps that it evidently remained strong throughout Korean history, one point deserves attention. Since thunderbolts usually
strike tall structures, by determining the objects that were struck one can develop a fairly good picture of the urban skyline of the Korean past.

Out of ten bolts between 660 and 935 (the Unified Silla period) eight struck Buddhist temples or pagodas. Since the other two struck a man and a royal mausoleum respectively, we can say that the Silla urban skyline was dominated by Buddhist buildings, probably higher than the royal palaces. In Koryo forty-two bolts are recorded: eight of them struck men, twelve of them hit Buddhist temples, and thirteen of them struck palaces or government offices. We can thus assume that the highest buildings in the Koryo capital were Buddhist temples and government offices or palaces. In the Yi period almost half of the twenty-one recorded bolts struck palaces or government offices while we cannot find any temples hit by lightning bolts. Royal tombs and shrines were the major targets of the remaining bolts.\textsuperscript{112}

The bolt that struck a pillar of the Bureau of Punishment in 984 (Songjong 3) deserves attention because the responsibility for the portent was placed on two high officials, who were then dismissed.\textsuperscript{113} Often thunder and lightning were seen as the wrath of Heaven. In the reign of Injong of Koryo (1123) the astronomer interpreted thunder with rain and hail as the sign of a hidden plot,
and advised the throne to chase out the strong and violent ones, to help the old and the weak, and to hire men of wisdom. Winter lightning that year brought further advice to the throne in the form of an oblique attack upon the monopoly of power by Yi Chagyom, who heard it with great ire. Yi was again criticized at the occurrence of thunder and lightning with heavy rain in the summer of 1124, when he was having a grandiose party to celebrate his birthday after being honored with the title of Prince of Choson State.

Great lightning and thunder along with hail and a cyclone occurred in 1197 (Myongjong 27) on the eve of Ch'oe Ch'unghon's prayer to Heaven to report his decision to expel the king. Ch'oe nevertheless was undaunted by this and went on to remove King Myongjong and to replace him with his hand-picked king, Sinjong.

One short entry in the Koryo-sa summarizes well what thunder meant to the Koreans of the period:

Thunder struck General Pak Chongmo. He was a greedy and wicked man.

The idea of Heaven punishing a wicked man by thunderbolt coupled with the people's desire to take part in the execution of justice, led to a peculiar tradition in Koryo. According to the tradition, any property taken from a house struck by a bolt would attract more wealth into
the house of the new owner of the property. So when the house of a royal family was struck by a bolt in 1376 (U 2), many people rushed to the scene to scavenge whatever piece of property they could lay their hands on, even before the family breathed their last breath.119

In early Yi Korea we find that King T'aejong's view of this portent shows a significant break from the opinion held by the Koryo people. In 1406 (T'aejong 6) the king discussed with his officials the reason why a thunderbolt would hit a man. Here T'aejong pointed out that in history the wicked and disloyal did not necessarily get Heaven's punishment, or thunderbolts, thus suggesting that man was struck by bad luck by contacting an evil spirit. Nevertheless the king confessed his deep dread of portents:

About portents all the old books say that they are interpolated on the bases of human affairs. As the Doctrine of the Mean says, if my ch'i is in harmony, then the ch'i of the world would be in harmony. The principle is most profound that the ch'i of one man can decide the harmony of the world. What we call "I" is actually one of many people. If all the officials do their jobs, not a single soul being negligent, then why will harmony come only after I respect and refrain? Heaven's way blesses the good and blames the wicked; yet its effect as luck or as omen takes a long time to come, thus making
people have doubt and suspicion. 120

So T'aejong became angered in 1410 when an astronomer told him that the winter thunder at that time was harmless. 121 Another punishment followed in 1412 because of a tardy report of thunder in spring. At that time a royal secretary was reprimanded for his procrastination with the report of the Office of Astronomy. 122

The appearance of portents was often taken as an opportunity for state councillors to turn in their resignations, and it seems to be more so with thunder and lightning, as it was in 1438 (Sejong 20). 123 Though the resignation of state councillors on such occasions became a tradition, written into the dynastic constitution (Kyōngguk taejŏn), according to which state councillors were held responsible for harmonizing *vin-yang*, their resignations were usually rejected by the throne. 124

Among the myriad responses to portents, the one in 1444 (Sejong 26) is unusual. When a lady-in-waiting was struck by a bolt that summer, the king relieved forty-five ladies from their court service, apparently in an effort to recover harmony in *vin-yang* through the dissipation of suppressed female desires. 125

One of the most significant effects of portents in Korean history can be found in the incident following the bolt of 1490 (Sŏngjong 21) that struck a man just
outside a palace gate. Sŏngjong immediately announced his intention to declare a general pardon, among other responses, and then after some deliberations decided to give back to some 690 former officials and scholars their forfeited service certificates (chikch'ŏn). It was the largest of such actions taken by government in Korean history up to 1550, possibly the largest in the entire traditional period. Included in the pardon were several hundred former officials or scholars disqualified for their involvement in the plot to restore the deposed King Tanjong, including those involved in the incident of the "six loyal subjects" in 1456. Traditional historiography sees this pardon as a major event in the reign of King Sŏngjong.  

This same bolt also served as an occasion to hire Chŏng Yŏch'ang, a disciple of Kim Chongjik and a distinguished scholar, into government through recommendation initiated by the portent. Another thunderbolt in 1493 served as an opportunity to prohibit royal families from building overly grandiose houses.  

One individual in Korean history who suffered most from thunder or lightning was definitely Im Sahong (?-1506), presumably the prototype of the soin (amoral man, mean man, or villain, hsiao-jen in Chinese) in Korean historiography. He was reinstated from a previous
exile on the occasion of a bolt in 1486, was disqualified by another bolt in 1497, and then demoted immediately, after being promoted in rank, because of thunder and lightning in 1498. We shall see more details of Im's political life and his role in the development of Korean portentology in Chapter IV.

King Yŏnsan was not as susceptible as other kings to this portent either. As early as 1497 (Yŏnsan 3) on the occasion of thunder and lightning he started to show a somewhat unorthodox view of portents. When an official from the Office of Inspector-General pinpointed unbecoming promotions and inadequate punishment as the cause of the portent, Yŏnsan dismissed this interpretation by arguing that it was already the first month of the spring season, thus implying that the thunder was not in winter and not ominous. When this view was effectively refuted by his scholar-officials, Yŏnsan laid blame at the feet of recalcitrant officials. According to him, the portent was due to the officials' neglect of their work and their persistent demonstrations on the palace grounds for remonstrances.

Later in his reign King Yŏnsan completed his purge of portents, and thunder was no exception:

The king said, "Some time ago there used to be some people who remonstrated with extreme words,
using the thunder of the tenth month as a portent. Is there any remonstrator today who would consider thunder of the tenth month as a portent?" When this was asked of the Royal Secretariat, royal secretaries answered, "According to Monthly Ordinances (Yueh-ling) thunder starts to disappear from the eighth month; thus thunder after the eighth month is taken as anomalous. But thunder in the tenth month is a yearly happening; thus it cannot be seen as portentous." No remonstrators or any others could bring any remonstrance otherwise. Historian's Comment: The king had already killed remonstrators in order to build his authority. Knowing that the route of communication was effectively shut off and that the people could not speak up, he was boasting of that. 132

With the restoration of King Chungjong in 1506 thunder and lightning were again considered portentous. In 1509 (Chungjong 4) Chief State Councillor was removed from the top government post when he turned in his resignation at the occurrence of hail and thunder.133 Although resignations were turned in and rejected with every major portent of this period, the actual acceptance of resignations like this was exceptional.134 In this case the acceptance was not a result of the portents per se, but the portents served as a face-saving device for the retiring state councillor who had been under constant attack for his service to the dethroned Yonsan.
Chungjong's reign is known in traditional historiography for the reinstatement of Sonung, or the royal tomb for the queen of King Minjong. She was deposed during the reign of usurper King Sejo because she was the mother of deposed King Tanjong. When the pine trees in the Shrine of Dynastic Ancestors were hit by a bolt in 1513 (Chungjong 8) it was decided to reinstate the unhappy queen to her rightful place after fifty-eight years. If this seems insignificant to us today, it was of vital significance to the new breed of scholars who were giving more and more stress to the moral rectification of their history. The problem of intellectual reorientation in this period will receive more attention in Chapter IV. It should, however, be pointed out here that it was not an easy decision for the king, who was a direct descendent of the usurper king, Sejo, to undo what was done by Sejo. Also worth noting in this reign is that an investigation was made of an astronomer's failure to report this portent in 1516—a rare happening since the reign of King Sŏngjong.

Thus thunder and lightning remained a strong factor in decision making in government. According to Yi I's memoirs, a winter thunder of 1566 (Myŏngjong 21) brought the reinstatement of those punished in the literati purge of 1545 (Ŭlsa sahwa), as well as posthumous entitlement
of Cho Kwangjo to state councillorship with the honorific title of Muňjong. Two years later, a winter thunder revived the recommendation examination, which was started by the Cho Kwangjo group before their fall in 1519.

(12) Earthquakes

The first record of an earthquake goes back to A.D. 2 of Koguryŏ, but the first big one is found in 779, when houses were destroyed and more than one hundred persons were killed. More importantly for our purposes, King Hyegong was killed in a coup the next year. In 1023 (Hyŏnjong 14), we are told, an exorcism was carried out on the occasion of an earthquake in Kŭmju. And when an earthquake occurred on the first day of the new year in 1228 (Kojong 15), a Taoist exorcism was performed.

Divination or prognostication was of course an important part of portentology in Koryŏ, as we see in the cases of earthquakes in 1184 (Myŏngjong 14) and 1196 (Myŏngjong 26). Both were similarly seen as indications that "subjects were not acting like subjects," and as "orders coming from below." Though the first one is not clear (it probably referred to the growing power of Yi Æimin); the second record was obviously meant as a prediction of the rise of Ch'oe Ch'unghŏn two months later. In the tenth month of 1362 (Kongmin 11) there were two
quakes in four days. The king announced an appeal for
counsel from all officials including local magistrates.
Censors responded with a memorial to the throne, main-
taining that the earth, as a reflection of subjects,
would have quaked because of the chaotic situation in
rewarding and punishing of subjects, thus allowing un-
deserving people to occupy high posts. 143

One unusual interpretation is found in King U's
reaction to the quake of 1385 when Koryŏ was still under
the Mongol influence. When the quake hit the capital
with the sound of "a stampeding herd of war horses,"
with the walls tumbling and the rocks of Mount Songak
rolling down, the king made this wishful comment: "Is
this not a sign of Heaven's wish to make Liao-tung
fall?" 144 Liao-tung is the place in Manchuria where
Yuan was confronted with the rising power of the Ming
dynasty.

In 1408 (T'aejong 8) a Ming emissary arrived in
Korea to recruit Korean girls, and this was seen as the
main cause of the quake of that summer, which was followed
by a series of other portents. 145 An earthquake of 1452
(Munjong 2) was interpreted by divination to mean that
the five grains would not ripen and people would have a
great famine. 146 Though divination at the occurrence
of portents was common and even a dominant mode of res-
ponse to portents during Koryŏ, it became remarkably less frequent in early Yi Korea, making this a rather rare case. More typical in the Yi period was King T'aejong's response to a quake in 1412, when the king emphasized "cultivation of human affairs" even without a single religious exorcism. 147 He was soon succeeded by King Sejong, who had his own view of earthquakes and portents.

His Majesty said at one of the royal lectures, "The earthquake is an important portent. Therefore the classics have recorded it without fail. The classics do not write of thunder and lightning, for this is an ordinary matter. From the fact that the Spring and Autumn Annals (Ch'ung-ch'ıu) records the bolt at the shrine of Po I, we can tell that thunder and lightning is an ordinary matter. As for the quake in our country, no year is free from them. They are particularly frequent in Kyŏngsang Province. The quake in the year of 1429 started in Kyŏngsang Province and spread into the three provinces of Ch'ung-ch'ŏng, Kangwŏn, and Kyŏnggi. At the time, I was reading and did not know of it until the report of the Office of Astronomy arrived. Though we do not have such quakes that destroy houses, we have many quakes in three provinces of the south. I am afraid these would not presage any invasion of barbarians."

Kwŏn Ch'ae responded, "Thunder and lightning is a lesser portent and earthquake is a major one. Nevertheless if one insists that a certain auspice occurs when some thing goes right, while a certain
omen occurs when some thing goes wrong, this would mean a logical inflexibility based upon forced correlations."

His Majesty said, "You are right. The effect of a portent of Heaven and earth can be either near or far in time. Thus we cannot tell for ten years if there is no effect. Many Confucian scholars of Han and T'ang times, indulged too much in portentology and made forced correlations and illogical matchings between portents and human affairs. This I cannot agree with."

Still, the earthquake remained an important portent throughout the period of our discussion. And as late as 1456 (Sejo 2) an astronomer was flogged with forty strokes for his failure to report a quake.

Sometimes different views of a single portent developed into a complicated political wrangle. One such case is the earthquake of 1493 (Sŏngjong 24), which was interpreted by the remonstrators as the sign of Heaven's displeasure with the recent manumission of some sons of concubines. King Sŏngjong strongly disagreed, thus inviting long and turbulent diatribes between the throne and the officials. More interesting in a similar vein is King Yŏnsan's reaction to a quake of 1503, which hit three southern provinces and the capital province. The king saw it as a minor portent comparable to a lunar eclipse and dismissed it as insignificant on the ground
that the moon, the essence of **vin**, did not represent the ruler. His secretaries, however, did not agree and presented their own view contradicting the throne's and proposing an announcement for counselling. Unlike the other kings before him, Yonsan refused to comply on the ground that an appeal for counsel did not bring up the real issues of the times, but only those full of self-centered matters.\(^\text{151}\)

(13) Drought

The rice culture of traditional Korea was particularly vulnerable to the usual lack of rain in late spring and early summer, thus making drought the most dreaded portent of all. In traditional historiography drought was often recorded in combination with other portents such as locusts and famine. And prayer for rain became perhaps the most important part of all the prayers in Yi Korea, requiring large expenditures of the state revenue each year. We find from the **Sillok** that drought was the most discussed of all portents and occupied more pages than any other portent.

(a) Three Kingdoms and Unified Silla Period

The records of drought, locusts, famine, and prayer for rain before the unification of the three kingdoms are shown in the following table.
TABLE 2
Drought, Locusts, Famine, and Rain-Prayer in the Three Kingdoms Period

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Drought</th>
<th>Locust</th>
<th>Famine</th>
<th>Prayer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Koguryō</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paekche</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silla</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(From the Samguk sagi)

The table does not tell much, but the comparatively small number of these agriculture-related portents recorded for Koguryō indicates that Koguryō was not as agricultural as the other two kingdoms, or more precisely speaking, Koguryō was not as heavily rice-oriented as Silla and Paekche in the Three Kingdoms period. This is well supported by the record of auspicious grains discussed below.

One of the earlier reports of drought has this to say about a king of Silla. In 184 King Adalla of Silla died without an heir to throne. A grandson of King T'arhae was invited to succeed him.

The new king was able to predict by watching wind and cloud when flood or drought would come, or what the year's harvest would be. He could also tell whether a man was good or wicked. People
called him "sacred." 152

Since this is all there is about the king himself, we can tell that this king, Porye, was primarily known for his mastery of predictions.

The first prayer for rain in Korean history is recorded in Paekche of 227, when King Kusu offered a rain prayer at the shrine of Tongmyong, founder of Koguryo and father of the Paekche founder. 153 The next record of rain prayer is in Silla in 253, when the prayer was made at the ancestors' shrine and at famous mountains. The third is in Paekche of 402, when the king prayed at a mountain. In all three cases, rain came in answer to the prayers. For the next several records, however, the results are not indicated.

Some of the early rain prayers reveal a mixture of various responses. In 492 the king of Silla announced self-criticism and simplified his table. In 563 King P'yongwon of Koguryo also simplified his diet in order to exorcise drought and prayed at mountains and creeks. And a Silla king in 585 vacated his main palace, simplified his diet, and took care of prisoners. These responses to drought strongly suggest a Chinese influence. After some centuries of cultural learning from China, the Koreans at this time might have decided to try these new ways to cope with droughts. All things considered, it
is highly doubtful that the Koreans of this early period accepted the philosophical underpinnings of Tung Chung-shu eclectic Confucianism, which gave meaning to such practices. If these records are true, these responses of Tung Chung-shu influence must have been taken by the Koreans merely as new ways of exorcism in their magical and shamanistic fight against drought.

The first Buddhist rain prayer is reported in 600 in Paekchel; and another case is reported in 753, when a Buddhist sutra was read at the rain prayer. 154 However, the rain prayer of 628 (in Silla) is reported to include moving a market place and using a picture dragon, again suggesting the influence of Tung Chung-shu. Then comes an interesting story of the first rain-maker in Korean history. In the summer of 715, Silla was hit by a severe drought, and the king invited a Taoist hermit named Ihyo of Yongmyong-ak (Dragon-crying Mountains) to hold a rain prayer. Ihyo held his service at the lake in Imch'ŏn-sa Temple. After the service rain began and continued for more than ten days. 155 The next summer was as dry as the one preceding it, and Ihyo made good his fame by another successful rain-making. 156 Unfortunately that is all we know about the man and his life, and we have no other rain-maker in this early period. (We will shortly discuss another story of a rain-maker in the early
Yi period.) However, this first case of rain-making, with its Taoist in a Buddhist temple, tells us something about the intellectual climate of the Unified Silla period.

Another feature of the responses to drought in the late Silla period is that in at least two cases prime ministers were removed from their posts due to droughts—-in 745 and 754. 157

(b) Koryŏ Period

For the first century of Koryŏ, we have only one report of drought, in 991 (Sŏngjong 10). Then for the rest of the dynasty, from 1011 to 1392, we have a more or less even distribution of droughts—-four out of every ten years were hit with droughts (161 drought years in the period of 382 years). To these droughts the Koreans responded in the same syncretic manner we have just seen—a mixture of indigenous or Taoist exorcisms, Buddhist prayers, and Confucian rituals.

The first response to the first recorded drought in Koryŏ, that of 991, shows a remarkable degree of Confucian spirit. In the throne's announcement the king asked the reason for the portent: Was it because of poor government or because of inappropriate rewards and punishments? Then the king decided on self-criticism because the primary cause seemed to be the failure of his own virtue. 158 In 1001 (Hyŏnjong 2) a prayer for rain
was offered at the ancestral shrine, and other trimmings were ordered, such as the move of the market, the prohibition of slaughter of domestic animals, removal of fans, and pardon of prisoners. 159

One summer morning of 1024 King Hyŏnjong heard people calling Heaven for rain outside the palace. The king immediately stopped his breakfast, took a bath, and began to pray before the burning incense in the palace ground, saying, "If I made a mistake, I beg immediate punishment. If the ten thousand people had faults, the responsibility should still be with me." 160 This was clearly a Confucian response, but this same king in 1021 offered a rain-prayer with shamans and with a dragon made of plaster. 161 In 1036 King Chŏngjong conducted a Taoist exorcism (ch'ŏ) as the last resort after many standard practices to induce rain were tried. 162 Five years later the same king conducted a Buddhist exorcism in the palace by reading a Buddhist sutra. 163 Another Buddhist exorcism to induce rain was tried in 1106 (Yejong 1), when the monk named Tamjin was ordered to give Buddhist lectures in a way of praying for rain. At the same time the people from the five districts of the capital city walked through the streets reading sutras, one of the widely practised customs of the Koreans of the period. 164 The Koryŏ-sa lists many of the Buddhist prayers said throughout the
whole period of the dynasty, but most of the records provide little information about the purposes for these practices. Many of them, I believe, were in response to various portents of nature, and considerable part of them for droughts.

(c) Droughts in the Yi period

In Yi Korea drought became the most important portent and a real calamity for the nation. While two out of every five years were hit by drought in the Koryŏ period, my compilation of drought records from the Sillok tells us that almost every year was hit by drought, severe or mild. As a matter of fact, my tabulation shows that of the 115 years of the first ten reign-periods of Yi Korea, namely from King T'aejo to King Yŏnsan, only thirteen years were free from drought. Table 3 shows the distribution of drought-free years for different reign-periods. (See the next page for Table 3.) It is remarkable that only two kings, Sejo and Yŏnsan, enjoyed considerable freedom from the portent of drought (asterisk). A closer look reveals that King Sejo was free from drought for the eighth year and the last four years of his reign (r. 1455-1468). For King Yŏnsan the five drought-free years are distributed throughout his twelve-year reign.

As responses to droughts, Yi Korea inherited from Koryŏ a mixture of Confucian, Buddhistic, and Taoistic-
TABLE 3
DROUGHT-FREE YEARS FOR YI REIGN PERIODS,
1392-1506

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reign Periods</th>
<th>Drought-Free Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T'aejo</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chongjong</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T'aejong</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sejong</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Munjong</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanjong</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sejo</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yejong</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Songjong</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yonsan</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>115</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Years</strong></td>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(indigenous prayers and rituals. And for the period of first two Yi kings this heritage seemed to be holding on. The founder of the dynasty, T'aejo, was blessed according to the Sillok historian with a long-overdue rain at the very moment of his inauguration.165 During his seven year reign rain prayers were freely said at the ancestral shrine, at Buddhist temples, at temples of gods (meaning Taoist or indigenous spirits and gods), and at the Temple
of Heaven (원단). From the third king of the Yi period we find the responses to drought were obviously undergoing a change, which we shall examine in more detail under the following subdivisions.

**Temple of Heaven**—Until the early Yi period the Temple of Heaven (Celestial Altar, 원구, 원단, 환구) served as a sort of center of all prayers or exorcisms, and prayers for rain in times of drought were also included in the usual practices at the Temple. Since the historical importance of the Temple of Heaven will receive more attention in the next chapter, we shall here limit our discussion to how rain prayers were said at the Temple during the early century of Yi Korea. We can verify that such prayers were performed at least once in 1398 during the reign of T'aejo and at least five times (in the years 1401, 1405, 1406, 1407, and 1410) during the reign of T'aejong. But in 1410 this practice was opposed on the ground that it would be transgression of propriety in rites, for the orthodox Confucian teaching said that only the Son of Heaven, namely the Chinese Emperor, could worship Heaven. Six years later, however, T'aejong reversed the previous decision and ordered Left State Councillor Yu Chŏnghyŏn to offer a rain prayer at the Temple of Heaven, thanks to the tenacious lobbying of Pyŏn Kyeryang for the necessity and legitimacy of
Rain prayer at the Temple of Heaven continued into the reign of King Sejong, who would not change the established practice the first nine years of his reign. During this early period rain prayers were conducted at the Temple of Heaven in 1419, 1420, 1425, 1426, and 1427. But this was the end of it at least temporarily. The arch-champion of such prayers, Pyŏn Kyeryang, died in 1430 (Sejong 12), but it was not necessarily the lack of champions that finally stopped the practice. The king himself actively opposed it and closed the Temple, even though some high officials urged the continuation of the prayers.

For instance, in 1439 (Sejong 21) the king turned down a proposal for a rain prayer at the Temple of Heaven presented by the director of the Office of Diplomatic Correspondence (Sŭngmun-wŏn). The drought of 1443 (Sejong 25) was one of the worst in the reign of King Sejong, and Ministry of Rites proposed a rain prayer at the Temple of Heaven. Sejong flatly rejected the idea, saying that "For the prayer at the Temple of Heaven, I cannot follow you. For other matters, you may do whatever you wish." The next year the Ministry of Rites, headed by Kim Chongsŏ, proposed the same thing again in vain. In 1449 (Sejong 31) Chief State Councillor...
Hwang Hui addressed the throne in favor of the same measure, to which King Sejong answered:

If it rains as a result of such prayers at the Temple of Heaven, then why should we worry about transgressing propriety in rites? Yet if we do not get rain after the prayer, then we will have committed a transgression of proper rites for nothing. This is good for no one. Furthermore, we have the Office of Taoist Affairs (Sogyok-chon) where we are actually praying to Heaven, though it is still unorthodox. 172

It was not until 1457 (Sejo 3) that the Temple of Heaven was reinstated, after thirty years, with the changed name of 

\[ hwan'gu \]

instead of wondan. 173 But the primary function of the revitalized Temple of Heaven was then not so much for prayers on the occasions of portents, but rather for symbolic efforts on the part of the monarch to regain royal authority in the period of fading charisma that followed his usurpation of his nephew’s throne. 174

**Buddhist Exorcisms**—Rain prayer by monks or at Buddhist temples was one of the major responses to droughts throughout the early Yi period. In the seventh month of 1411 (T'aejong 11) one hundred monks were ordered to begin a rain prayer. Four days later, however, T'aejong changed his mind and prohibited any further rain prayer
at temples. For his change of mind he gave three reasons: first, it was not considered proper according to the established rites; secondly, his experiences told him Buddhist prayer was futile; and thirdly, there was no great monk who could bring any result even if Buddhism were effective in fighting drought.\textsuperscript{175} Two years later, in 1413, however, we again find that one hundred monks gathered to offer a rain prayer at Hŭngch'ŏn-sa Temple.\textsuperscript{176} Contrary to his image as an opponent of Buddhism, King T'aejong was in a mood to protect Buddhism as religion.\textsuperscript{177}

As a matter of fact, Buddhist rain prayer remained one of the major responses to drought until the reign of Sŏngjong. In 1482 (Sŏngjong 13) a rain prayer was said in Hŭngch'ŏn-sa Temple, and when the king was going to reward the attending monks, for rain followed the prayer, the Office of Special Counselors (Hongmun-gwan) objected on the ground that the rain was a response to the king's devotion, not the monks' prayers.\textsuperscript{178} Three years later we find that King Sŏngjong's plan for rain prayer at Hŭngch'ŏn-sa Temple met stronger opposition from his subjects, and the Office of Special Counselors opposed a rain prayer at Wŏn'gak-sa Temple.\textsuperscript{179} After that, Buddhist rain prayer was never as strong as it was earlier in the Yi period.

\textbf{Shamanistic Rain Prayer}---Exorcisms for rain in time
of drought were common phenomena until early Yi Korea, when in 1482 (Songjong 13) it was proposed to abolish the rain-prayer by female shamans. Though little evidence can be found from the Sillok that there were any more such prayers by shamans, one discussion in 1521 (Chungjong 16) is of some interest:

His Majesty attended daytime royal lecture. Coming to the topic of rain prayer performed by shamans, the king commented, "Drought is a major portent. Yet how can a prayer by shamans exorcise it? It must be true, as historians recorded, that we must be apprehensive in meeting Heaven's admonitions. There used to be gatherings of shamans and the blind for rain prayers in our country too; this must be of no use.

Special Attendant Sim Chōng said, "Very true are Your Majesty's teachings. The portent of drought is one way in which Heaven admonishes; this has to be answered by refraining from pomposity. To use the absurdity of shamans is indeed unallowable." The dwindling role of shamans in the official government rain prayers, however, did not change their important role in the local rain prayers that survived into the twentieth century. Such shamanistic practices in the early Yi period are revealed by the episode of a rain-maker in the reign of King T'aejong. This man, Mun Kahak, is the second professional rain-maker of Korean history.
(Ihyo, who flourished in 715-716, was discussed above.)

In 1402 (T'aejong 2) Mun was rewarded for his successful prediction of rain during that year's drought.183 The next year, he offered an apparently successful Taoist-shamanist prayer for rain at Songnim-sa Temple.184 Immediately after that Mun found some excuses about his familial matters and went to his home town, Chinju of Kyōngsang Province, but failed to return to the capital when the king needed him most in the next year's drought. T'aejong became furious and had him brought in custody to perform a rain prayer in the fifth month of 1404.185

The next year was even drier than the year before, and this time Mun volunteered his service. His exorcism indeed brought rain, albeit "too little even to moisten dust."186 This was the last run he could make, for he and his followers were executed for a plot against the state in 1406. According to the Sillok:

Kahak was a man from Chinju. After studying t'aeil method of predictions in outline, he boasted that he could tell the sign of rain or sun, gathering some followers among the people. His Majesty called him in for a test, and then he was appointed sun-watcher (giil) at the Office of Astronomy. But for a long time he was not effective and finally was expelled to the Office in the Old Capital. There he fooled and allured some unwise people and then told Kim Chang, "Now
that Buddhism is declining and Heaven shows repeated portents, it is time for me to enter the land of gods. It is easy for me to do so by reciting the *Sinjung* scripture to invite ghosts, Heavenly soldiers, and gods' soldiers. Only if we can get some human soldiers, then we can carry out a great venture. . . ."187

What amazes us in the episode of Mun Kahak the rain-maker is the fact that the indigenous-Taoist tradition was so very strong in this period, which, on the surface, was a time of rapid Confucianization. Perhaps Mun's influence was more serious than we can discover from the *Sillok*, which records at least one more incident about Mun's followers. According to this report, a man was beheaded in 1419 (Sejong 1), thirteen years after the execution of Mun and his followers, for his known sympathy to Mun Kahak.188

Compared with Buddhist practices, then, shamanist rain prayers fared much better in the early Yi period. We have only few records about the divinations used officially in Yi Korea, such as King T'aejong's consultation with a diviner at the expected times of rain-fall in 1410 and 1414.189 This lack of evidence, however, does not mean that shamanist practices were not popular in official decision making in the early Yi period, but rather that the influence of Confucian historiography, which discouraged such records, was growing. For instan-
ce, we have evidence that the shamans in the early Yi period had their own government office in Kungmu-dang (Hall of National Shamans), a fact which the traditional histories generally omit. 190

Taoist Rain Prayers---Shamanist and Taoist rain prayers are distinguished here simply on the basis of their institutional affiliations. This is possible because of the existence of the Office of Taoist Affairs (Sogyŏk-sŏ, or Sogyŏk-chŏn) in early Yi Korea. Though we can discuss rain prayers performed by the certified Taoists in the Office of Taoist Affairs in this section, this does not mean the rain prayers were very much distinct from those performed by shamans.

If we consider only those performed by the Office of Taoist Affairs, we find that they were apparently less significant than the shamanistic ones, and they received less criticism from the rising Confucian scholars in the early Yi period. For one thing, Taoist prayer was practiced by a formal government institution which had existed for hundreds of years. Furthermore, the dozen offices which existed in late Koryŏ were at least officially consolidated into one bureau in the early Yi period. (One additional office, Taech'ŏng-gwan, however, seems to have persisted separately for some years.) This meant only a minimal burden on state revenue, an important point
that could escape the censorial touch of the Confucian scholars.

Responses to drought in the early Yi Korea, therefore, usually included Taoist prayers, obviously in small scale. But even this could not be continued permanently, and the radical reform movement led by the Cho Kwangjo group finally abolished the institution of Taoism in 1518 (Chungjong 13). Four years later, after the demise of the Cho group in 1519, King Chungjong reinstated the Office of Taoist Affairs, but this time not so much for prayers on occasions of portents but more for response to occasions of diseases in the royal family. The office survived in the most obscure mode until the Hideyoshi invasions.

In our discussion above about rain prayers at the Temple of Heaven, it was noted that the Temple of Heaven was related to Taoist practices because of their common denominator in the direct worship of Heaven. The problems of the Taoist Affairs Office, the worship at the Temple of Heaven, and the worship at the shrine of Tangu gun will be further considered in broader perspective in the following chapter.

Lizard Rain Prayers—This was perhaps one of the most popular rain prayers in the early Yi period and it seems to have survived throughout the dynasty. It started
in 1407 (T'aejong 7) when the king heard of the successful use of this method by Kim Kyŏm, Deputy Commander (Taehogun) of the Metropolitan Police (Sun'gūm-sa), who learned it from a poem of Su Shih, a famous Chinese poet and politician of the Sung dynasty.

According to the method, two barrels of water are put in the middle of a yard, and lizards caught in advance are placed therein. When everything is tidied up and incense starts to burn, twenty boys in blue attire hold willow branches in their hands and chant, "Lizards, lizards! Make cloud and spurt fog! Let rain come like torrents! For that rain, we let you go."193

This was the birth of a tradition in the rain prayers in Yi Korea. It was performed with increasing numbers of children—sixty boys in 1425, eighty-two in 1460, and one hundred in 1469.194 From the reign of King Sŏngjong, this was often known under different names, "children's rain prayer" or vaguely "rain prayer at lakeside," because it was performed at the side of Kyonghoe-ru Lake.

At least once King Sŏngjong stopped this practice, for the implication of the rain prayer that a mere animal could make rain seemed to be too haughty.195 From the writings of Sŏng Hyŏn, however, we know that the same song was used a century after its initiation.196 The
practice continued through to the early nineteenth century, according to Yi Kyugyông (1788-?). Yi also explains that the lizard rain prayer was practised in T'ang China because of the similarity between lizard and dragon, the legendary rain-maker.\textsuperscript{197}

**Other Rain Prayers**---There also was a real dragon rain prayer, which dated as far back as the Silla period and continued throughout the period of our discussion. Five dragons of different colors were drawn on paper or made out of plaster, and they were used in the dragon rain prayers in five areas---one for each of the four directions and the center.\textsuperscript{198} Of course most important, though omitted here, are the rites for rain that were performed in various places sanctioned by Confucianism, including the Altar for Rain, the Shrine of Dynastic Ancestors, and other famous mountains and creeks. Their omission here is not because they were in any way negligible at the time, but because they were uniformly important throughout the period of our concern, and are implicitly part of our later discussion of the Confucian tradition in Korea.

**Other Responses to Droughts**---Other measures than rain prayers were taken in time of drought. These include specific measures for drought only and general measures taken for any portent. General measures in-
clude appeal for counsel (kuŏn), pardon, self-criticism of the throne for lack of virtue, waiving of corvee or local tributes, halt of public works, halt of the use of music in palaces, simplification of the royal table, abstention from wine and dining, vacating the main court-hall, and so on.

Specific measures taken for droughts include the change of market places, opening of the North Gate (Sučhŏng-mun) and closing of the South Gate (Sungnye-mun) to the capital, the use of bells in place of drums in marking hours, etc. All these measures are in general explained as efforts to suppress yang, which symbolizes drought, and to boost yin, which stood for rain. For example, the move of the market to Tonghyŏn in Seoul was explained as an effort to suppress the yang of the south (Tonghyŏn was in the south of the city) by bringing yin (market stood for yin vis-a-vis the court of the king, the yang) over the south.\textsuperscript{199} Just like the move of market place, the change of the main gate of the capital city from the usual south to the north (which was closed ordinarily) was meant to invite the yin through the north gate and to shut off the yang from the south gate. We do not know when the move of the market place started in Korea, but the change of the main gate seems to have started in 1416 (T'aejong 16) with a series of rain prayers proposed
by the Ministry of Rites. Quoting from Tung Chung-shu's method of rain prayers, the Ministry proposed the change of the main gate, setting a tradition for the rest of the dynasty. The use of bells in place of drums for telling time in dry season started in 1425 (Sejong 7) with a proposal of the Ministry of Rites in reference to the Wen-hsien t'ung-k'ao. This was done because the sound of drums made of leather stood for yang, whereas the sound of bells made of metal stood for yin. We can find this practice in the reign of Chungjong in the early sixteenth century, but do not know how long it was continued thereafter.

This story of yin-yang was not necessarily accepted without criticism. King Sejong once criticized Tung Chung-shu's theory of liberating yin and shutting yang in the dry season as "very absurd." Nevertheless, the king ordered the continued adoption of the Tung formulae, as long as they would not bring any harm.

One interesting reaction to drought is seen in 1414, when the ladies in court were divided into three shifts to attend King T'aejong alternately. This action was taken at the suggestion of the crown prince, who maintained that the drought might have been caused by the malice held by the ladies, and such malice could only be dissipated by consummating their frustrated love.
life. The crown prince did the same with the ladies in his palace. Also ladies in waiting were allowed to go out to their homes to meet their men. Similar actions—sending out the palace ladies to give them chance to see men—were taken at least twice in Sejong's reign, in 1436 and 1444 respectively.

Review of these fantastic records about how to fight drought in Yi Korea seems to bring us to a seemingly more relevant question for today. With all these practices, did they not try anything to mitigate the harm of drought, such as dams to preserve water for emergency and pumps to irrigate higher land with the water below? They tried, as we can see so often in Sejong's reign, for instance, to develop effective water pumps. And newly appointed magistrates were repeatedly instructed by King Sejong to do their best for reservoirs.

But the Koreans in this period obviously did not succeed in tackling the drought problem effectively. The reasons are three. First, the land of Korea was too mountainous and generally disadvantageous for effective use of pumps. Second, even if pumps or dams were proven effective, there was a tremendous obstacle to be overcome in the philosophical outlook that saw portents, including drought, as being caused by people's complaints about building dams. Third, and most important, the
Koreans did not have enough technical knowledge at the time to build pumps or dams effective enough to sweep away the two obstacles. For example, an effort to develop a water pump in 1435 was stopped after a trial of a few years because the amount of water drawn by the pump was too small to justify the efforts needed. Another effort in 1502 was also ineffective.208

"Rain of King T'aejong"—One entry in the *Tongguk Sesigi* (Annual Customs of Korea), a book on the year-round customs in Korea compiled in the first half of the nineteenth century, has the following legend.

The tenth day of the fifth month is the day of King T'aejong's death. On this day every year without exception, it rains, and this is called the "Rain of King T'aejong (T'aejong u)." At his death the king told his son, King Sejong, "Right now drought is hard-hitting. If I can do so after dying, I will make it rain today." Indeed, his words came true after his death.209

This, however, does not seem to be a historical fact of four hundred years ago, for we can find from the Sillok, completed nine years after T'aejong's death, that the year of his death was not so dry and that there was no such incident as the one quoted above. However, the legend was already well established in the early seventeenth century, exactly at the mid-point between the death of T'aejong and the *Tongguk Sesigi*, when Pak Tong-
nyang (1569-1635) wrote that the "Rain of King T'aejong" missed for the first time in two hundred years in the year of Hideyoshi's invasion in 1592, "to the apprehension of knowledgeable men."

Perhaps we will never know when and how this legend was generated, and this is not of concern here. More interesting and significant is that this "false" legend tells us a great deal of truth. King T'aejong's obsession with droughts and other portents is best expressed in this legend. He could not sleep well for the drought of 1407. He wept and wailed in the drought of 1415 in the belief that the portent was caused by his moral failure on the throne, but he could not abdicate because of his heir's instability and unreliability. The king's affection for his crown prince was rapidly eroding at the time, and three years later he was replaced by his younger brother, who became King Sejong. During this drought period, T'aejong ate only one meal a day and often sat in the sun too long, thus causing a severe case of diarrhea. When some provincial governors reported that the drought of that year would not be harmful to farming, the king, suspicious that they were making false reports to flatter him, would not believe them.

For the drought of the next year, 1416, he made it clear why he thought himself a moral failure.
The cause of this drought, as I thought deeply, is nowhere else but in the events of 1398, 1400, and 1402. They were against the true ways of parent-son and of brother-brother. 215

T'aejong (1367-1423; r. 1401-1418), who masterminded the birth of the Yi dynasty, had antagonized his father by killing several of his own brothers as well as their followers on his successful march to a throne that was never offered to him. Now at the age of fifty, he was obviously in a mood of atonement, although he was at the same time trying to find some consolation in the idea that these events were what Heaven had destined, and not what he personally had wished to do. 216 To undo at least some of his past wrong-doings, T'aejong announced a pardon for the survivors of the families of those punished in those events. And they were once again given the right to seek government posts. Included in the pardoned was a son of Ch'ong Tojon, a leading figure of T'aejong's opponents. 217

The next king, Sejong, made every effort to emulate his father on occasions of drought. Often he would not sleep whole nights, reading the memorials submitted in response to the royal appeal for counsel occasioned by droughts or any other portents. 218 Sejong was a king with no birthday, because his birthday fell at the 17th of the fourth month, which happened to be in the
middle of drought almost every year. And like the model Confucian king he was, he usually forbade any act of celebration for his birthday beforehand. Nevertheless, even Sejong's response was milder than the spontaneous determination we see in T'aejong's response to droughts, such as his willingness to have his head shaved if that would help fight the drought somehow. The legend of the "Rain of King T'aejong" exemplifies the kind of remarkably well-grounded allegory that Confucian historiography developed every so often.

(14) Locusts

Unlike that of some of the drier parts of the world, Korean agriculture did not face too serious a threat from locusts. The first response to locusts is found in 109, when a Silla king trekked mountains and rivers to perform exorcising services, which were finally rewarded with a good harvest that year. When locusts invaded the north-west in the summer of 769, Kim Am said a prayer to Heaven at the top of a mountain with incense burning. His prayer was answered with a sudden storm that killed all the locusts. Kim Am, a descendent of General Kim Yusin, had only recently returned from his study of Yin-yang in T'ang China. He was soon appointed "Great Professor of Astronomy" (Sach'on tae paksa), the only such honori-
fic title found in the history of the Korean astronomical institution, the ordinary title for the post being "professor of astronomy (Sach'on paks)."). The "magical" power Kim Am demonstrated here shows once more the strong shamanistic tradition of the Kim family. We have already noted several cases of the magical power of Kim Yusin, Kim Am's ancestor.

The locusts of 1127 or 1128 were thought by a remonstrator to be caused by a high official, Ch'oe Hongjae, who infringed the laws and harmed the state with his greed and wickedness. The criticism was well received, and the high official was immediately removed. Years later in 1145 (Injong 23) locusts hit northwest Korea. The court astronomer interpreted the portent in a remarkably Confucian voice for so early period:

This portent happens because of the existence of many wicked men in the country. No one is loyal in government. They simply stay in government posts and eat up their salaries like insects. Men of principle must be placed in high posts to relieve this portent.

In Yi Korea the appearance of locusts seems to have been met more with efforts to catch and kill them than with discussions of portentousness. In 1441 (Sejong 23) the king ordered that plans be drawn up to fight the insects, and three years later the soldiers in Kongju, Ch'ung-
ch'ŏng Province, reported catching sixty sŏk of locusts.226 The advantage of catching locusts is reiterated in one of the royal lectures in 1477 (Sŏngjong 8).227

As a portent, locusts were already minor in the early Yi period. Yet two things seem to be worthy of note here. First, the distribution of locusts in Korean history shows that this portent was extremely frequent only in the first half of the fifteenth century ---to be more exact, locusts attacked in twenty-four of fifty years in the first half of the fifteenth century, whereas five attacks are the most for other periods of fifty years, and only three years had locusts in the period 1451-1500. This seems to suggest that locusts were still of some importance in combination with a series of other portents during the first half of the fifteenth century and lost completely their portentousness thereafter.

The second thing worthy of note is found from a tri-folding wall panel made for the throne in 1476 (Sŏngjong 7) which had famous quotations from Chinese history ---the first panel from the wise rulers, the second from wise-turned-foolish rulers, and the third panel from wise imperial consorts. On the first panel was a quotation from a legend of T'ai-tsung of T'ang China:

121
One year in the reign of T'ai-tsung locusts hit the capital area. The emperor once went into his palace garden to find locusts. Picking up several of them, he said, "People take the grain as their life, yet you ate it. You should rather eat my liver and intestine." Then he lifted his hand up to swallow them. Imperial attendants tried to stop him by saying that the bad thing might cause some disease. With his answer that "when I take the harm from my people, how can I expect to evade disease?" he gobbled them up. That year the locusts did not cause any harm. 228

We find the same story the next year at one of the royal lectures for the same king, Sōngjong. 229 The story was retold in one of the royal lectures in 1511 (Chungjong 6). This time, however, one attendant said that the Chinese Emperor was going to burn himself to death at the occurrence of locusts, whereupon Heaven immediately gave rain and the locusts were instantly eradicated. So the attendant concluded the lecture by saying that the moral cultivation of the throne could definitely move Heaven. 230

Needham's rendition of a mid-nineteenth century Chinese record, however, gives us still another version of the episode. It is said that the Chinese Emperor ate a dish of "fried" locusts in 628 in order to demonstrate that they were not something sacred sent from Heaven as a punishment. 231 It would be interesting to speculate
how these different versions with totally differing philosophies behind them developed in two countries. But it suffices here for our immediate concern that locusts lost portentousness by the latter half of the fifteenth century and remained only as a part of legends meant for moral inculcation.

(15) Fire

From 1100 to 1500, a fire is recorded approximately every two years. Unlike some other portents, fire records show a rather even distribution throughout this four hundred-year period. This seems to suggest that fire did not exactly develop as a serious portent at any time in this period. For one thing, the number of fires was far lower than other kinds of portents, and the fires were often attributed to human errors. In the first response to fire recorded in Korean history, the officer responsible for the garrison fire of 1084 was dismissed from his post, and a Buddhist prayer was performed.232 And from the early Yi period, active efforts were made to prevent fire in the capital by digging more walls and building special insulation-walls, as well as organizing people specifically for fire emergencies.233

In the reign of Songjong we find Chief Royal Secretary Sin Chōng saying, "If every household is careful,
there will be no fire," and Im Sahong casting his doubt on the interpretation of Tso Commentary (of the Spring and Autumn Annals, or Ch'un-ch'iu), which saw fires as caused by the trends of the period. 234 Eight years later, in 1483 (Sŏngjong 14), when a fire swept more than three hundred houses in the central district of the capital, the king ordered an investigation to find the responsible party for punishment. 235

If fire was not very serious as a portent, mysterious ones were always considered more portentous, especially in the Koryŏ period. In 1090 a government warehouse burned with all the goods in it. The Office of Inspector-General claimed the Office of Astronomy was responsible for the fire because of its failure to predict it. The Director of the Office of Astronomy, however, answered that his office had made such a report a year earlier by its notice of Mars' invasion of a constellation. The Director said the report was suppressed by the Superintendent of the Office, Ch'oe Sagyŏm, who did not allow the report to go to the court. Ch'oe was expelled from office for this incident, and the Director was also punished. 236 Strangely this was the second of the fires that contributed to the destruction of Ch'oe's intimacy with the throne. The first fire had burned down a hall that was under construction in Poje-sa Temple only two months
earlier. The hall was to preserve some documents and papers about Buddhist rituals that Ch'oe had brought to Korea from his trip to Sung China. 237

A mysterious fire of 1152 in the palace garden is interpreted by the Koryŏ-sa as caused by King Ŭijong's busy party life. 238 The fire in the Office of Construction (Chosŏng togam) in 1281 (Ch'ungnyŏl 7) was seen as a warning from Heaven about the people's hardships due to the remodeling of the palaces, which went on for three years under the direction of Yuan Chinese carpenters. 239

No sooner had Yi Pangwŏn become the third king of Yi dynasty in the winter of 1400 than a fire burnt down the main palace in Kaegyŏng, the Such'ang Palace, where his father, Yi Sŏnggye, had declared the birth of a new dynasty eight years before. Upon the occurrence of this serious portent, T'aejong immediately announced an appeal for counsel, which was answered by Kwŏn Kūn, one of the leading scholars of the period. One of the six points Kwŏn submitted to the throne required official praise of the loyalty demonstrated by the Koryŏ loyalists including Chŏng Mongju and Kil Chae, who opposed the Yi dynasty. 240 Chŏng Mongju, of course, was the arch-rival of the Yi house, and it was Yi Pangwŏn (now the king) who ordered his assassination to pave the way for the new dynasty. Nevertheless, King T'aejong accepted Kwŏn Kūn's
memorial without being offended. Other than these, we can find no more interesting responses to fires in the Yi period.

(16) Hen-Turned-Cock and Other Portents

The first two cases of hen-turned-cock are found in 932 (T'aejo 15) and 1277 (Ch'ungnyŏl 3); these are the only two in Koryŏ.\textsuperscript{241} Another similar portent is the case, in 1017, in which a hen in a government office cried with the sound of rooster.\textsuperscript{242}

In the Yi period, we have two cases of such change of sex in the reign of Sejong—in 1437 and 1440.\textsuperscript{243} Except for an exorcising prayer and the sending of a eunuch for an investigation in 1437, we do not have any specific responses to these cases of portents. It is only with the case of a three-legged hen in 1497 (Sŏngjong 25) in the capital that responses are observed. Reviewing the history of three-legged hens in T'ang and Sung China, the Office of Special Counselors concluded that this portent appeared when the ruler used the words of ladies. King Sŏngjong, no too happy with such an interpretation, retorted with his view that the portent did not mean anything for the throne. This reaction, however, made the censors stiffen in their view, and they argued that any and every portent, including one that occurred in the

126
remotest part of the country, should be seen as caused by the ruler. And the portent of a three-legged hen occurred right in the capital of the country.

The king could not but back down, and he ordered the hen brought to the palace for a royal inspection. The next day the hen was brought into the palace, and that evening thunder and lightning came. Now a censor of the Office of Censor-General approached the throne with the argument that the portent of the three-legged hen occurred because of the king's inclination toward the ladies, and the thunder and lightning was the result of the throne's failure to respond properly to the portent of the hen in the beginning. Sŏngjong, who had already announced a self-criticism at the occurrence of thunder and lightning, now announced another self-criticism and appeal for counsel, among other responses. 244

Perhaps it will be worthwhile to point out that the series of arguments and counter-arguments between the throne and the censors ran for four full months from the first report of the portent of the hen to the last point when the king backed down. And it was a major issue for these four months.

Because this portent is very rare at any time in history, the four cases reported from the winter of 1514 through the spring of the next year sound very strange.
and even suspicious. A look at the following table will convince any one that something is strange.

**TABLE 4**

**HEN-TURNED-COCKS BEFORE 1550**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case No.</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Reign Year</th>
<th>Place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>932</td>
<td>T'aejo 15</td>
<td>Seoul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1277</td>
<td>Ch'ungnyŏl 3</td>
<td>Sŏngp'yŏng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1437</td>
<td>Sejong 19</td>
<td>Haemi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1440</td>
<td>Sejong 22</td>
<td>Kangjin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5*</td>
<td>1514</td>
<td>Chungjong 9</td>
<td>Seoul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6*</td>
<td>1515</td>
<td>Chungjong 10</td>
<td>Seoul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7*</td>
<td>1515</td>
<td>Chungjong 10</td>
<td>Pup'yŏng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8*</td>
<td>1515</td>
<td>Chungjong 10</td>
<td>Kangnŭng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>1519</td>
<td>Chungjong 14</td>
<td>Kurye</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Compiled from the *Koryŏ-sa* and the *Sillok*)

Since we have only nine cases of hen-turned-cock during the whole period of Korean history under consideration, the fact that four of them are found in the period of four months from the eleventh month of 1514 to the third month of 1515 is very suspicious. Yet no inkling of doubt was cast either by the king or by any of his officials on the reliability of any of the four consecutive portents of hen-turned-cock. After the second case was
reported, the Office of Special Counselors opposed the already announced plan to select a king's concubine. Chungjong cancelled his original plan because of this opposition. 246

This cluster of four hen-turned-cocks at this time is best explained by a comment by Kim Allo, a contemporary politician who was soon to reach the pinnacle of power:

During the year of 1514 anomalies among hens appeared repeatedly. Hens turning into cocks and a three-legged hen---there were too many. Then author takes some examples from Chinese history to show the portents as occurring by the rulers' use of the words of ladies. The anomalous hens all corresponded to the harms of ladies; that is why knowledgeable men worried at this. In the spring of 1515, Queen Changgyông died. How can a portent signify more than this? 247

I believe this series of hen portents is aimed at the rising influence of Lady Pak, Chungjong's favorite lady in court, who had a grown son, Prince Poksông. Taking advantage of the royal favors at the time, the lady was pushing her son to the place of crown prince, which had been empty for a long time because the king had no son by the legitimate queen. 248 Lady Pak's position was apparently already rising when Queen Changgyông died in
early 1515. Lady Pak had captured the king's support, and had her son who could be appointed as crown prince. But there was one significant hitch—the queen died after giving birth to a son, the only legitimate son of the king, though he was barely one week old. So the question of selecting a new queen was directly related to the future succession of the throne, and this created intellectual as well as political problems for the scholar-officials, whose sense of moral righteousness was rapidly growing in harmony with the teachings of Chu Hsi.

In the middle of the ensuing political turmoil, Cho Kwangjo hit upon a brilliant idea and distinguished himself above his peers, ultimately leading his group to power and then to death in the literati purge of 1519. We will see more of Cho Kwangjo, Lady Pak and all the entanglements of the period in the last chapter, in their relation to the political and intellectual history of the early Yi period.

One renowned scholar of this period wrote in his memoir a story of a rooster's egg. And Yi I relates his retirement from politics in 1576 (Sonjo 9) to the occurrence of hen-turned-cock in Sōnsan that year. A somewhat different interpretation is found for the sex reversal of a hen in 1693 (Sukchong 19). It occurred at the residence of former queen, Min, then in exile at
her home after being expelled by Lady Chang, who, with the support of the king, succeeded her to become queen. But one year after the portent, the former queen was recalled to the palace to be reinstated, and Queen Chang was demoted. 251

In the European Middle Ages such animals as hen-turned-cock were punished criminally in courts of law. A cock was sentenced to be burned alive in 1474 for the "heinous and unnatural crime" of laying an egg. A similar incident took place in 1730 in Switzerland. 252 But in Yi Korea the animals themselves were absolutely of no concern for the scholar-officials, whose only interest was the degree of moral perfection of contemporary politics. And the hen-turned-cock was one of the indicators to reflect the morality of the society.

(17) Dragon

We have eighteen reports of dragon in the Samguk sagi and two each from the Koryo-sa and 150 years of the Yi Sillok, as TABLE 5 shows. The number of cases seems to make it clear that the dragon was not much of a portent at any time after the Three Kingdoms period. Black dragons in early Korean history were taken as gravely ominous, often presaging the death of the king. The black dragon of 455 in Paekche seemed to be sign of the
## TABLE 5

### RECORDS OF DRAGON

**BEFORE 1500**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case No.</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Color</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Koguryō</td>
<td>35 B.C.</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Silla</td>
<td>A.D. 3</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Silla</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Paekche</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Silla</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Paekche</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Silla</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Silla</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Paekche</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Paekche</td>
<td>455</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Silla</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Paekche</td>
<td>477</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Silla</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Silla</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Silla</td>
<td>516</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Silla</td>
<td>553</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Silla</td>
<td>764</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Silla</td>
<td>875</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Koryŏ</td>
<td>1177</td>
<td>Blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Koryŏ</td>
<td>1261</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Yi</td>
<td>1413</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Yi</td>
<td>1418</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Compiled from the *Samguk sagi*, the *Koryŏ-sa*, and the *Sillok*)
death of King Piyu, and the same portent of 477 in Paekche presaged the death of King Munju, who was slain by his high officials in that year. 253

Then we have three cases of yellow dragons, among which only one is related to a historical event. King Chinhūng of Silla was building a new palace east of the Moon Castle (Wŏlsŏng) in 553 when a yellow dragon appeared at the site of construction. Thereupon the king changed his original plan and ordered the building of a Buddhist temple on the site, which he named "Hwangnyong" Temple. 254 The characters used in writing "Hwangnyong" were to be interpreted as "Imperial dragon," but what it actually implied was "hwangnyong (yellow dragon)" with the difference of one character. If the yellow dragon shows no definite character of portentousness, the blue dragon in 1177 was seen as an omen for a forthcoming fire. 255

Many folktales have dragon motives, and some can be found in the Samguk yusa. Dragons in the dreams of women were interpreted as a sign that they would bear important sons. And in the early Yi period the sinking of artificial tiger-heads in waters where dragons were believed to live was a very common form of rain prayers.

The dragon's meager role as a portent in the Yi period can be seen in the discussions between King Sejong and his scholar-officials in a royal lecture in 1430. When the
lecture arrived at the part where Emperor Hui-tsung of Sung China (r. 1101-1125) said that yellow and blue dragons were auspices and white and black ones were omens, King Sejong expressed his doubts about observed dragons and said that the ch'i of cloud, fog, and storm happened to look like dragons. He also questioned the reliability of the reported observation of a dead dragon in the Taedong River, whereupon one of his officials objected, maintaining that a dragon would die like all the other animals do.\(^{256}\)

In 1474 King Songjong was reading Chinese history when he came to an entry about the appearance of a yellow dragon. Songjong asked whether this could be reliable story, and he was given the answer that it should have been true. But Sillok historians added their comment at the end of this entry criticizing the wrong answer provided to the throne at the time.\(^{257}\)

Yi Ik, one of the better minds of seventeenth-century Korea and wellknown as a sirhak scholar, believed that dragons did actually exist as mammoth animals in water. Yi even tried to explain some meteorological phenomena with the mysterious power of this animal.\(^{258}\)
B. Auspices

(1) Triplets, Quadruplets, and Quintuplets

In 193 we find the first record of multiple births, a case of Silla quintuplets, the only record of five-baby birth in Korean history. The next entry occurs after the unification of the three kingdoms, leaving Koguryŏ and Paekche without any such record. In Unified Silla we have seven records, four cases of triplets (all male) and three of mixed quadruplets.

During the Koryŏ period we have eleven cases of triplets but no quadruplets. As a matter of fact, we cannot find any more quadruplets after the Unified Silla period. 259 It is remarkable that all the records in Koryŏ are male triplets and no record is made for two centuries between 1186 and 1382. 260 During the early Yi period the record seems to be more realistic, and we have forty-one cases of triplets listed in the Sillok for the first half of the fifteenth century.

Though the number of males dominates the number of females in the Yi period, it is very different from the Koryŏ picture, where there are twelve cases of all male triplets. I do not have any good explanation for this finding. Such multiple births were rewarded from Silla times by giving a certain amount of grain to the family. The amount of grain given on such occasions varied from
100 to 200  sok in the beginning. In 1035 the amount of grain was set at forty  sok for each baby, but two years later it was reset at thirty  sok. In 1225 we still see that thirty  sok was given, but in 1383 the amount was decreased to twenty. In the early Yi period the grain thus given as reward was decreased to less than ten  sok, at one time going to as little as three  sok. When we come to the reign of King Chungjong in the early sixteenth century, it is not clear whether any reward was ever given at all except for a few cases when the exact amount of reward was written down in the Sillok. Probably the traditional practice of reward had been by this time discarded.

The reasons for such rewards, if there ever were reasons except that the Chinese did it, were unclear in the beginning of the Yi period. When the second king of the Yi dynasty inquired about the portentousness of such unusual births, the answer of the Office of Astronomy was that they had been seen as a sign of peace and of forthcoming tribute from foreign countries. King Sejong quoted an old saying to the effect that men of such multiple births would become wise men.

King Yŏnsan was ambivalent when he ordered a family with triplets rewarded with rice and beans in 1502:

His Majesty ordered, "Two boys and one girl at
one birth must be taken as an anomaly. Yet will it be worth rewarding? I want the Minister in charge of the matter to look into the reason why the dynastic ancestors set the rule of rewarding such cases." The Minister of Rites approached the throne, saying, "Though it is hard to find thoroughly the reasons for such rewarding, it was first of all to help the difficulties of supporting the new-born children."266

Even before such discussion in the time of Yŏnsan, nobody made it an occasion for congratulations, although it had been considered as a sort of minor auspice. This low degree of portentousness was obviously dissipating after the Yŏnsan period, and we find from the Chūngbo munhŏn pigo that its editor deleted many such cases from the comprehensive listings of all the portents in Korean history, even though apparently many records were available to the eighteenth century editor.267

(2) Albino Animals and Other Animals

Animals of unusual color had been seen as auspicious from ancient times, and it was particularly so with white, or albino, animals. The first record of an albino in Korea is as far back as 18 B.C., when a Koguryŏ king caught a white deer while hunting in the western part of the country. By 655 we have ten records of
albino animals, all deer or reindeer, eight of them observed in Koguryō, one in Paekche in 213, and the last of them recorded by Sillans in 655. Along with these albino animals, we also have "divine" (sin) animals, nine cases of them, between 32 B.C. and A.D. 483: four divine sparrows (three in Koguryō and one in Silla), four divine reindeer (all in Paekche), and one divine horse attributed to Koguryō in A.D. 20.

It is probable that "divine" animals were actually the same as albinoes in indigenous tradition, so called before the Koreans became more versed in the place of "white" animals in the Chinese system of auspices. Lack of evidence makes it impossible to evaluate the responses to these auspices. For instance, the first record of a white pheasant in Silla in 441 shows that the catcher was rewarded with an unspecified amount of grain. On the other hand, the same portent attracted much attention in Japan when it was first reported in 650. According to Nihon-gi, the Japanese sent an enquiry to Paekche because there was nobody in Japan who could give an adequate interpretation of the white pheasant. The answer they got from the Koreans confirmed its being an auspice, thus arousing a great stir in court. The animal was sent free, a general amnesty was announced, and most of all the reign-title was changed to "Hakuchi,"
meaning "White pheasant." 268

The response to auspicious animals in early Korea were magical and divinational. A red crow with two bodies in A.D. 20 was seen as sign of the forthcoming unification of Koguryō and Puyō; a white hog with two bodies and eight legs in 655 was considered as presaging Silla's unification of the Three Kingdoms. 269 A royal diviner of Koguryō lost his life thanks to an ill-fated prognostication he made in 148. When a Koguryō king was on a hunting trip in the early fall of that year, a white fox followed the royal entourage barking continuously. Thereupon the diviner presented the view that the omen could be turned to good result if the king could read the exact wish of Heaven and meet it properly. The king, who believed that the diviner was treacherous because each portent was born with a set meaning, ordered him put to death. 270

Records of unusual animals drop sharply in the Koryō period with only five entries, compared to sixty-eight in pre-Koryō. A white pheasant in 956, a white magpie in 976, a rabbit with two bodies in 1012, and a white stork in 1029 are recorded for earlier Koryō; an albino deer in 1376 is the only one for the rest of the Koryō period. Judging by the almost complete disappearance of auspicious animals in the Koryō period after 1029,
we can only guess that this auspice might have lost its portentousness in the mid-eleventh century.

But this guess seems to be wrong when we find that Yi dynasty records show this portent once every two years for the first one hundred years. King T’aejong’s 18-year reign was blessed with two white animals, which the throne refused to recognize as auspicious portents. For instance, he considered the white pheasant caught in 1411 as a natural product in the mountainous area.\(^{271}\) The next king, Sejong (r. 1418-1450), was the most fortunate monarch in Korean history, as far as the number of auspicious animals is concerned. Next to Sejong, who had twenty-three white animals during his thirty-two-year reign, was King Sejo (r. 1455-1468) with eleven white animals in his reign.

More important than such statistics are the reactions of different monarchs to this auspice. Here we find a remarkable difference between the two kings who had more auspicious animals than any other, King Sejong and King Sejo. Sejong followed his father’s example of rejecting any auspicious portentousness of albino animals in every case. Congratulations offered by his scholar-officials on such occasions were refused by the king in 1428, 1430, 1431, 1432, 1435, 1438, and 1445.\(^{272}\) He did not specifically deny the implied auspiciousness of these portents,
but only refused to admit that they were Heaven's sign praising him as a good ruler. On one occasion he said that his lack of virtue was proof enough that he was not responsible for such auspices, and he continued to say that they were only happening by "luck."\textsuperscript{273}

We cannot find the modesty of Sejong in the reign of his son, King Sejo. Sejo obviously enjoyed such occasions as much as possible, and on one occasion the king even had an experience of an albino reindeer turning back into the normal light brown color when it changed hair after being captured.\textsuperscript{274} This incident seems to suggest amply that the local magistrates were eager enough to report as many auspices as possible during his reign.

But no sooner had King Sejo died than the old tradition of his father and grandfather reasserted itself as King Yejong refused to accept the congratulations offered for the white crow of 1469 (Yejong 1).\textsuperscript{275} In 1504 King Yŏnson had a minor confrontation with his officials when the officials demanded that a local magistrate be punished for flattering the throne after he had sent a white pheasant to the court as an auspice.\textsuperscript{276} Finally the man, Yi Chŏm, was removed from his magistracy, but he came back to a better position in the middle of the turbulent political situation that followed the expulsion of Yŏnson in 1506. Two years later, however, he was

141
again removed from his post as Inspector-General for the same reason.\textsuperscript{277} This was about the end of the portentousness of albinoes in Korea. We can therefore find that a local official in the reign of Sŏnjo (r. 1568–1608) is praised in a contemporary history for having not submitted a white pheasant he caught to the throne.\textsuperscript{278}

(3) Auspicious Stars

Two fixed stars were seen as auspicious, when they were seen at all, the Old-man Star (Noi̖n-sŏng) and the Spirit Star (Yŏng-sŏng). The old-man star was also known as su-sŏng (longevity star) thanks to the traditional belief that its appearance presages a long life for the watchers.

As far as I could determine, before 1550, there is no record of the spirit-star appearing in Korea. But we have six records of the longevity star—-in 934, 1120, 1123, 1170, and 1382, all in Koryŏ. The year 1170 has two records, and the appearance in 934 is recorded for both Silla and Koryŏ. With such a small number of records we can hardly discuss its portentousness.

Yet the two records of the old-man star in 1170 (Ŭijong 24) are interesting. When the report of observation by the Governor of Sŏhae Province reached the capital in the second month of the year, the king received
it with great joy and sent high officials to the western capital, Haeju, and to other places where there were halls for the aged, to perform services to the auspicious star. And a Taoist service was performed by the king himself. It was at this time that the auspicious star was reported a second time, in Ch'ungju, at the very moment when the local official there was carrying out the service for the star directed by the throne. The occasion was celebrated, by both the officials and the king, with great rejoicing.\textsuperscript{279}

But the next year, the first year of a new king, Myŏngjong, the local official was punished for erroneously reporting an ordinary star as the auspicious old-man star.\textsuperscript{280} In Koryŏ there was an official altar for prayer to the spirit star (Yŏngsŏng-dan).\textsuperscript{281} It is highly probable that there was a similar altar for prayers to the old-man star, and one record about the "shrine for the old-man star" (susŏng-sa), in the biography section of the Koryŏ-sa, seems to support this hypothesis.\textsuperscript{282} A record also shows that in 1108 and 1111 King Yejong had his services to the old-man star at the South Altar (Namdan).\textsuperscript{283}

The tradition of Koryŏ was duly inherited by the Yi dynasty, and the two altars were established from the early period of the new dynasty. But they did not last
I could not find any record of appearance of either of these two auspicious stars in the first one hundred and fifty years of Yi Korea, though there is one entry in 1509 (Chungjong 4) of a "yŏng-sŏng (lasting star)," which probably was meant to be "spirit star" with the same pronunciation but with a different character. A similar confusion with the use of a wrong character is found in 1409 (T'aejong 9) when the king asked what "yŏng-sŏng" was. There was nobody at his side at the moment who could explain the word to the king, who had found it in a report from the Office of Astronomy. A later investigation found that this confusion occurred simply because the Office of Astronomy used the wrong character for "yŏng" for spirit star (yŏng-sŏng), this time turning "spirit star" into "zero star." The astronomer who made the mistake was put into prison.

Neither auspicious star signified much in Korean history, as far as we can tell from the records available. The "spirit star" especially must have been only the most obscure matter of astronomy as the people of the Yi dynasty had difficulty in writing the correct word for it. This, however, does not preclude the role of the old-man star in popular tradition.

The old-man star was seen as a symbol of good luck and longevity throughout Yi Korea. And it was a custom
of new year's day that the Bureau of Painting (Tohwa-so) would submit drawings of the old-man star to the throne. Another custom at the start of spring (ipch'un) was for people to write a wish for long life on wall or pillar stickers, one of the phrases using "old-man star." 287 As knowledge of astronomical phenomena advanced at an unprecedented rate during the reign of King Sejong, it became well-known that the 'old-man star," or more properly the south pole star, could not be watched in Korea. Then a legend seems to have been born that only on the island of Cheju off in the southern coast could one catch a glimpse of the pole star of the south and that longevity was commonplace among the islanders. Yi Ik, for instance, related a story he heard from a reliable source, who told him that a party held on that island brought many people over one hundred years old and there was one 140-year-old man too. 288

(4) Auspicious Grain

In general unusually big ears of grain were considered auspicious, but extraordinary harvests were also considered equally auspicious. In the Three Kingdoms period Silla dominated the other two kingdoms in the number of auspicious grains. Crude evidence though it is, this seems to suggest that Silla was predominantly agricultural in
its origin and growth as a nation. We have already seen that auspicious animals were concentrated in Koguryo, an implication of the hunting orientation of its cultural heritage.

Other than this, there is little to comment on in the record. Perhaps one more thing worth noting is the somewhat excessive records of this portent during the reigns of Sejong and Sejo. Both kings obviously enjoyed having such auspices, apparently not so much as portents but as signs of good harvest.289

(5) Sweet Dew

The auspice of "sweet dew" was known to Koreans from the early years of their contact with China. A Buddhist temple named "Sweet Dew Temple (Kamno-sa)" was erected in late Silla, and a bronze urn known as "sweet dew urn (kamno-jun)," still preserved today in Unmun-sa Temple, was obviously made toward the end of Silla.290 Traditionally sweet dew was known to fall when government was peaceful, and its taste was sweet like caramel or honey.291 In the Koryo period, a monk was found to be deceiving people with faked sweet dew he made with honey. (We will return to this in the next chapter.)

The first record of sweet dew as a portent, however,
occurred as late as 1415 (T'aejong 15), and we have only fourteen records of sweet dew for one hundred years thereafter. Strangely enough, twelve of these fourteen records are from the two reign periods of Sejong and Sejo. Just as with auspicious animals, Sejo accepted them as auspicious, whereas Sejong refused to be congratulated for the auspices. Sejong had once considered this portent as ominous because it occurred in the fourth month of 1426 when drought was becoming severer every day. He just could not consider it timely at all that Heaven would respond to Korea with an auspice at such a time. 292

(6) Sarira

The first record of sarira, or the relics of the Buddha or Buddhists, in Korea, is its introduction into Silla in 549, when a Silla monk, Kaktōk, returned from Liang China accompanied by an Imperial emissary to bring sarira to Korea. 293 And Paekche sent sarira to Japan in 588, according to a Japanese source. 294 As the sacred remains from the cremations of prominent monks or other Buddhists, sarira had been a well-established tradition in Buddhism since the first produce of eight chiao four tou of sarira at the death of Shyakamuni himself. 295 Following the tradition of King Asoka, who built 84,000 stupas to keep the enormous amount of sarira bequeathed by
Shyakamuni, Korean Buddhists built many stupas following the introduction of Buddhism in the Three Kingdoms period. Nevertheless, we cannot find many records of sarira in the pre-Yi period when Buddhism was at its highest. All the records of sarira in pre-Yi Korea are purely as religious relics, never as auspicious portents. In several places in the Samguk yusa we find sarira mentioned, including Chajang's 100 pieces of sarira kept in the nine-storied pagoda of Hwangnyong-sa Temple, but these never relate to portentousness. 296

For the Koryó period, Yi Saek, for instance, writes about sarira in several places and one story explains how 155 pieces of sarira which originated from the cremation of Naong, a famous monk of his time, were divided into 588 pieces as the result of prayers. 297 But Yi Saek never indicates that sarira was seen in terms of political portentology in his time.

A more interesting story from Koryó history is a case of a monk's fabrication of sarira and sweet dew in 1313. According to the Koryó-sa, a monk named Hyoga was imprisoned for misleading people with fake sweet dew made from honey and false sarira made of grains of rice. 298 A similar incident occurred in the reign of King Sejo of the Yi period, when a monk of Kaesŏng submitted sarira to the throne in 1463 (Sejo 9), only to
have it discovered later to be millet. When the monk was summoned for interrogation, he was already on the run. 299

King Sejo was indeed a fervent believer of Buddhism, and it was against such a background that the faked sarira were presented to the throne. It was also in his reign that sarira came for the first time to be considered as auspicious portents in political terms, as far as the records show. For the thirteen-year reign of Sejo (r. 1455-1468) we have more than twenty records of sarira and congratulations for the production of sarira. There are a few more reports after his death, but then sarira fades from the world of auspicious portents, as Buddhism declined.

C. Recapitulations

From the discussions of individual portents above, we can delineate major stages in the development of Korean portentology. The first dividing line seems to fall at the beginning of the eleventh century when Koryŏ became self-confident of its intellectual achievement after a century of learning from the continent. As we have seen in Chapter I and in several of the sec-
tions above, Chinese theory of portents began to be widely applied to Korea from the eleventh century, often with references to Chinese history. Although it might have started in Unified Silla, a systematic understanding of portents emerged in the early century of Koryŏ to achieve the stage of "portentology" in its wider meaning for the first time in Korean history.

At the end of the tenth century, instead of the case-by-case interpretation of portents in shamanistic-Taoist terms—the dominant pre-Koryŏ response—portents were put into the more rigid framework of the theory of *vin-yang* and five elements. The portentousness of certain anomalies of nature was determined through the application of the theory of *vin-yang* and five elements, and then was exorcised through combination of various religious rituals, often with the addition of minor Confucian formulae. Thus responses to portents in the Koryŏ period were largely eclectic, with more shamanistic, Taoist, and Buddhist exorcisms and a growing, but still small number of Confucian responses.

With the rise of militant Confucian scholars toward the end of the Koryŏ dynasty and with the rise of the new dynasty in 1392, the mode of response to portents showed a significant shift toward Confucianization. Even though Buddhist exorcisms did not disappear until the reign of
King Songjong in the latter half of the fifteenth century, and Taoist exorcisms were to live longer, officially until the reign of Chungjong in the early sixteenth century, the dominant mode of response from the beginning of the Yi period was Confucian. Now the ultimate cause of any portent was seen in terms of the success or failure in human government; this was the beginning of political portentology.

Confucian political portentology was more rational in interpretation and more political in its response to portents. So in the early Yi period we find rapidly diminishing records of fire, locusts, meteors, the five planets, and so on, as their portentousness is lost to rational interpretations. On the other hand, other portents such as solar haloes and the appearance of Venus in the daytime were given more emphasis because of their political significance. These portents were significant because they seemed to be threatening the intrinsic brightness of the sun, the symbol of the king that was more and more becoming the center of political portentology. It was with the same logic that the lunar portents were taken as negligible from the early Yi period. Thanks to the rationalization process of Confucian portentology, most of the tangible portents on earth were losing their portentousness rapidly, leaving only the
intangible celestial portents in the realm of political portentology.

Yet more important for the following discussions are the different attitudes toward certain portents shown by different kings of the Yi dynasty. Most of these monarchs tried to conform to Confucian portentology, but we know there are two exceptions---King Sejo (r. 1455-1468) and King Yŏnsan (r. 1495-1506). For instance, only these two kings seem to have been blessed with some freedom from annual drought when all the other kings experienced drought almost every year. King Sejo was also blessed with unusually frequent auspices throughout his reign, and it was in his reign that sarira became an important auspicious portent. King Yŏnsan, on the other hand, was the only king in Korean history who tried to challenge portentology. These idiosyncrasies of different kings of early Yi Korea can best be explained in the context of the political and intellectual environments of major reign periods of the period, which we shall examine in Chapter IV.
CHAPTER III
FROM PORTENTS TO CONFUCIAN PORTENTOLOGY

A systematic understanding of portents developed in China as an important part of Tung Chung-shu's eclectic Confucianism. Ever since, portentology has remained a major element in Confucian political philosophy in China. By tracing the changing attitudes toward portents held by different Confucian scholars in China, we can clarify the Confucian tradition in its historical context. In the first part of this chapter I try to sketch Chinese portentology and to compare Chinese Confucian development with that of Koryo Confucianism.

The second part of this chapter is devoted to the effect on traditional elements of Korean culture, especially in the early Yi dynasty, of the new theory of portents. Tung Chung-shu's interpretation of portents was first of all a political philosophy in which every portent was viewed as a result of political failures in this world. With the rise of the militant Confucians at the end of Koryo dynasty, Korean Confucian scholars imposed "rational" interpretations of and response to portents in place of more superstitious responses. The result was an erosion of traditional practices of shaman-
istic, Toaistic, and Buddhistic exorcisms throughout
the early years of the Yi period. Yet there was a sig-
nificant impediment to Korea's absorption of Chinese
portentology. As a political philosophy, Chinese por-
tentology developed first of all for the Chinese, and
it therefore had no specific means to accommodate non-
Chinese like the Koreans.

In the Chinese Confucian cosmic order, the role of
the ruler as the Son of Heaven was rather well defined;
he was the mediator between Heaven and Man. Portento-
logy served as an important part of the whole scheme.
But the role of a king outside China was never clear,
and confused Koreans in the early Yi period. According
to the "Chinese" world order, the Korean king should have
been only a sort of feudal lord under the Chinese emperor.
Yet according to the "Confucian" portentology, the Korean
king could be seen as a son of Heaven within his own
domain.

How did the Koreans of the early Yi dynasty clarify
the contradiction innate in their conscious Confucianiza-
tion and unconscious Sinification? This question deserves
a lengthy discourse of its own; here, in the last part of
this chapter, it is discussed as it is related to and
clarified by Korea's portentology. The discussion will
show that although portents were taken very seriously by

154
the Koreans of the period, apparently little serious concern was given to the logical contradiction involved in the application of the "Chinese" portentology to Korea.

A. Portentology in Chinese Philosophy

The development of Korean Confucianism largely paralleled Chinese Confucian development as seen in the works of Tung Chung-shu (179?-104 B.C.) of the Han, Han Yu (768-824) of the T'ang, and Chu Hsi (1130-1200) of the Sung. This selection of major Chinese Confucian philosophers is not arbitrary, even though Han Yu is not a great name in the history of Chinese philosophy today. He is an admitted master of its literary history, and yet was most influential as one of the inspirers of Korean Confucianism. Confucian scholars in the declining years of the Koryo dynasty believed that Confucianism was handed down in China through Confucius, Mencius, Tung Chung-shu, and Han Yu to reach the Ch'eng brothers and Chu Hsi.¹

Tung Chung-shu (179?-104? B.C.)

The Han Confucianism of Tung Chung-shu was highly eclectic product with heavy borrowings from Legalism, Taoism, and Mohism, as well as from the theories of yin-yang and the five elements. As a political philosophy, Tung Chung-shu Confucianism was to serve as the justifi-
cation of the newly emerged imperial institution in China. As a philosophy of nature, it pushed man more into nature and toward the world of deities in it. Where classical Confucianism was mainly concerned with man in society, Tung Chung-shu's eclectic Confucianism elevated its basic concern to the question of man in the cosmos.

Tung Chung-shu's teaching was highly anthropomorphic, and susceptible to and tolerant of belief in one God or in any number of deities. His Heaven "possesses its own feelings of joy and anger, and a mind which experiences sadness and pleasure, analogous to those of man." His Heaven "possesses its own feelings of joy and anger, and a mind which experiences sadness and pleasure, analogous to those of man."2

The king, according to his theory, became the messenger to man of this anthropomorphic Heaven. So Tung said:

Those who in ancient times invented writing drew three lines and connected them through the middle, calling the character "king." The three lines are Heaven, earth, and man, and that which passes through the middle joins the principles of all three.3

In pre-Ch'in China the sovereign was called wang (king) instead of ti (emperor). The word ti in ancient China stood for shang-ti (High Lord, Lord-on-High) or t'ien-ti (Lord of Heaven), both meaning a personal god in a religious sense. Ch'in Legalists tried to exult their kingship by borrowing from the indigenous idea of a Heavenly God. This is how the ruler in China began

156
to be identified with Heaven, and Tung Chung-shu's phi-
osophical scheme was merely a metaphysical explanation
of a fait accompli. Thus the ruler was the one who was
assigned by Heaven to bring harmony and peace to the
triad of Heaven, Man, and Earth.

"The Son of Heaven," the term used thereafter in
reference to the Chinese emperor, most aptly describes
a regent of Heaven who ruled the "World under Heaven"
(t'ien-hsia) with the "Mandate of Heaven" (t'ien-ming).
Then what was the primary task of the Son of Heaven to
make good his Mandate of Heaven? Unlike Mencius, Tung
Chung-shu thought man's nature was not yet good at his
birth, but only potentially good. To actualize such
potentiality in man is the ultimate goal of the ruler,
thus achieving harmony in the cosmos---Heaven, Man, and
Earth. The ruler can attain this goal, and must try
to do so, through moral suasion, with needed assistance
from Legalist enforcements.

But what happens if the ruler fails to do so?
Here Tung's cosmology developed a system of relations
between man and Heaven (nature), relying heavily on
the theories of yin-yang and the five elements. Every
phenomenon in nature from astronomical to zoological
as well as historical changes was explained in terms of
these theories. It was this enormous system of explana-
tions of natural phenomena that gave portents a new elevated status in the intellectual life of China after the Han. Tung speaks clearly about the anomalies of nature:

The things of Heaven and Earth display at times unusual changes and these we call i. Lesser ones we call tsai. Tsai comes first always, and then is followed by i. Tsai is Heaven's admonition; and i is Heaven's threat. Heaven admonishes first and if man does not know, then it awes people with threats... The genesis of all such tsai and i is a direct result of errors in the state.4

This is very different from what the Christian West believed in the Middle Ages:

Throughout the Middle Ages, men watched anxiously for signs of the approach of the finale: plagues, eclipses, earthquakes, battles, any or all such events might be signs. How much effect this had on the way people acted is not clear. It does help, however, to explain why medieval annalists and chroniclers so seldom give satisfactory accounts of human motives and historical causes: they were seeking evidence in events not of human, but of divine agency.5

Portents to Tung Chung-shu were manifestations in nature of the errors of human society, while portents in the Christian view were signs of God's designs toward man. Portents in the Confucian tradition were caused by man,
though this became less clear later in T'ang China, whereas they were caused by God in the early Christian West.

Here Confucian astrology was working in an opposite direction from the mechanism of Western astrology, which Joseph Needham called "inverted astrology." We find here one fundamental difference in the ideas of man and nature held by the Christian West and the Confucian East. According to Tung Chung-shu, nature was essentially the reflection of the humanity of man, Heaven being intermediary between man and nature; the Christian West held that man and nature were two different realms under One God. Tung's eclecticism went to the extreme, for a Confucian, in postulating an anthropomorphic Heaven. Nevertheless, his Heaven, although angered or pleased by human affairs, was not God himself. For one thing, Tung's Heaven did not create man or nature, nor had it any power to reveal human destiny on earth even though it had power to punish man on the basis of praise and blame.

Han Yu (768-824)

From the fall of the Han empire in 220 until the reunification of China by the Sui in 589 and the rapid succession by the T'ang in 618, China experienced a long period of political disunity and disruption. It was the period of Buddhism and Neo-Taoism in China, and
they replaced even Tung's highly eclectic Confucianism as the dominant intellectual climate. However at the end of the Han dynasty portentology had been making great strides in the techniques of prediction and portentology prospered as it combined with numerous methods of prognostication in apocryphal literature.

This was also the period when the Koreans started their active learning of the Chinese culture, and it was against a background of Buddhism and Taoism in China that Korea developed into primarily a Buddhist country. Confucianism survived in T'ang China, under the shadow of a strong Neo-Taoism and Buddhism, largely thanks to the traditional literary skills that were transmitted generation after generation through the civil service examination.

Han Yu's most celebrated memorial against the display of Buddha's bone, or sarira, in 803 signalled the sharp break of the Confucians with the long tradition of complacent subordination to Buddhism and Neo-Taoism. First of all, Han Yu's criticism of Buddhism and Taoism was based upon traditional Confucian rationalism. He tried to invoke the original vision of Confucianism as created by Confucius and Mencius, thus bypassing Tung Chung-shu. Tung's eclectic compromise with the superstitious practices of Buddhists and Taoists was not exactly within the ration-
alistic tradition of Confucianism, although it helped the survival of Confucianism on hostile soil.

With an unprecedented degree of militant zeal Han Yu campaigned for a Confucian revival. His total dedication to his vision of original Confucianism became thereafter a trademark of the Confucian tradition in China and in Korea. As Fung Yu-lan has pointed out, Han Yu was the forerunner of Neo-Confucianism by making a basic reorientation of the Confucian tradition toward the Neo-Confucian movement that blossomed in Sung China. But just as he bypassed Tung Chung-shu, Chu Hsi all but ignored Han Yu as the forerunner of Neo-Confucianism by claiming that the orthodox line of Confucianism connected Confucius and Mencius directly to the Sung scholars.

Despite such neglect, Han Yu was more in deed than in thought the forerunner of the Neo-Confucians, who later include Chu Hsi and Wang Shou-jen. Han Yu’s demonstration of courage and fortitude in his belief in the Confucian millenarianism was to become an important part of Neo-Confucianism. Well armed with the eloquence of his own style of writing, which became a model for later generations, Han Yu was most of all an iconoclastic rhetorician. His attack on Buddhism and Taoism was the first shot that eventually brought the end of the dominance of Buddhism and Taoism in China. As we shall soon
see, this militant iconoclastic rhetorician was an inspiration to the Korean Confucian scholars at the end of the Koryŏ period.

**Chu Hsi (1130-1200)**

Unlike Han Yu, Chu Hsi was a great philosopher in every sense, and he achieved undoubtedly the highest mark in the Confucian tradition after Confucius. He gradually became the dominant figure in Chinese intellectual life and stayed so until the very end of the Ch'ing dynasty in 1911. It was the Chu Hsi version of Confucianism that eventually became the dominant system of thought in Yi Korea.

The basic text of Chu Hsi's teaching is the Great Learning (Ta-hsueh), a short excerpt from the Book of Rites (Li-chi), where the famous eight steps to the ultimate harmony and peace of the world are neatly presented. Varying interpretations by different scholars, of Chu Hsi's first step, "the investigation of things" (ke-wu), have caused some confusion concerning Chu Hsi's attitude toward natural phenomena. Hu Shih found it "very near to the inductive method" and even compared the Great Learning with the Novum Organum of Francis Bacon. But such a positive opinion of Chu Hsi's view of nature is not universally shared by other scholars including
Then how did Chu Hsi perceive natural phenomena?

Let us see first what he has to say of the "investigation of things."

The meaning of the expression "The perfection of knowledge depends on the investigation of things" is this: If we wish to extend our knowledge to the utmost, we must investigate the principles of all things we come into contact with, for the intelligent mind of man is certainly formed to know, and there is not a single thing in which its principles do not inhere. It is only because all principles are not investigated that man's knowledge is incomplete. For this reason, the first step in the education of the adult is to instruct the learner, in regard to all things in the world, to proceed from what knowledge he has of their principles, and investigate further until he reaches the limit. After exerting himself in this way for a long time, he will one day achieve a wide and far-reaching penetration. Then the qualities of all things, whether internal or external, the refined or the coarse, will all be apprehended, and the mind, in its total substance and great functioning, will be perfectly intelligent. This is called the investigation of things. This is called the perfection of knowledge. 14

Here is the source of Hu Shih's view of ke-wu as Baconian induction.

Confusion was inevitable because Chu Hsi never made
the meaning of ke-wu, especially wu (things), clear. As James Legge complained, it is impossible to accept Chu Hsi's own words on ke-wu verbatim, for it is obvious that the investigation of the myriad things and affairs in nature and in society is impossible. Then what did Chu Hsi mean by "things"? The answer can be found by juxtaposing Chu Hsi's comment on ke-wu with a part of the body of the Great Learning, which reads:

From the emperor down to the common people, all without exception must consider the cultivation of the individual character as the root. If the root is in disorder, it is impossible for the branches to be in order.

Chu Hsi's "investigation of things" set its ultimate goal in the moral cultivation of man in society. As such, his "things" (wu) were more of human affairs in society than of natural phenomena in general. Such "things" of Chu Hsi's primary concern can only be found in history, and for this reason Chu Hsi tried to develop his own historical method by writing Kang-mu, which was emulated by later historians in China, Korea, and Japan. (We shall see more of it in the next chapter.)

Necessarily Chu Hsi's idea of "Heaven" was to be different from Tung Chung-shu's Heaven:

The blue sky is called Heaven; it revolves continuously and spreads out in all directions.
It is now sometimes said that there is up there a person who judges all evil actions; this assuredly is wrong. But to say that there is no ordering (principle) would be equally wrong.\textsuperscript{17}

As Needham pointed out, Chu Hsi here clearly dismisses any existence of a personal God or an anthropomorphic Heaven.\textsuperscript{18} The mandate of Heaven for him means "the moral nature of man, conferred by Heaven," which is a cosmic moral order.\textsuperscript{19} Therefore man in society has to abide with his lot in it and perform his moral duty to it. Portents thus became a barometer to measure the degree of achievement of this moral principle, often called ta-i ming-fen (taeui myôngbun in Korean), in a given society, mostly as a mirror for the highest representative of the society, that is, the throne.

Although Chu Hsi knew perfectly well the predictability of eclipses, he wrote that a solar eclipse occurs because of the moral degeneration of society.\textsuperscript{20} And in his "Memorial on Portents," Chu Hsi viewed all portents as signs of the waxing yin and waning yang, which could be cured only by moral cultivation on the part of the throne.\textsuperscript{21} It was in this spirit that Chu Hsi emphasized the importance of recording portents in writing history in his introduction to Kang-mu.\textsuperscript{22} Natural phenomena were considered important only when they reflected the degree of morality attained in human affairs. Nature
existed for Chu Hsi only as an extension of history.

The Tradition of Anti-Portentology in China

The theory of portents, or portentology, was developed in China within the orthodox Confucian tradition. In contrast to this orthodox thinking, however, there was a tradition of scepticism toward portentology. Notable in this tradition are three scholars who were roughly contemporaries of the three scholars in favor of portentology.

Wang Ch'ung (27-97?), whose name is today well established in the history of Chinese thought, was perhaps the foremost champion of the Chinese scepticism. He was a severe critic of Tung Chung-shu's portentology. For him natural phenomena were nothing more than mere chance happenings that had nothing to do with human affairs:

Originally there were no calamities or omens, or if there were, they were not considered as reprimands from Heaven. Why? Because at that time people were simple and unsophisticated, and did not restrain or reproach one another. Later ages have gradually declined—superiors and inferiors contradict one another, and calamities and omens constantly occur. Hence the hypothesis of reprimands from Heaven has been invented. Yet the Heaven of today is the same Heaven as of old—it is not that Heaven anciently was kind, and now is harsh. The hypothesis of Heavenly reprimands has been put forward in
modern times, as a surmise made by men from their own (subjective) feelings.\textsuperscript{23} Wang Ch'ung's attack on the superstitions flourishing at his time sounds almost modern to us today. But as Fung Yu-lan has warned, Wang Ch'ung was a destructive critic with few constructive alternatives to offer; thus his contemporary stature was not as important as many scholars today would have us believe.\textsuperscript{24} And it is very doubtful that he ever had any influence in Korean history at all, though there is no conclusive evidence on this point.

Liu Tsung-yuan (773-819) was a contemporary of Han Yu and established his fame as a literary master, just like Han Yu. In his view of portents, however, Liu was diametrically the opposite of Han, who was very much in the orthodox tradition with all of his strong criticism of superstitious Buddhism and Taoism. Liu Tsung-yuan wrote "On Heaven" to attack Han Yu's portentology, first showing Han Yu's theory of portents and then adding thereto his own rejoinder point by point:

Heaven and earth are not much different from big fruit. . . . How can these praise or bring fortune, and punish or bring misfortune? A fortunate man makes his fortune for himself; an unfortunate man also makes his misfortune for himself. It is a great mistake if one hopes for Heaven's praise and punishing. It is still a greater mistake to call or curse Heaven,
and to hope for Heaven's sympathy or benevolence. 25

Taking thunderbolts, which often strike rocks and trees, as examples, Liu Tsung-yuan asks, "How can trees and grasses commit any extraordinary crimes?" 26

Like Wang Ch'ung, however, Liu's stature in Chinese history of ideas has only recently been discovered by scholars in mainland China, who are impressed with the obvious merit of his materialistic tendency. 27 Unlike Wang Ch'ung, Liu Tsung-yuan was a well-known figure to the Koreans, along with a number of other literary masters in T'ang China including Han Yu. But Liu was known to the Koreans as a literary master, not as a great thinker. As far as we can tell now, as a sceptical philosopher Liu was totally unnoticed in Korea.

The third figure following Wang Ch'ung and Liu Tsung-yuan in the Chinese tradition of anti-portentology is Wang An-shih (1019-1086), the great reformer of the Sung period. According to the Sung-shih (History of Sung), Wang An-shih was an extreme revolutionary who once uttered:

It is unnecessary to be afraid of Heavenly portents;
It is unnecessary to emulate dynastic ancestors;
It is unnecessary to care about the voices of the people. 28

Although it is not clear whether he actually voiced this
"Theory of Three Unnecessaries," this seem to reflect well his general attitude toward Confucian tradition. And the attribution of this remark to him in his biography in the Sung-shih undoubtedly contributed to his reputation as a heretic in the eyes of Confucian scholars. It was precisely because of such a record in the Sung dynastic history that fifteenth century Korea had its own critic of portentology, parallel to Wang An-shih, as we shall see in detail in Chapter IV.

B. Portents and Politics in Koryŏ Confucianism

Eclectic Confucianism

The Confucian classics and institutions were known to the Koreans of the Three Kingdoms period. However not until the early Koryŏ period did politics come under Confucian influence largely through the influence of students of Chinese learning who had been barred from reaching high posts in the government due to the strict social stratification in Silla. The introduction of the civil service examination after the Chinese model in 958 (Kwangjong 9) was perhaps the most significant factor in the encouragement of Confucian scholarship and Chinese learning. But the dominant intellectual outlook in the period was Buddhistic, with a mixture of Taoist and indigenous elements. Born in such a milieu, it is no
wonder that the first notable scholar of the Koryŏ period, Ch'oe Sŏngno (927-989), said in his famous memorial to the throne, in 982, that:

To follow Buddhist teachings is the basis for self-cultivation; to follow Confucian teachings is the basis for governing the state. Self-cultivation is an asset for the future; governing the state is work for today.\(^{31}\)

Such an eclectic approach can be found in many Koryŏ scholars, from the leading Buddhist monk, Ùich'ŏn (1055-1101), son of King Munjong, all the way through to the very end of the Koryŏ period.\(^{32}\)

A cursory look at early Koryŏ shows that Chinese influence was rapidly gaining momentum, notably in Confucian education through the private institutes popularized by Ch'oe Ch'ung (984-1068), who is remembered in Korean history as "the Confucius of Korea." It was a period in which Koreans were eager to borrow as much as possible from China. Naturally the rise of Confucian scholarship demanded some sacrifice on the part of the established traditional practices. For instance, P'algwanhoe was abolished for its superstitiousness in 981 (Sŏngjong 0).\(^{33}\)

But the suppression of the indigenous-Taoist tradition was not continued. The abolition was soon repealed and the practice of primitive rituals continued for the rest of the dynasty until the study of Lao-tzu, Chuang-tzu,
and Taoism was formally prohibited by decree in 1131 (Injong 9), touching off the second round in the struggle against traditionalism.\textsuperscript{34} In the midst of the sustained struggle between more rational Confucians and superstitious indigenous-Taoist traditionalists, Buddhism was largely unchallenged for most of the dynasty.

Under these circumstances, the "Confucius of Korea" remained primarily a teacher of literary skills, instead of trying to teach any revolutionary ideas. A Sung Chinese scholar who visited Korea in 1123 (Injong 1) as a member of the Chinese embassy to Korea commented succinctly on the lack of discussion on political questions in the Korean civil service examinations:

Generally speaking, poetry is highly esteemed, but the study of the classics is not yet well under way. If one reads only Korea's literary products, he will find it very similar to the left-over from the T'ang period.\textsuperscript{35} Modern scholarship does not show any remarkable departure from this contemporary evaluation. Takahashi Toru, for instance, saw that Korean Confucianism through to the very end of the Koryŏ dynasty remained a study of textual criticism and memorization rather than one of thoughts and beliefs.\textsuperscript{36} Even this was halted by the rise of the military regime in 1170, which marked a sharp break in the Confucianization of Korea. Thus a Korean Confu-
cian scholar at the end of the fourteenth century reflected upon the state of Confucianism in Koryo:

Our country before 1170-1173 \( \text{when the military emerged and took control of government} \) had more Confucian scholars and famous literati than China. Thus the T'ang Chinese saw us as a country of gentlemen and the Sung Chinese took us as a country of culture, rites, and music, naming the residence of the Korean embassy to China the Hall of Lesser China. After 1170-1173, however, if they \( \text{Confucian scholars} \) were not killed, they escaped into the mountains and woods, leaving behind only a few out of every hundred scholars. And those who studied Buddhist teachings started to propagate wicked theories, thus deceiving many officials above and misleading the unsuspecting people below.\(^{37}\)

This observation is credible, for we know Confucianism was building up momentum when the military emerged in 1170.

**Myoch'ŏng and Portents**

As we have noticed earlier, in Chapter I, the sharp rise of recorded portents from the eleventh century according to the *Koryo-se* is seen as a sign of the Koreans' successful absorption of the Chinese theory of portents found in the *History of the Former Han* (*Han-shu*), and the *History of Chin* (*Chin-shu*), among others, which are reflections of Tung Chung-shu portentology in general.
It was to be another century before the name of Tung Chung-shu and his philosophy of portents were first recorded in Korean history, in the memorial presented to the throne in 1134 (Injong 12) by Im Wan. In this memorial, a monumental record in the intellectual history of Korea, this scholar-immigrant from Sung China, who worked closely with Kim Pusik's group in their struggle against the Monk Myoch'ong, wrote:

According to Tung Chung-shu, which I read before, when a country is going to fail in keeping the Way, Heaven first shows anomalies to warn it. If they were unheeded and no self-reflections were made, then grave portents are sent as serious warnings. Only if they were unnoticed, does the catastrophe finally come. This shows Heaven's benevolent love toward the ruler and its desire to stop unruliness in the world.38

Then quoting from the authority of the Book of Poetry, Im Wan continues that the king must respond to Heaven with the real (sil) and not with mere formalities (mun). He defines the real as virtue and the formalities as things like Buddhist exorcisms (toryang) or Taoist exorcisms (chaech'o).39 Interpreting the unusual number of portents in the past few years as signs of Heaven's benevolent love toward the monarch, he concluded his memorial with a scathing attack on Myoch'ong:

Ever since the building of Taehwa Palace, many
people have been mobilized to arouse their complaints and curses. Last year when Your Majesty went there, there was an ominous portent at a Buddhist pagoda, and Your Majesty's visit this year was met with a succession of meteors and dead horses. Furthermore, though this palace was meant to search for fortunes, there has been no single auspice for the past seven or eight years of its existence, whereas omens have occurred in succession. Why is this so? Heaven seems to be saying that a wicked man is deceiving Your Majesty. Man can be deceived, but is Heaven deceivable? The portents in the past days might perhaps be Heaven's warning to Your Majesty to wake you up. How can Your Majesty defy the will of Heaven to spare a wicked subject? I beg you to demonstrate the august royal authority and decapitate Myoch'ong to answer Heaven's warning above and to placate the people's hearts below. These are the public words of the world and not a personal view of this subject.

Myoch'ong was a monk from the Western Capital (Sogyöng), who had almost succeeded in persuading King Injong to move the capital to the Western Capital, and the helm of power to himself. Claiming that he was the inheritor of the secret teachings of Tosôn's geomancy, Myoch'ong tried to persuade the throne and other officials to his idea that only the vis vitæ of the new capital could rejuvenate the dynastic destiny that was in the ruins after the
internal strife which resulted from the costly expulsion of strongman Yi Chagyŏm. When he realized that his method of persuasion would not succeed, he chose to rebel and failed in 1135, half a year after the memorial of Im Wan. 41

As the only important testimony kept in the record about the intellectual consensus shared by the anti-Myo-ch'ŏng forces of the time, this might have played a crucial role in the ideological battle of the opposing camps in the Myo-ch'ŏng episode. The ideological struggle in the incident of Myo-ch'ŏng in the mid-Koryŏ was the climax of the sustained battles between conservative traditionalists bent toward indigenous-Taoist beliefs and progressive reformers bent toward Confucian rationalism. Buddhism was safely kept from the center of the battleground throughout the course of the struggle, but the fact that Myo-ch'ŏng was a Buddhist monk and was defeated in the final showdown with the Confucian leader of the time, Kim Pusik, has a lasting significance in the conflict between Confucianism and Buddhism in later Koryŏ.

A significant difference in the interpretations of portents by these two groups of politicians was that Kim Pusik and his supporters, in attacking the superstitiousness of the indigenous-Taoist traditions, placed greater emphasis on the political implications of portents.
As we read from Im Wan's attack on Myoch'ŏng, portents were seen more and more as signs of Heaven reflecting the virtue in government on earth. Specific prognostication and specific exorcism for a particular portent, which had been practiced all through Korean history up to that time, was gradually giving way to this new view of a more generalized interpretation of portents in political terms. It was this political twist of portentology that made the higher officials in government feel responsible for portents, as we can see from the resignations submitted in 1114, 1179, and 1184.42 Probably these were imitation of the practices of China, instead of genuine expression of the sense of responsibility for portents.43 Yet the fact remains that such imitation started at this time of Korean history, and learning starts with imitation.

The Outburst of Confucian Rationalism

History, however, failed to make a turn at the fall of Myoch'ŏng. Reaction was quick to assert itself and within half a century, after the military take-over of the government, the major response to portents was still religious and not political, each portent was prognosticated and exorcised on individual basis. The trend did not change even in the second half of the thirteenth century.
or the early fourteenth century. In the reign of King Ch'ungnyŏl (r. 1275-1308), which is known in history for its strides in Confucianization, two Confucian scholars were still hesitating whether to advise the throne to take Confucian option to meet portents or leave him continue with religious exorcisms.\(^{44}\)

Yet it is true that the reign of King Ch'ungnyŏl witnessed important institutional reforms leading to a rapid growth of Confucianism in Korea. The placing of seven professors of classics and history at the national college in 1280, began an important reorientation of Korean Confucianism from its almost exclusive concern with literary techniques to a more fundamental political philosophy. It goes without saying that such a reorientation was possible because of the fertile soil prepared over the past centuries. In 1296 (Ch'ungnyŏl 22) an independent government office was set up to oversee the teaching of classics and history. It was several years after these institutional changes that the first Korean contact with Chu Hsi's writings was made by An Hyang (1243-1306) during his visit to Yuan China in 1286.

It was only after these events and with the growing influence of Confucian scholars that open criticism of Buddhism began to be aired. As Yi Pyŏngdo points out, two kinds of criticism can be seen.\(^{45}\) One was largely
on the financial and moral degeneration connected with both priests and believers in Buddhism, while the other was upon the superstitiousness of the old belief system. The first, appearing earlier than the other, can be seen from the criticism of Yi Saek (1328-1396), one of the leading minds of the period. After noting the great development of Buddhism in both China and Korea, Yi's memorial to the throne in 1352 (Kongmin 1) continues:

Since the mid-period of Koryo dynasty, its followers became more numerous... and Buddhist temples were built at every riverside and every valley. Then the Buddhists not only became vulgar, but many other people in the country began to eat without working. Knowledgeable people worry about this. Buddha was a great saint, and I am sure he would have shared his likes and dislikes with people. Can we then be sure that his spirit in the other world would not be ashamed of such wretched behaviour among his followers? I beg Your Majesty to decree that practising priests be relicensed, so as to conscript those without license into the army. New temples must be ordered destroyed, and if the order is not carried out, the magistrate in charge should be punished for it.46 (Italics mine)

The vulgarities of the monks Yi Saek noted above was a growing concern of the society, and particularly frowned upon was the moral laxity that spread among many monks who often indulged in activities of dubious moral value.47
With this mild criticism of Buddhist practices came the beginning of Confucian sacrificial rites, the lack of which was noted and lamented by a twelfth-century Chinese visitor. Gradually the Koreans started to build their system of rituals in accordance with Confucian tradition. It was Yi Saek who introduced for the first time in Korea the three-year mourning period for the death of a parent. And the broader and intricate sacrificial system of Chu Hsi was soon to be introduced by one of the architects of the Yi dynasty, Cho Chun (?-1405), in a formal decree toward the end of the Koryo dynasty.

The observance of sacrificial rites, of course, served to bridge the cultural gap between the more "exorcist" Koryo period and the more "rational" decades of the dynastic change. As Hsun-tzu put it, sacrificial rites have a dual principle with two different meanings, one for the superior men (chun-tzu) and one for the ordinary people (pai-hsing). For the superior men it was simply "a human practice" (jen-tao), while it was a "serving of the spirits" (kuei-shen) for the commoners. The active introduction of such double standards eased the Buddhist-Confucian transition in the late Koryo, primarily in the era of mild reformism of the Yi Saek type.

Such steady yet unmistakable development toward Con-
Confucianization in late Koryo, however, was not fast enough to quench the rising expectations of the young scholars who wanted radical reforms. To the eyes of those new scholars, the attitude and accomplishments of Yi Saek were inconsequent. As Sŏ Kŏjong wrote a century later, Yi Saek seemed to be "criticizing one, while praising one hundred," when he called Buddha a great saint in his supposedly anti-Buddhist memorial quoted above.\(^{52}\) It was only in the last few years of the Koryo dynasty that such radical views began to be openly expressed. For example, Kim Chasu, Chancellor of the national college, presented a memorial to the throne in 1391:

Han Yu of the T'ang dynasty memorialized to Emperor Hsien-tsung, "From Huang-ti, Yao, and Shun through to the Three Dynasties, they enjoyed long \(\text{dynastic}\) lives. This was when Buddhism had not yet come to China. Ever since the introduction of Buddhism in the era of Ying-p'ing of the Han, the decline and fall repeated and the life of each dynasty was short. Throughout the Sung, Chi, Liang, Chen, Yuan, and Wei dynasties, the more Buddha was worshipped, the shorter the dynasties became." This is not Master Han's imagination, for we can clearly see this from history.\(^{53}\)

After recalling how his king in Korea had indulged in Buddhism in the past and how Chinese history showed the effectiveness of responding to portents by the cultiva-
tion of virtue on the part of the throne, Kim Chasu con-
tinued:

From this we can tell that if the ruler's mind
is on the right track, it is enough to move the
mind of Heaven. If it is on the wrong track,
however, it is enough to bring ominous portents.
I beg Your Majesty to keep your mind clear,
and in meeting with the Lord-on-High, do as if
he were near you even though he is far and in
darkness. When you meet with his responses,
be more attentive to the bud of His concern.
Seeing, hearing, talking and acting must be in
accordance with proprieties. In going in and
out, standing up and sitting down, Your Majesty
should never stray from respect. And Your Majesty
should never be blinded with personal desires in
doing things, nor resort to expedient solutions.
Then such respect in mind will be enough to dis-
sipate omens, help educate people, and raise
the country. Why should there be any additional
efforts in worshipping Buddha and actively buil-
ding pagodas to make the dynastic life lengthened?54

This memorial in the fifth month of 1391 marks an
important turning point in the ideological struggles of
the rising radicals, who had eventually rallied together
to make the birth of a new dynasty possible, if not in-
evitable, the next year. The memorial of Kim Chasu was
followed by a flurry of similar memorials by Kim Ch'o,
Hŏ Ung, Chŏng Tojŏn, Chŏng Ch'ong, and others.55 Like
the old guard reformists, including Yi Saek, the radical

181
reformers found the pressing demands of their society focused in the curtailment of the economic aggrandizement of the Buddhist monasteries, the moral corruption of the clergy, and the financial squandering of the government on religious (and superstitious) exorcisms of portents.

The most acrimonious attack made by these militant young radicals was expressed in the memorial by Kim Ch' o, who after a violent attack upon the deceitfulness of Buddhism and other shamanistic exorcisms, called for legislation to "kill, without any consideration of pardon, both those who shaved their heads and those who practised shamanistic exorcisms."56 To reinforce the point, the leader of these young radicals, Chŏng Tojŏn, quoting from an old story from Chinese history, concluded in his memorial that, "When a state rises, it listens to man. When a state declines, it hears from ghosts and deities."57

Indeed these acrimonious memorials by radical Confucian reformers were occasioned by the king's appeal for counsel when a series of portents including drought occurred in the spring of 1391. This anti-Buddhist outbreak is well documented both in traditional and modern historiography. Usually scholars today assess this eruption as an expression of the "Neo-Confucian" reorientation embraced by the young scholar-officials at that time. As such, according to this view, it served merely as a
new intellectual climate that facilitated the rise of a new dynasty. Therefore, the dynastic change in 1392 was primarily political and economic event and only secondarily an intellectual event. 58

Reactionary Efforts for Dynastic Rejuvenation

Since the above thesis has been so long accepted, little attention has been given to the study of the nature of the new climate of opinion or of the immediate cause that made such a sudden flare-up of anti-Buddhist movement possible, or even inevitable. The attack on Buddhism was one of the two major issues these radicals brought up in the declining years of the Koryo dynasty; the other was land reform to rectify the aggravating economic inequities among the scholar-officialdom. After the purges of some of the old guard, including Yi Saak, in the coup of 1388, and the expulsion of King Ch'ang the next year, the radical reformers could safely initiate land reforms. Yet they did not yet hold political supremacy, nor were they well united among themselves. Scholars today feel Yi Sŏnggye was neither in a position nor in a state of mind to be ready for a dynasty of his own. 59 It was in such a murky state of politics that King Kongyang was put on the throne toward the end of 1389. Apparently he was not the best qualified man, and he had a good share of
mediocrities at the age of forty-four. The now familiar anti-Buddhist eruption came only when the new king and his supporters from the old guard failed in their efforts for a dynastic rejuvenation which they tried through a series of "esoteric" adventures, including moving the capital.

This effort for a dynastic rejuvenation began within a few months of the new king's enthronement. In the first month of 1390, the king set a statue of the Buddha of Benevolent King (*inwang*, or *jen-wang*) in a palace annex in order to pray before it every morning and evening as well as whenever any portent occurred. Sutras with magical formulae were read before it, whether there were portents or not, as royal ceremonies "to protect the country from all kinds of calamities and induce prosperity." One of the often used sutras reads:

0 great kings! When the country starts to become disorderly, demons and gods go disorderly first. Because demons and gods go disorderly, ten thousand people go disorderly, enemies come to rape the country, and people perish and lose their lives. Then princes and high officials fight against each other, ominous portents occur, and the stars in the twenty-eight constellations and the sun and the moon go untimely and out of order. Calamities like conflagrations, floods, and typhoons come. This sutra is to be read on such occasions.
King Kongyang also wanted to appoint Monk Ch'anyŏng, a disciple of the famous Monk Fou, to the position of Royal Preceptor. This effort, however, was thwarted by stiff opposition from Chŏng Mongju, Sŏng Sŏngnin, Yun Sojong, and others.\(^63\) In another adventure the king was more fortunate. When Monk Pobye of Yŏnbok-sa Temple proposed to remodel a desolate five-story pagoda and the three lakes and nine fountains within the compound of his temple, acts which in his opinion would bring the nation and people prosperity and happiness, the king ordered their immediate reconstruction by appointing chief and vice chief directors for the work.\(^64\)

Then came the memorial of the Office of Astronomy in the seventh month of the same year, in which the move of the capital was proposed. Armed with a quotation from the ever-venerable *Secret Book of Tosŏn*, the proposal urged the king to move the capital to the southern capital (modern Seoul), thus giving a chance for rest to the tired geomantic *vis vitæ* of the capital.\(^65\) This proposal was apparently very timely, because the king was apprehensive about the continued appearance of portents, particularly of the Venus in the daytime, which once so frightened the king that he ordered that the curfew in the capital city be rechecked.\(^66\) Brushing aside some minor opposition, King Kongyang decided to move the capi-

\(^{185}\)
tal to Hanyang, the present Seoul, in the ninth month of 1390 (Kongyang 2). The nominal opposition this move received at the time seems to suggest two things—First, geomancy was more respected than shamanistic or Buddhistic exorcisms of portents, and second, the radical reformers could not yet find any common cause to rally around after their initial victory.

Strong opposition was unnecessary, as the situation finally turned out. King Kongyang's efforts for dynastic rejuvenation through the move of the capital was found to be ineffective, for portents were observed even more frequently than before. When portents were observed one after another, including a tiger's attack on a man after the move of the capital, Minister of Punishment An Won suggested returning to the old capital, Kaegyong, in the twelfth month of the same year. King Kongyang had no choice but to oblige and to put the question to discussion by his scholar-officials. Following the recommendation of the government, the court moved back to the old capital in the second month of the next year, 1391. This year, however, portents seemingly occurred more frequently than ever before, including a drought in the early summer. When the list of portents was lengthened by the appearance of a comet in the fourth month, the king could not but announce an appeal for counsel. The
celebrated flurry of anti-Buddhist rhetoric we saw earlier was the outcome of this appeal for counsel.

This effort for dynastic rejuvenation was a reactionary resurgence of Myoch'ông's tradition, which in turn was in the tradition of Tosôn. As such it was not a new effort, nor the last such endeavour, as we shall soon see in subsequent movings of the capital in the early Yi period. What makes the closing years of the Koryŏ dynasty unique in the intellectual history of Korea is not their revival of tradition, but a change in the Confucian tradition which suddenly expressed itself in a violent anti-Buddhist and anti-superstition campaign against the traditional procedures for dynastic rejuvenation. The summer of 1391, then, can be taken as a major turning point in the intellectual history of Korea. The militancy of the Confucian scholars involved in the campaign shows a sudden outburst of Confucian rationalism, which had been dormant in the Confucian tradition for so many years. It was the first indication of the maturity reached by Korean Confucianism in its long history from eclectic subordination to self-confident supremacy.

Portents and Remonstrance

This anti-superstition movement left another important legacy: the rise to unprecedented power of the
Confucian scholars in government, especially those in the position to remonstrate to the throne. As we have already noted, the whole eruption of the anti-superstition movement was occasioned by the king’s appeal for counsel in response to portents. But when the criticism of the court and the throne went to the extreme of Kim Ch’o’s demand for the beheading of all Buddhists and shamans, the king was repelled and planned to kill Kim Ch’o to set an example. When the throne had a difficult time in finding an excuse to punish the remonstrator, one of the royal secretaries suggested grounds for breaking established precedents.\(^68\)

It was at this point that Chōng Mongju, a Koryŏ loyalist, came to his rescue, not so much to defend Kim Ch’o who might have been closer to Chōng Tojŏn, supporter of the Yi house, but to protect the principle of the freedom of remonstrance:

Faith is a great treasure of the ruler. The state is secure with its people, and the people are secure with their faith. Recently Your Majesty appealed for counsel, saying, “Those who speak out shall be free from punishment.” Therefore people came out with memorials criticizing the gains and losses in politics and the happiness and unhappiness in the people’s lives. Indeed it was a time with no fear. Among them there was the one submitted by a professor and
students at the national college, which aroused Your Majesty's anger by being tactless in phrasing its argument against the heterodoxy. This makes all the subjects of the government apprehensive. We believe that criticism of Buddha is a usual affair for Confucians, and the rulers from olden days did not make any fuss over it. Appealing to the magnanimity of Your Majesty, we beg the generous pardon of those misled ones, thus demonstrating Your Majesty's faith in the people of the nation.69

It was with this very attitude, upholding the principle of remonstrance, that Chōng Mongju successfully expelled the Yi Sōnggye group from Koryo politics in the spring of 1392. Through a series of well-manoeuvred remonstrance by his own followers, Chōng seemingly attained his own political supremacy by ousting the leaders of the Yi camp.

A daring coup de grâce, however, came from Yi Pangwŏn, the fifth son of Yi Sōnggye and later the third king of Yi Korea, who sent an assassin to cut Chōng Mongju down in the fourth month of 1392. If Yi Sōnggye had no role up to this point in the founding of his own dynasty, as Yi historians would have us believe in their records in the Koryo-sa, he must have realized now that the blow of the assassin's iron bludgeon left him no choice but to send one of his henchmen to the throne to justify his son's assassination of Chōng Mongju.

The only reason Yi Sōnggye could find was that Chōng
Mongju had "secretly agitated the remonstrators to entrap men of loyalty." It is true that Chŏng Mongju did manipulate remonstrators to effect, on the first day of the fourth month of 1392, the expulsion of all the major supporters of the Yi camp from the government, including Chŏng Tojŏn, Cho Chun, Nam ŏn, Yun Sojong, Nam Chae, and Cho Pak. It was only three days later that Chŏng Mongju was slain by Yi Pangwŏn. Yi Songgye's reason for the slaying was given to the throne as well as to the people. An investigation was started of all the remonstrators, and most of them were sent to exile.

The death of Chŏng Mongju meant a triumph for the Yi Sŏnggye group, but a reversal for the Confucian ideal of the freedom of remonstrance and a halt of the growing political role of remonstrators. In Confucian portentology, portents prompt the throne's appeal for counsel. This, in turn, provides a forum of political discussion, and the major route of communications in such discussions is remonstrance. Therefore any regression in remonstrance was tantamount to regression in Confucian politics. Far from being a Neo-Confucian intellectual victory, then, the birth of the Yi dynasty three months later was a reactionary military coup.

For the Confucian survivors of this dynastic change, the new dynasty, although an intellectual failure, was a
political victory. The new dynasty guaranteed the Confucian supremacy for the rest of the traditional history of Korea. This might not have been possible if Koryŏ dynasty had survived in 1392. This much was the victory of the Confucians. But in achieving this political victory, they had to compromise their ideal of Confucian politics by allowing submission of the principle of remonstrance, the very principle Confucian politics had to uphold. This was the failure of the Confucians.

The Nature of the Confucian Outburst

Here one thing has to be clarified for further discussion of the Confucian tradition in Korean history: the nature of Confucianism in 1391-1392. Few scholars have probed this, and those who deal with it have unquestioningly treated it as Hsing-li scholarship (Söngni-hak), Chu Hsi-ism (Chuja-hak), Ch'eng-Chu Learning (Chõng-ju-hak), and so on, all with roughly the same meaning. The reason for this is their acceptance of the notion that the formal "introduction" of Neo-Confucianism had already been made by An Hyang in 1286, as the tradition had it.

Another important reason for the view is that the later Neo-Confucians traced their scholarly lineage to Chŏng Mongju, calling him "the father of Korean Neo-Confucianism." This of the survey histories, there-
fore, states:

The most notable event in the intellectual history of later Koryo times was the introduction of the Chinese thinker Chu Hsi's reinterpretation of Confucianism. Besides revitalizing Confucian thought itself, it brought about organized opposition to Buddhism. It is particularly significant that this neo-Confucianism was mainly identified with the supporters of Yi Sŏnggye, while Buddhism had its greatest influence on the Koryo royal family and the old landlord aristocracy.72

While it is true that Chu Hsi was known and studied by some of the leading scholars of the period, it is difficult to find any hard evidence that they, at the time of the dynastic change, had successfully digested the new philosophy or found anything relevant to their own society.73 The first thing they started to accept from Neo-Confucian writings was Chu Hsi's ceremonial rites.74 The next apparent influence was on the writing of history.75 From the writings of the foremost ideologue of the dynastic change, Chŏng Tojŏn, for instance, we can find only glimpses of Neo-Confucian ideas, including his introduction of Chou Tun-i's diagram of the Great Ultimate (t'ai-chi).76

Other than this peripheral evidence of Neo-Confucian borrowings, all obviously in the first stage of the
learning process, we do not have any hard evidence to call the intellectual climate of late Koryŏ Neo-Confucian. Indeed, the names of Chu Hsi and the Ch'eng brothers are found a few times in the anti-superstition discussions of 1391-1392, as recorded in the Koryŏ-sa. Both are found in a similar context. For instance, one reads:

Ever since Mencius fought back Yang-chu and Mo-tzu to revere Confucius, Master Tung of Han, Master Han of T'ang, Masters Ch'eng and Chu of Sung had all supported this Way and fought against heterodoxy, leaving their names in history as the superior men of the world. Wang An-shih, Chang T'ien-chueh and others boosted Buddhism and changed customs to leave their names in history as the amoral men (min) of the world.77

All there is, is the simple lineage of Confucian orthodox tradition with no evidence of Chu Hsi's or any other Neo-Confucian philosopher's relevancy to the intellectual climate of fourteenth-century Korea.

Rather the main current in the anti-superstition argument in the last years of Koryŏ seems to parallel Han Yu, whose anti-Buddhistic, or more aptly anti-superstition, argument was reviewed earlier in this chapter. Just as Han Yu started a staunch fight against the superstition and the degeneration of public morality of late T'ang China, the Korean Confucians opened their attack on the same ills they found in Koryŏ. And just as Han Yu did
not deviate much from Tung Chung-shu in his view of portents, Chŏng Tojŏn and his followers continued in general to follow Tung's philosophy of nature and man.

In the next chapter I will try to show in detail that Chŏng Tojŏn was not Neo-Confucian, and why it makes more historical sense to set the time for the beginning of the Neo-Confucian politics in Korea to the reign of King Songjong, one hundred years later than Chŏng Tojŏn and his followers.

C. Traditional Exorcisms in the Early Yi Period

Before we get into the development of Confucian portentology and its relation to political and intellectual development in the early Yi Korea, it will be helpful to review non-Confucian attitudes toward portents in the period---How did Buddhist and indigenous-Taoist attitudes fare in the early years of Yi Korea?

In ancient Korea shamans played a dominant role in society. In the beginning they were kings, priests, and physicians or medicine-men, but they quickly lost political supremacy, remaining for some time as physician-prophet-priests. A drastic change came with the first contact with the higher culture of China, especially in the garb of Buddhism.

The transition from an oral tradition to written
knowledge in Korea occurred with the coming of the Chinese culture. This also meant the erosion of the intellectual dominance of shamans. By the time of Unified Silla the division of labor among different specialties in the shamanistic tradition was well under way---Buddhist monks taking over the priesthood, astronomers emerging as an independent group who read the meaning of Heavenly phenomena, and geomancer-futurologists busying themselves with interpreting the structure of the earthly contours and predicting dynastic cycles. All of them remained strong intellectual factors throughout the Koryŏ period until the Confucian dominance at the dynastic change.

**Buddhism: Still Strong in Early Yi Korea**

The founder of the Yi dynasty, Yi Sŏnggye (1335-1408; r. 1392-1398), was a devout believer in Buddhism well before the foundation of his dynasty. His name is even listed as a lay follower of famous monks of the late Koryŏ period such as T'ægeo (1301-1382) and Naong (1320-1376), and he had very close contact with Muhak (1327-1405), the recognized successor of Naong. On his first birthday celebration as king in the tenth month of 1392, only three months after the birth of the Yi dynasty, Muhak was appointed Royal Preceptor. And Monk Muhak was to play perhaps the most important role, as we shall soon see, in the
dynasty's decision to build its new capital in present-day Seoul. 79

Muhak's appointment to the Royal Preceptorship (wang-sa) by itself is a remarkable development in Korean Buddhist history and the intellectual tradition of the period, because we know that the last king of Koryo could not appoint his favorite monk to the same position due to the militant opposition of Confucian scholars in 1390. 80 So during the first two reign periods of the Yi dynasty, Buddhism prevailed more or less in the exorcism of portents with Taoist exorcisms closely following it in importance. The suppression of Buddhism was not unknown, but it was minimal, mostly in terms of suppressing the more flagrant economic sprawl of temples and the moral degeneration of monks, as shown, for instance, by the directive of the throne in 1397 (T'aejo 6). 81

The first decade of the Yi dynasty turned back the clock to the status quo ante in the days of Yi Saek's selective criticism of Buddhist corruption, both individual and institutional. This obviously was not what the militant Confucians led by Ch'ong Tojon wanted. Still, the frustrations felt by the militant young scholars of late Koryo were handsomely compensated in their maturer ages with enormous career opportunities in government and economic gains opened for them by the new dynasty.

196
Ranked among the first group of meritorious subjects of the new dynasty, Chŏng Tojŏn played a key role in the formulation of all the governmental institutions according to the blueprint outlined in his Chosŏn kyŏngguk-chŏn. Yet his dissatisfaction with the lukewarm attitude of the new dynasty toward Buddhism is expressed in the strong words he used in his writing on Buddhism (Pulssi chappyŏn) in 1398, the very year he was killed after his unsuccessful confrontation with Yi Pangwŏn, later King T'aejong. In his letter to Kwon Kŭn (1352-1409), Chŏng expressed his last wish: "Even if what I said in this book is not realized now, I would be happy in the other world after death if this be made known to later generations."82

Chŏng Tojŏn's death opened the door for the rise to power by Yi Pangwŏn, paving the way of his march to the throne. It also established Kwon Kŭn as the next leading scholar of the new dynasty.

Kwon Kŭn (1352-1409), unlike Chŏng Tojŏn, was from a well-established family that was involved deeply with the latter-day Buddhism. For instance, Kwon Tan, his great great grandfather, retired as a monk in 1311 (Ch'ungsŏn'3), the year when Kwon Pu, Tan's son, went to Yuan China to purchase a Buddhist tripitaka.83 In academic training, too, Kwon Kŭn was more closely related to the established scholars of the old dynasty as a student of
Yi Saek and Chŏng Mongju. Indeed, his pen name, Yangch'on, was given to him by Yi Saek. Understandably Kwon Kūn's support of the Yi house came only in the eleventh hour, and his anti-Buddhism was essentially that of Yi Saek. Like his teacher, Yi Saek, he wrote many eulogistic pieces favorably related to Buddhism. ⁸⁴

King T'aejong (r. 1400-1418) was not as anti-Buddhist as later Confucian historians tried to depict him, a description some modern scholars tend to accept. ⁸⁵ While it is true that some serious efforts to control Buddhistic institutions started during the reign of this king, his basic attitude was not far from Yi Saek's conservative reformism. As the studies by Yi Sangbaek and Han Ugun show, the efforts to suppress Buddhism at the dynastic change and in the early Yi period had little to do with the "newly introduced Chu Hsi-ism," but more with a desire to take over the wealth of the Buddhist institutions, and thus to consolidate the royal prerogatives. ⁸⁶ King T'aejong's attitude toward Buddhism as religion was ambivalent at best:

About the services to immortals and Buddha, I do not know very much. Yet their ineffectiveness should be very clear. What benefits can there be? Nevertheless, because two former kings both believed in them, we cannot eradicate them completely. Taking this into con-
sideration, it is now ordered that a report be made to me as to which of them can be re­moved. 87

In 1405 T'aejong issued a decree fixing the number of slaves for different Buddhist temples, thus actually limiting the land-holdings for Buddhist institutions. This economic straightjacket was much lamented by monks and a protest was submitted to the throne the following year, to no avail. 88 In 1406 the king took another step to limit the number of temples as well as the number of slaves and the amount of land each temple could own. 89

With all these suppressive moves against Buddhism, there is no evidence that official Buddhist exorcisms of portents fell into disuse in a similar manner. As Han Ugun's study pointed out, and as we have seen above, the Confucian rites introduced in the last years of Koryo were not enough to satisfy the religious demands of the Koreans. 90 And it was mainly due to his officials' strong objections that T'aejong decided in 1401 to give his eight-year-old prince a Confucian education at the national college instead of having him tutored by a Buddhist monk, as he originally planned following Koryo practices. 91 In the long section on droughts in Chapter II, we have already discussed the Buddhistic rain prayers which were the dominant mode of response to portents in the early Yi period, at least until 1411. T'aejong
stopped a typical rain prayer planned at a Buddhist temple in that year on grounds of impropriety, but it was resumed two years later and continued until the reign of King Sŏngjong (r. 1470-1494).

In fact the Buddhist response to portents remained a dominant feature of fifteenth-century Korea, largely due to the favorable inclinations shown by Kings Sejong and Sejo. King Sejong (r. 1419-1450) maintained the moderately anti-Buddhist policy of his father, T'aejong, in the early years of his reign. Gradually his view of Buddhism became more and more favorably inclined toward the later years of his reign. This changing attitude is well explained by the Sillok historians:

Due to illness His Majesty in his later years could not meet with ranking officials often enough. And two princes Kwangp'yŏng and P'yŏng-wŏn died in succession; furthermore, Queen Sohyŏn died. His Majesty became very lonesome. Thereupon Prince Suyang and Prince Anp'yŏng, who were misguided by the wicked teachings of Buddhism, led His Majesty to build a Buddhist hall on the corner of the palace compound. There was no one official in the nation who did not remonstrate against it in extreme words. Yet they could not change Heaven, thus leaving a speck on His sacred virtue. This indeed was due to the misguidance by the two princes.92

At least once King Sejong had openly and poignantly criti-
oized Confucian scholars for their hypocrisy in being Buddhist at home and presenting exclusively Confucian arguments in court. 93

Buddhism had its last great defender in the strong reign of King Sejo (r. 1455-1468), who openly declared that the Buddhist way was far superior to the Confucian way. 94 During the reign of his father, Sejong, he, as Prince Suyang, was the leading guide in his father's growing interest in Buddhism. He led many Buddhist exorcisms during his father's reign, such as the rain prayers at Hŭngch'ŏn-sa Temple in 1449 (Sejong 31). 95 And his continued indulgence in Buddhistic practices during the reign of his brother, King Munjong (r. 1451-1452), almost got him into a criminal case under the pressing of remonstrators. 96

How his sufferings, inflicted by the constant barrage of Confucian scholars, influenced his later attitude toward these scholars during and after his coup of 1453 is only a matter of speculation. At any rate, his heavy inclination toward Buddhism was too much even for Chŏng Inji, one of the most illustrious of the merit subjects behind his coup. This inclination caused the first serious conflict between Chŏng and the king in 1458 (Sejo 4), and resulting in Chŏng's punishment. 97 It was against the background of this pro-Buddhist penchant of King Sejo
that we find so often during his reign the records of auspices in the Buddhist tradition such as sarira and sweet dew, as we have seen in the last sections of Chapter II.

It was not until the next reign, that of King Sŏngjong, (r. 1470-1494), that Buddhism suffered an irreparable setback as the major response to portents. King Sŏngjong, however, could not do much about the deep devotion of his mother to Buddhism. And there are many more cases of a similar involvement of court ladies in Buddhist practice. Thereafter, one outstanding example being the short but energetic revival of Buddhism by the Monk P'ou and his patron, Queen Munjŏng, mother of King Myŏngjong (r. 1546-1567). All in all, Buddhism after Sŏngjong remained a popular religion among the people, but was completely rejected as an official response to portents.

**Geomancy and Futurology**

If exorcism in any religious form is a direct response to individual portents, geomancy (**p'ungsu** or **chiri**) and futurology (**toch'am**) were two forms of long-range response to portents in general. Geomancy can be seen as man's effort to escape from the portended or from any adverse predictions, and futurology as man's search for freedom from portents. Until the early Yi period these
two modes of long-range response to portents went hand in hand in the venerable tradition of Tosŏn, a late Silla monk and grand master of the trade. Tosŏn's tradition of geomancy-futurology was repeatedly exhorted throughout the latter half of Koryŏ after Myoch’ŏng's abortive effort in the 1120's, often in efforts to move the capital in search of a portent-free dynastic rejuvenation.

An immediately apparent fact is that up to the early Yi period geomancy-futurology was a tradition primarily preserved by the Buddhist monks—an example of the syncretic Korean Buddhism that had successfully integrated the indigenous Korean beliefs in the Three Kingdoms period and the geomancy-futurology developed in the Han and T'ang China. The key figures in Koryŏ efforts to move the capital were Myoch’ŏng, Pou, and Sindon—all Buddhist monks. And this tradition of Tosŏn found its prominent exponents in the Yi period among Buddhists, such as Muhak, Hyujŏng, and Nam Sago. Muhak of course was the monk who, as Royal Preceptor for the first Yi king, played a key role in the move of the Yi capital. Hyujŏng (1520-1604), whose fame is well established both in Korean Buddhism and in the history of the Hideyoshi Invasions for his distinguished service as a Buddhist militia leader, was also the author of the Secret Teaching of Teacher Sŏsan (Sŏsan taesa pigyŏl), a crystal-ball
text of the late Yi period. Nam Sago (fl. 1560's) learned his trade in this area from a Buddhist monk and established his fame as master of clairvoyance in many contemporary writings, including Yi I's memoirs. ⁹⁹

Though these two arts were practised together throughout the Koryo period, they are properly quite distinct as systematic attempts to read the future. Geomancy, as the original word chiri means, tries to decipher the meaning of the pattern of the earth (chiri in the literal sense), whereas futurology (toch'am) is an effort to foretell the shift in the mandate of Heaven. In China and Korea, every dynastic founder tried to justify his new dynasty in futurologic terms, as we can see in the foundation of Koryo dynasty well ahead of its actual beginning. ¹⁰⁰ Since new order necessarily begins with the demise of old order, futurology is always related to eschatology, a tendency that drove some Chinese emperors, including Yang-ti of the Sui dynasty, and officials to frown upon the toch' am writings. ¹⁰¹ This was also good enough reason for the earlier kings of the Yi period to shun it. Furthermore the distinction between geomancy and futurology was to become more and more clear in the early Yi period, a separation that seems to have had an adverse effect for both of the "sciences," but especially for futurology.
When the founder of the Yi dynasty wished to move his capital to a new place soon after the birth of his dynasty, it was a response in accordance with the tradition of Toson, that is to say, the combined tradition of geomancy and futurology. This episode about the selection of the new capital snowballed through the early Yi period and developed an array of fantastic stories. All stories had at least one thing in common—the dynastic change was predicted long before it actually occurred. Although it is very doubtful that there was any accurate prediction of the family name of the new dynasty, prediction of the impending end of the Koryo dynasty might have been known to people well before the end of the Koryo period.

The first major effort to build a new capital started in early 1393, when King T'aejo, accompanied by high officials and Monk Muhak, his Royal Preceptor, went to Mount Kyeryong on a five-day survey trip. At the end of the same year, however, the king ordered a halt to the construction, consenting to the dispute raised against it by Ha Yun, one of the leading merit subjects of the new dynasty. He argued that the place was so far toward the south of the country and that it failed to meet the conditions prescribed in the geomancy text written by Hu Shun-shen of Sung China. This episode had a lasting influ-
ence in Korean history: first, Mount Kyeryong became the mecca of miscellaneous popular religions largely inspired by Chōnggam-nok, a futurology classic apparently compiled after this incident. Second, the geomancy text of Hu Shun-shen thereafter became a standard text in examining geomancers in the state examinations in Yi dynasty. 104

Ha Yun in his turn recommended Muak (the western part of Seoul) as the site for the new capital, and the king sent high officials on an actual survey in the second month of 1394. As it turned out, however, Ha Yun was alone in supporting the place as a capital; the opinions of the high officials all differed on the problems of geomancy-futurology. 105 The first thing they had to handle seemed to be to clear up the theoretical muddle in the art of geomancy-futurology. It was exactly for this purpose that King T'aejo, in the seventh month of the year, ordered the establishment of a temporary Directorate General for the Revision of Yin-yang (Ümyang sanjōng togam) including all these officials. 106 In cooperation with the members of the Office of Astronomy, the task of the Directorate was to compare all the writings on geomancy and futurology available to find the differences and discrepancies among them and to distinguish right from wrong. Only after this was done, did the business of setting the new capital seem to progress smoothly.
A third site, Hanyang (present Seoul), was chosen and construction started within the same year. On the basis of futurologic predictions, the government moved to Hanyang in the fall, well before major work had begun.

Portents seem to have had little to do with the initial move from the old capital of Koryo to Hanyang. From the Sillok we can find only a few portents recorded for this early year in the new dynasty, perhaps because of an expectable lack of organization in the office in charge of such observations and probably because of the reluctance of officials to report inauspicious portents in the earlier years of the new dynasty. Thus the move of the capital to Hanyang was mostly a matter of geomancy-futurology, and as such only indirectly related to portents.

However, a direct relationship between portents and the moving the capital was soon to be found in the return of the capital from Hanyang back to the old Koryo capital in 1399 (Chongjong 1). This move is explained in the Sillok:

The Office of Astronomy memorialized to the throne, "A horde of crows gathered to chirp, wild magpies came to build nests, and other portents occurred in succession. Your Majesty must self-cultivate to exorcise these portents, and must also escape by moving your residence." So the king summoned royal family members and
ministers including Left State Councillor Cho Chun to show them the memorial presented by the Office of Astronomy. Then the king asked them whether the proposed move to another place was to be carried out or not. All answered affirmatively. Then he asked where they should move. Their answer was that the old capital had palaces and houses of officials intact, whereas other places in the capital province area did not have such accommodations for officials and guard-soldiers to stay.\textsuperscript{107}

This explanation for moving back to the old Koryŏ capital is admittedly not sufficient; the major reason behind the return to the old city was actually the power struggle of the preceding year, which resulted in the death of the princes and Chŏng Tojon. This fratricide in the royal family in the still-insecure days of the fledgling dynasty must have been appalling to many people, who probably thought about the possible relation between the move of the capital three years before and the ensuing bloody conflict.

However, King T'aejong, who was the man behind this bloodshed, decided in 1405 to move the capital back to Hanyang, brushing aside his officials' expressed opposition on the grounds of the famine of that year.\textsuperscript{108} Though discussion of moving the capital was not totally unknown thereafter in Korean history,\textsuperscript{109} Hanyang remained the capital of the country to the present.
Through the controversies about the move of the capital of the new dynasty, one thing pertinent to our discussion emerges. That is the first obvious separation of geomancy and futurology. When King T'aejo was on his survey to Muak as a prospective capital in the eighth month of 1394, Yun Sindal, Superintendent of the Office of Astronomy, and Yu Hanu, Deputy Chief of the Office, presented their professional opinion that the place was not adequate as a capital of the country. But they failed to give any alternate place when the monarch asked them to do so:

His Majesty became furious and said, "While serving in the Office of Astronomy, you say that you do not know. Whom do you think you can deceive? Did you not hear of the theory of the diminishing viṣṇu viśe of Songdo Koryo capital?" Hanu answered, "This is a theory in the tradition of futurology. Because your subject has only studied geomancy, he does not know of futurology."

This seems to be the earliest open statement that geomancy and futurology are two different areas, and we can take it as a watershed in the history of Korea's geomancy-futurology tradition.

King T'aejong is well-known in Korean history for his active anti-superstition movement, and the main efforts he exerted in this direction were precisely upon
the fantastic writings of futurologic theories. One of the first things he did after he ascended the throne in 1400 was to prohibit such eschatology-oriented writings, which received universal support from his Confucian scholar-officials. T'aejong's struggle against futurology thoroughly discredited the legend that had supposedly predicted well before 1392 the birth of a new dynasty named Yi. In 1417 (T'aejong 17) he ordered all such writings to be submitted to the government and ordered the Office of Astronomy to burn them. Any violators of the decree were to be punished according to the existing stipulations applicable to the writings of "wicked documents," and the reporter of any such offence was to receive the violator's possessions as a reward.

One month later, we read, two boxes of futurology books that had been kept by the Office of Astronomy were put into an incinerator.

Officially futurology as an art of clairvoyance disappeared from any serious discussions in government. It went underground at this point, thus producing a strong popular tradition of eschatologic-millenarian ideas and visions. This popular tradition is still very much alive, notably in the cult of Chōnggam-nok (Chōng's Predictions) and Mount Kyeryong, where a police raid was made as recently as the spring of 1976 to round up dozens of
"pseudo-religious movements." 115

Another significant aspect of the official ban of the simultaneous practice of geomancy and futurology was the redefinition of the career of these professionals, limiting them strictly to the practice of geomancy. Geomancy, in comparison with futurology, is a much more systematic learning, and the practitioners needed much experience and some erudition. This redefinition might have caused the achievement of a higher degree of professionalism with more technical knowledge on the part of geomancers, but it also stripped away much of the lustre the profession had enjoyed before. Gradually geomancers became more and more deeply involved in the selection of burial sites for the royal and other demanding families, as the Confucian tradition of ancestor-worship grew.

Shamans and Taoists

By the start of the Yi dynasty, the shamans' function was primarily limited to healing or rather exorcising human diseases. Though human diseases were still considered a major portent, it was largely a personal matter which had little to do with any governmental actions. Beyond this, the shamans were allowed, in the early Yi period, to continue only one important official role traditionally given to them, namely praying for rain.
As we have discussed earlier in the section on droughts in Chapter II, the shamans at the time were probably mobilized in large numbers through the Hall of the Nation's Shamans (Kungmu-dang). As a leftover from the Koryŏ dynasty, this institution came under mild attack by Confucian scholars, as we can see from the statements by the Office of Censor-General in 1426 (Sejong 8). This mild criticism itself seems to be proof enough to indicate the negligible status of the Office of the Nation's Shamans at the time, and King Sejong did not even accept the remonstrance of the censors on the grounds of reverence to established tradition.116

Taoists did not fare any better than the shamans in the early Yi period. Nevertheless, Taoists had an advantage in their organized religion, which the shamans did not have. Throughout Koryŏ period many Taoist offices were instituted and abolished by the government, sometimes only for temporary purposes to exorcise certain specific portents, and at other times for more permanent aims. The more important of them included Pogwŏn Palace, Sin'gyŏk Hall, Hall of Nine Luminaries (Kuyo-dang), Sojŏn Bureau, Taech'ŏng Pavilion, Ch'ŏnggye Office for Star-Worship, and others. At the very outset of the Yi dynasty King T'aejo apparently abolished all of them except the Office for Taoist Affairs or Sogyŏk-chŏn.117
However the purging of Taoist remnants in the early years of the Yi dynasty was not as thorough as the initial report indicates. At least one additional Taoist institution survived the first wave of abolition, for we find in 1397 (T'aejo 6) that T'aeil-jon, a Taoist office to worship the Great Dipper Star, was incorporated into Sogyok-chon. Then Taech'ong Pavilion, officially abolished, reemerged sometime in the early years of King T'aejong's reign, as T'aejong was a confessed worshipper of one important star, out of many stars worshipped by Taoists, namely the Northern Dipper or the Great Bear. This office is described later as if it were meant for worshipping the Great Heavenly Lord (ch'ŏnhwang taeje) and the Pole Star and appears to have been abolished in 1422 (Sejong 4), only months after T'aejong's death.

The major exorcisms of portents in early Yi Korea were administered through a mixture of shamanistic, Taoistic, Buddhistic, and Confucian routines. All the formal Taoistic rituals were under the control of this Office of Taoist Affairs (Sogyŏk-chŏn) until the office itself faded away at the end of the sixteenth century, probably after the Hideyoshi Invasions. Such a long survival of formal Taoistic exorcisms of portents in the growing Confucian climate of the early Yi period, was a rather remarkable phenomenon. The irony here was that this tenacious
survival owed much to the failure of Taoism in Korea.

From its introduction in the Three Kingdoms period, Taoism as a religious movement was a failure, partly because it had little to offer to the indigenous shamanistic tradition and partly because it was not as evangelistic as Buddhism. Its affinity to the indigenous pantheon only made the indigenous tradition prosper by borrowing whatever new elements Taoism offered, while Buddhism with its differences from the indigenous tradition posed a serious intellectual tension, as we can see in the episode of Ich'adon's martyrdom.\textsuperscript{121} Although we see some institutional development, if minor, during the Koryō period, Taoism in the early Yi period survived only in a couple of offices with only a handful of practising priests (toryu or tosa), whereas the shamans, mobilized in times of droughts, numbered well over a hundred and the Buddhist monks far outnumbered these. It was this failure of Taoism in Korea that made its longer survival in the official exorcisms possible, for it failed to present any ideological threat to the intellectual milieu and did not pose any serious financial burden on the government.

Furthermore the Confucian scholars of the period were ambivalent on the question of worshipping Heaven and Heavenly stars, which were closely identified with
Taoism. Such worship, sanctioned by Tung Chung-shu, was not seriously questioned by the Yi Confucian scholars, and Taoism-related ideas of worshipping Tan'gun, the legendary founder of the first Korean state, and sacrificing to Heaven at the Temple of Heaven were not totally discredited in the period. Surely doubts were growing, and we have a remark by King Sejong in 1425 (Sejong 7) on the matter:

The teachings of Taoism and Buddhism are not at all worth believing. Those of Taoism are particularly absurd. The Sogyok-chon in our country is for Taoism. Nevertheless, the successive reigns have continued this until today, because the worship of stars is an important matter. 122

In the middle of the growing doubts, the Office of Taoist Affairs made a slight name change from Sogyok-chon to Sogyok-so in 1466 (Sejo 12). 123 Its abolition was discussed in 1484 (Songjong 15) apparently without result. 124 Then King Songjong in 1490 (Songjong 21) proposed the abolition of the Office of Taoist Affairs, saying, at the appearance of a comet in that year, that the exorcism of such a portent should be done by self-cultivation and not by Taoistic prayers. Somehow the monarch's initiative was received without any response from his officials, and the matter obviously was simply dropped with no results. 125 Then two years after this,
we find King Sŏngjong was not ready to abolish the Office because he could not suddenly discard what had been kept by the dynastic ancestors all along. 126

In 1506, the last year of King Yŏnsan's reign, the Office of Taoist Affairs was formally abolished, although in actuality its reduced services were continued. 127 When the king was expelled in that year, almost everything he had done was immediately discredited. Naturally the Office of Taoist Affairs was fully reinstated after the restoration of King Chungjong. 128 Since the rebirth of the Office was possible only because of the wholesale recovery of the status quo ante, not from any real needs, opposition to the Taoist office was quick to appear. The criticism which surfaced in 1511 (Chungjong 6) was especially strong, coming from the Office of Special Counselors, State Council, Ministry of Army and others, and the question was seriously discussed on several occasions in the royal lectures in the early summer. The opinions expressed, as recorded in the Sillok, show that the king was about the only one who gave support to Taoist institution, while all of his officials raised clear voices in opposition. The monarch himself admitted that it was "the wrong way to fight portents," yet he confessed he would rather not destroy impulsively the traditional institution codified in the dynastic constitution (taejon). 129
another wave of criticism against the Taoist practices of exorcising portents started in the summer of 1518 (Chungjong 13) and continued through the early fall, gathering momentum among all walks of the officialdom. The high point of this drama, which marks a very important point in Korean history in relation to the rise and fall of Cho Kwangjo, is depicted by a contemporary scholar Kim Chongguk (1485-1541):

In the year of muin (=1518) the two offices of the Special Counselors and Royal Decrees took turns in memorializing the throne on the abolition of the Office of Taoist Affairs. The ministers and other officials also came out to support them. For months, however, the throne did not budge. Thereupon First Counselor Cho Kwangjo asked for an audience to urge strongly the throne. The next day he again led his fellow officials in their four memorials which were submitted while they were prostrate in the court yard. When the throne persistently refused to grant it, he told the royal secretaries, "Without His Majesty's permission (for the abolition), we shall never retire today." Night fell and all the censors retired. But Cho Kwangjo, with a look of determination, told his fellows, "It is already late today, and the censors have all retired. Yet we have to do our best, even at the risk of being punished for it. We shall try to change Heaven's mind, even if we have to stay all through the night." Their memorials
continued to be submitted until the roosters' crying was heard. The king at last said, "Why can't I allow this! The only reason is that it has been with us so long, and this very fact makes it difficult for me to decide. Tomorrow I shall discuss the matter with the ministers to do away with it." At that time the royal secretaries and others were asleep, leaning against their tables. All were tired and felt disgusted. Because the secret inner palace was continuously disturbed all night due to the frequent comings and goings of the intermediaries carrying the memorials and the king's answers, could His Majesty be free from the feeling of disgust?\textsuperscript{130}

Thus Cho Kwangjo succeeded in abolishing the Office of Taoist Affairs. But his high-principled arguments started to turn the once-favorably inclined king away from the young radicals, thus rapidly pushing the situation toward the bloody literati purge of 1519 (Chungjong 14). All of Cho's group fell victim to this tumultuous turn in political fortune, and soon thereafter the Office of Taoist Affairs was reestablished by the king in spite of the opposition raised by other officials. King Chungjong's answer to their opposition was that he could not but do what he did because of the illness of his mother.\textsuperscript{131}

The role of the Office of Taoist Affairs in the early Yi period is not to be overemphasized. After all, it was there largely because it had been there for so many years. As we have seen in Chapter II, and above,
the Taoistic office remained a neglected organ of the government during the first half of the Yi period. In the final analysis, Cho Kwangjo's struggle for the abolition of this office was far more significant in Yi history than the survival of the office itself. Taoistic practices in the popular culture in Korea, however, did not in any degree suffer from the official insignificance of the Office of Taoist Affairs. As James Gale pointed out fifty some years ago, "Taoist thoughts occupy so great a place in the understanding and imagination of the Korean," particularly in the popular culture of traditional Korea.132

D. Portents and Korean Kingship

A View of the Delegated Authority of Korean Kingship

Because of the well-known fact that the Korean kings, in the Yi period in particular, sought investiture from the Chinese emperors and the fact that they expressed a ritual subservience in their diplomatic exchanges with China, scholars today believe that the authority of the Yi kings in Korea was a kind of delegated authority assigned to the Yi house by the Son of Heaven, i.e., the emperor of China. The following are only two examples of such a view.
The rulers of the petty Korean nations came to view investiture by the emperor of China, the Son of Heaven, as necessary to their right to rule, or as a delegation by the world ruler of the authority he possessed from Heaven.133

* * *

Technically, the Korean king, ruling under the Chinese emperor, was responsible to him, and the emperor alone was responsible to Heaven for the Chinese realm and its tributary states. This point was the subject of much argument between Yi kings and their officials.134

In his study of early Yi history, Pow-key Sohn considered the Korean monarch as a "China-sanctioned" "feudal lord," who owed his power, in principle, to China's son of Heaven.135

This reasoning, which has been widely held in the interpretation of Korea's relations with China, particularly in the Yi period, seemed to have been corroborated by the recent history of Korea. The Korean court and high officials changed sides with each of the Big Powers in their confused responses to the incoming waves of "modernization" after the "opening" of Korea in 1876. This revealed an attitude of dependency that seemed to be an idiosyncracy of the Korean people, with its historical roots well established in the Yi subservience to China. Scholars and intellectuals in Korea and Japan were quick
to find the term, *sadae* ("to serve the big"), from the traditional relations between Korea and China, and to coin a new word, *sadae chuüi* (sadae-ism) to name such an attitude.

It is true that there was a relation of subservience. In official correspondence Korean kings referred to themselves as the subjects of Chinese emperors, and tributary missions were sent with all the motions of great reverence.\(^{136}\) It is also true that the Koreans in the Yi period called the Chinese emperors "Son of Heaven" in Korea. Thus a Japanese scholar of Korean history made this demeaning comment:\(^{136}\)

The idea of the Son of Heaven in the peninsula \(\text{Korea}\) is derived largely from Chu Hsi-ism. While the Japanese successfully absorbed Chu Hsi-ism after digesting it, the people of the peninsula could not digest it, thus absorbing the formalities instead of the spirit therein. So they took the Son of Heaven for the Chinese in China as their own Son of Heaven.\(^{137}\)

Although the view of the delegated authority of Korean kingship is convincing, with the given evidence, when we turn our eyes to the enormity of portent literature in Korean history, we cannot but feel suspicious of this view. Only the Son of Heaven in China, in theory, could be held responsible for portents---Heaven's wrath
and pleasure with man's doings under Heaven, according to Tung Chung-shu. Then how did the Koreans of the Yi period justify their application of portentology to Korean politics? This can be answered better by considering several pertinent problems: the theory of field allocation in Korea, the problem of Heaven worship, the worship of Tan'gun as the prime ancestor of the Korean people, and the Korean use of the term "mandate of Heaven," etc.

**The Theory of Field Allocation**

Chinese portentology gave leeway for the Koreans to have their share of portent politics, namely the theory of field allocation (punya, or fen-ye). According to the theory, developed in early Han or pre-Han China, different areas of the sky corresponded to different areas on the earth; i.e., the total areas known to the Chinese of the period, and Korea was not considered as an area within the Chinese area proper. Eventually the Koreans could "discover" their own area of the sky and could apply any unusual happenings in that area of the sky to the situations in Korea. By using this idea Koreans could interpret very limited number of the observed portents as portending for Korea. Indeed in the early period of the Yi dynasty, notably in the reign of King T'aejong, this theory seems to have gained considerable
ascendancy.

In the third year of T'aejong (1403), an observation reported that the moon made contact with a fixed star. The monarch summoned the Superintendent of the Office of Astronomy to inquire into the meaning of this portent. The superintendent's answer was that the incident happened in the area of the yu direction (=west), thus having nothing to do with Korea. Despite such an interpretation, based upon the theory of field allocation by the highest official of the Office of Astronomy, King T'aejong ordered it to be used as an opportunity for self-cultivation and announced an appeal for counsel. In the seventh year of the same king (1407), a predicted solar eclipse failed to occur, which caused the king to speculate:

In the olden days it is said that there were failures of predicted eclipses. Since I am the king of a small country, this can probably happen even today if the Son of Heaven cultivates himself and repents in awe.

King T'aejong seems to have been well-acquainted with the theory of field allocation, probably from the Wen-hsien t'ung-k'ao, which he had once quoted as his source of authority. According to his reading, Korea corresponded to the mi and ki fields of the sky, the sixth and seventh hsiu (lunar mansions). Although slight changes can
be seen in later interpretations concerning the corresponding field in the sky for Korea, this view was to be upheld throughout the dynasty.\footnote{142}

Apparently this theory of field allocation was well established in the portentology of early Yi Korea, and the next king, Sejong, even decreed in 1425 that there should be no reports of any anomalous star movement in the foreign fields of the sky.\footnote{143} But even in this period of growing understanding of the theory of field allocation, the Koreans had not tried strictly to apply the theory to their interpretations of portents in general. On the contrary, the theory itself was losing influence so rapidly that in 1502 (Yönsan 8) a third state councillor said that the field of the sky corresponding to Korea was just the same as that corresponding to China.\footnote{144}

Throughout the dynastic existence of the Yi house, few if any portents were explained away as inapplicable to Korea on the grounds of the theory of field allocation. With only rare exceptions, this theory of corresponding areas between a certain part of heaven and Korea was largely ignored, even though the understanding of Chinese civilization by the Koreans rapidly matured during the same period. This perhaps has something to do with the suspicion about the theory of field allocation expressed by Chu Hsi himself.\footnote{145} Whatever the reasons, every
major portent observed in Korea was seen portending for Korea, or more precisely put, for the Korean monarch.

The Temple of Heaven

Acceptance of unusual natural phenomena as portents meant for the Korean monarch presupposes that the Korean monarch assumed a sort of *de facto* communication between himself and Heaven, without any intermediation by the Son of Heaven. More than this *de facto* practice of direct communication with Heaven, the early Yi kings had *in form* a direct route of communication with Heaven in the Temple of Heaven.

The Temple of Heaven has a long history in Korea. All the ancient states in Korea had some sort of direct appeal or prayer to Heaven, and Koryŏ modelled their practice on the Chinese system by building the Temple of Heaven. The Koryŏ kings' direct appeal to Heaven at the Temple of Heaven was not interrupted even under the almost colonial period of Yuan Chinese domination.

From the very beginning of the new dynasty, however, the practice of direct appeals to Heaven at the Temple was questioned. Only one month after the birth of the Yi dynasty, the Minister of Rites turned in a memorial to the throne proposing to do away with the Temple of Heaven on the grounds that it was the exclusive privilege
of the Son of Heaven. A similar criticism of the Temple was brought up soon thereafter by the Inspector General, who pointed out that improper rituals in place of self-cultivation would be harmful for the country. This memorial further pointed out the well-known formula that the only the Son of Heaven could worship and pray to Heaven, while the lords could only pray and worship to the mountains and rivers within their domains, thus implying that Korean monarch was a "lord" of the Empire in China.

The orthodox interpretations notwithstanding, the decision to repeal the traditional Temple of Heaven did not easily come. Rather, the orthodox view was challenged from time to time on the grounds of the long tradition of such practices in Korean history as well as on the pressing need to do something in emergency cases such as severe droughts. Thus in the third year of King T'aejo, in 1394, the Ministry of Rites advanced the cause of Temple of Heaven:

From the Three Kingdoms period we Koreans have been worshipping Heaven at the Temple of Heaven for a good harvest or for rain. Since such a long tradition can not be easily repealed, we propose to codify the practice as before, but under the changed name of wǒndan.

In Korea, as in China, the Temple of Heaven had been
called won'gu (round hill); the name here changed to wondan (round altar) with no change in meaning.

Vacillating attitudes toward the Temple of Heaven continued for many years. For instance, King T'aejong had at least once abolished the Temple only to start reconstruction of it when a new argument was presented in 1411. The new proposal, supported by First State Councillor Ha Yun, took the example of the Ch'in dynasty of China, which as a mere lordship in the western part of China had worshipped the White Heaven God, believed to control the western direction. So the Koreans' worship of the Blue Heaven God, who controls the east, the argument held, would be appropriate. In the very next year, however, the king stopped the rebuilding of the Temple of Heaven, taking more firmly the position that the Korean king was on par with the feudal lords of China and thus holding that his worship of Heaven would constitute a ritual impropriety.

King Sejong, son of T'aejong, inherited his father's view of the Temple of Heaven. In the early years he seems to have gone to the Temple of Heaven for worship. But very soon we find that he decided his view went counter to the propriety of rituals. Despite repeated appeals from his officials for the continuation of the Temple of Heaven, he remained more or less adamant in
his view thereafter. With the reign of King Sejo (r. 1455-1468) the Temple of Heaven was revived under the name hwan'gu (round hill), and Sejo went to pray at the Temple many times during his reign. However, his deviation from the practices of his father, Sejong, did not endure after his death, though at least once, in 1482 (Songjong 13), the Temple's revival was suggested and it actually was revived toward the end of the Yi period with the declaration of the Empire of Korea in 1897.

The Worship of Tan'gun the Founder of Korea

One of the major rationales behind the recurring question of the propriety of Heaven worship in Korea was the legend of Korea's founding by Tan'gun. According to the tradition, Tan'gun was born to the son of Heaven. One of the more influential champions of Heaven-worship in early Yi Korea, Pyŏn Kyeryang (1369-1430), wrote in his memorial to King T'aejong in 1416:

Now [Your Majesty] prayed for rain, but not to Heaven. And I do not think it is enough. Rain, sunshine, cold, warmth, and wind—all of these are what Heaven makes. . . . Prayer for rain by the people in olden days therefore was always done directly to Heaven. . . . We Koreans have good reason to worship Heaven, and not to repeal
... Korea was started by Tan'gun, who descended from Heaven, and not enfeoffed by the Son of Heaven.\textsuperscript{157} (Italics mine)

In the reign of King Sejo, Yang Sŏngji (1415-1482) firmly supported the throne's restoration of the Temple of Heaven with his view of Tan'gun similar to Pyŏn's.\textsuperscript{158}

In the beginning of the dynasty, the prestige of Tan'gun was not very high in Korea. As a matter of fact, Tan'gun was worshipped only as a minor ancestor of sorts, even lower than Kija, the legendary Chinese immigrant sage who supposedly started a later dynasty in Korea after the first state founded by Tan'gun. \textsuperscript{159} But emphasis seems to have been reversed in 1425 when King Sejong directed that higher respect be paid to Tan'gun than to Kija. Then five years later when Sejong heard that the tablet in the shrine of Kija in Pyŏngyang read "Kija: Viscount of Chosŏn," the king was not sure of the propriety of the wording, and suggested a further discussion and study of his own suggested revision to "Kija: Founder of Later Chosŏn." Though there was some opposition among lower echelon officials, all the high officials agreed to the throne's suggestion.\textsuperscript{160} Then in 1456 (Sejo 2) King Sejo added another touch of his own to the tablet by rewriting it from "Tan'gun of Chosŏn" to "Tan'gun: the Founder of Chosŏn."\textsuperscript{161}
By the time of Sejo, then, the stature of Tan'gun, as the founder of the nation, was greatly elevated; Kija became the introducer of "the civilization" to Korea. As he did with the worship at the Temple of Heaven, King Sejo did a notable service for the worship of Tan'gun in Korea. Unlike his Heaven-worship, which did not outlive the reign itself, the worship of Tan'gun was to last much longer. With the rise of a more rationalistic scholarship, particularly that of sirhak scholars such as Yi Ik, the legend of Tan'gun itself was to be seen as a mere legend with possible influence from Buddhist ideas. Nevertheless, the worship of Tan'gun continues even today, when we can discern several sects of Tan'gun worshippers among the current religious movements in Korea.

The Mandate of Heaven and Korean Kingship

As is evident from the story of Yi Sŏnggye's coup, as recorded in the Sillok and elsewhere, Yi and his followers claimed that what moved them was the Mandate of Heaven. Of course, the Mandate of Heaven they were invoking at this early stage of dynastic change was not through the Chinese emperor, for the Koreans could not get the formal recognition of China for eight years after the birth of the dynasty. Instead we are told that the support they claimed from the people was the
Mandate of Heaven, or Heaven's calling. Yi Sŏnggye once compared himself with the founder of Ming China for both of them came from humble families. Apparently this fact was the source of the later development of several legends on how the founders of Yi Korea and Ming China were similar in their origins. These legends do not show any subordinate relation between the two founders of Yi Korea and Ming China, although destiny always plays more favorably for the Chinese founder than for the Korean counterpart. As King Sejo once said, whenever "an emperor or a king" rose, it happened according to the Mandate of Heaven. More to the point is King T'aejong's comment:

My ascending to my place (the throne) was not what I sought to get, but what the Lord-on-High (sangje) mandated to me.

In their daily expressions throughout the Yi dynasty, Korean officials seem to have had little sense of logical contradictions in referring to their king with a variety of Heaven-related terms, including "Heaven's hearing" (ch'ŏnch'ŏng), "Heaven's face" (ch'ŏn'an), "Heaven's affection" (ch'ŏnch'ŏng), and so on. Therefore, when some of the Jurchens wished an audience with the Korean king, Sŏngjong, and called him "Emperor," the Korean officials did not bother to advise them otherwise.
This does not mean, however, that the meticulous sadae practice was altogether forgotten in the internal politics of Korea. To some people at least the sadae practice and its concomitants were disgraceful. For instance, a legend about the last words uttered by Im Che, (1549-1587), a famous poet of King Sunjo's reign, states:

Four barbarians of the east and eight barbarians of the north all had called themselves emperor. Yet Koreans had never claimed to be emperor. I would rather die then live in such a country.170

Such an attitude was highly exceptional. Perhaps this was the intellectual futility that many Koreans would feel even today and General Im Kyongop (1594-1646) felt with his lament—"Alas, I have to spend all my life in this small land!"171 But this is a pathetic aspect of human existence, and nothing peculiarly Korean.

If we look more closely into the sadae practice in traditional Korea, we can discern that the expressed respect was directed to the high civilization of China, but not necessarily toward the Chinese state or people. King Sejong, although his infatuation with Chinese civilization was very thorough, once remarked that the Chinese would eat each other in emergency, while the Koreans would never do that for survival.172 What was inculcated.
in the children of traditional Korea in the Yi period was that they should be proud of themselves as the sons of "so chunghwa" or "the lesser or smaller civilization," and not "small China," as is usually translated. 173

Sadae, first of all, was a political expediency with its immediate gains in the importation of the higher civilization of China. On the more practical level, this also guaranteed the national security and political stability of the ruling house in Korea. In the days when the relations between states were defined in Confucian para-familial terms, any recognition of such a relation was highly desirable for the Korean ruler. Thus the close political relation cemented by the marital relations with Yuan China is highly praised by Yi dynasty historians for "making the people of Korea enjoy a hundred years of peace." 174

It was with such an attitude that the high officials of King T'aejong in the early Yi period tried to arrange a marriage between the Korean crown prince and a Chinese princess. The proposed marriage was fully approved and supported by the throne only to be rescinded after a second thought, Ha Yun explained the motive for the proposal:

If we can earn the support of the big country, would there be anyone in the royal or other fam-
ilies who would dare try a rebellion? How can there be any rebels or enemies? The former dynasty had brought princesses from Yuan China, and for one hundred years there was no internal or external troubles whatsoever. This is what has been proven in the past. 175

If necessary for dynastic interests, Koreans did not hesitate to fabricate misleading reports or cover-ups to the Chinese envoys. As early as 679, King Minmu of Silla bribed a Chinese ambassador to make a false report on the nature of Sach'ŏnwang-sa Temple, which was originally built to pray for the expulsion of the invading T'ang army. 176 Such underhanded dealings continued, and when King T'aejong abdicated in favor of his son in 1418, he did not bother to get Chinese imperial consent first. 177

King Sejong (r. 1418-1450), who was more active than anyone in Yi history in introducing Chinese civilization, tried to keep his development of astronomical instruments secret from the visiting Chinese eyes. He once directed that his new armillary sphere, which perhaps was the first of its kind in Korea for accurate measurement of heavenly movements, be kept away from the Chinese visitors, because of its infringements of proper rites. 178 Since the observation of heavenly bodies was the sole privilege of the Son of Heaven, it was not appropriate for the Korean
ruler to watch the heavenly bodies and read the messages of Heaven. The same effort to hide the Koreans' actual observation of heavenly bodies from the Chinese envoys can be found in King Chungjong's reign in the early sixteenth century. Chungjong expressed the difficulty of keeping double standards---one for the internal use and the other to show to the Chinese visitors. At the time Koreans were using the same astronomical instruments installed at Poru-gak, Hŭngyŏng-gak, Kanŭi-dae and so on, and the same terminology such as T'aejo (for the first king of the dynasty), kyŏngyŏn (royal lecture) and so on ---all forbidden to be used by a "lord" under the Chinese emperor. The next year, 1538 (Chungjong 33), the king even suggested it would be easier if all such practices of infringements were stopped. But they did not cease and throughout the Yi period efforts were made to hide them from China.

It is true that the scholar-officials' dedication to Confucianism was rapidly growing throughout the early Yi period, but it does not necessarily mean the growth of Sinism, or China-centered thinking, at the same rate. As long as Confucianism and Sinism did not contradict each other, Koreans could comfortably follow both lines. But once there occurred any tension between the two, they stayed with Confucianism. The existence of so many "double
standards" we just saw above is nothing but an expression of Korea's complex relations with both Confucianism and China. 181

Koreans viewed their kingship coming from the mandate of Heaven, not as a delegated authority assigned by the investiture of the Chinese emperor. The investiture was somewhat similar to the Papal endorsement of secular authority, even though the analogy is admittedly poor because of the lack of any divine will in the Confucian view. 182 With all the "double standards," the development of portent politics in the Yi Korea, to which we shall turn in the next chapter, was a firm evidence that the Korean king was the son of Heaven in Korea as far as the Koreans of the period were concerned.
CHAPTER IV

PORTENT POLITICS AND THE RISE OF NEO-CONFUCIAN
PORTENTISM, 1392-1519

By the founding of the Yi dynasty in 1392, Confucianism had been accepted as the guiding spirit of politics. Like the protest of Han Yu in late T'ang China, the militant anti-superstition movement of the young Confucian scholars toward the end of the Koryo dynasty was an outburst of Confucian rationalism against religious practices. The first self-assertion of the Confucians over the then dominant religious milieu of Korea was the effort of Chŏng Tojŏn and a small group of a new breed of Confucian scholars who had liberated themselves from the subordinate role of Confucian scholars under Buddhist-Taoist dominance. It was a monumental event in the intellectual history of Korea, and the rise of the Yi dynasty in 1392 can be seen as a byproduct of this intellectual reorientation.

Nevertheless, we cannot call it Neo-Confucianism. For one thing, it has none of the sense of cosmic moral continuum we find in Chu Hsi's philosophy. Man’s relation to Heaven through the medium of an anthropomorphic "Heaven" remained that of Tung Chung-shu at the dynastic
change. Furthermore we can best explain the political developments of the latter half of the fifteenth century as symptoms of the emerging Neo-Confucians in Korean politics.

In this chapter then, especially by examining the evidence of portentology, we shall see the transition of the Confucian tradition of Korea into Neo-Confucianism in the early Yi period. The most prominent aspect of the changing attitudes toward portents in the first one hundred years of the Yi dynasty is the different views held by different kings of the period. Under the political structure of the dynasty, the opinion of a monarch was the most important factor in the political and intellectual outlook of the reign period. Yet this opinion was not purely individual proclivity, but rather a political phenomenon developed under the influence of the political circumstances and intellectual trends of the time.

Departing from this point, we shall probe the history of early Yi Korea as it unfolds in the triple helix of politics, political philosophy, and portentology. Efforts will be made to explain why different kings had different attitudes toward portents by seeing those attitudes against the background of the major political upheavals of the period as well as the overall intellec-
tual trends among the scholar-officialdom. Here what we will see are three transitions mutually interrelated—the shifting center of power from the grips of the monarch to the hands of the scholar-officials; the changing views of portents from "political portentology" to "ethocratic portentism"; and the metamorphosis of the Korean Confucian tradition into Neo-Confucianism.

A. The Growth of Confucianism and Portent Politics

---Kings T'aejong and Sejong

The Atavistic Legacy of Chōng Tojon

Many of the old edifices preserved in Seoul today bear the names originally given to them by Chōng Tojon when they were first erected with the birth of the new dynasty and the new capital. Just as he gave names to all the major physical structures of the new dynasty, Chōng designed the basic institutional structure of the new dynasty in his Chosŏn kyŏngguk chŏn (Codes for Governing the State of Chosŏn), which became the basis for the final compilation of Kyŏngguk taejong (Great Codes for Governing the State)—the basic codes for the Yi dynasty. Chōng Tojon was also the author of the first draft of the Koryŏ history, which undoubtedly became the basis for the eventual compilation of the official dynastic history, the Koryŏ-sa, as we have it today.
While Chōng Tojōn gave underlying form to the physical and institutional structure of the new dynasty, he failed in his efforts to impose his own ideological structure on it. We have already seen how his dedication to the anti-superstition movement in the last years of the Koryō succeeded in destroying the old dynasty but failed to prevail in the early Yi period. His failure to realize his ideals in the new dynasty is more evident when we recall the strength of "superstitious portentology" which flourished through the early reigns of the Yi dynasty.

His failure in this respect can also be seen from even a cursory look into his basic political philosophy. In his "Mind asks and Heaven responds," (Simmun ch'ŏndap), Chōng Tojōn compares the human body to the phenomenal world. Saying that the sun and moon are Heaven's eyes, and so on, he continues:

Heaven, earth, and a myriad of things are originally in one body. Therefore, if man's mind is right, then the mind of Heaven and earth is right. When man's ch'i is in harmony, the ch'i of Heaven and earth is also in harmony. This is why the portents occurring in Heaven and on earth are caused by success and failure in human affairs. When human efforts are successful, then portents harmoniously follow their regularities; when human affairs fail,
then portents reverse from normalcy. Why do you not take this opportunity for reflecting upon yourself to find out what you have to do, instead of blaming Heaven in haste?¹

Essentially this is the idea of Tung Chung-shu, as we have seen already. As the title of this essay implies, Chōng's idea of Heaven is anthropomorphic, just like Tung Chung-shu's. And his analogy of the human body extends even to the governmental structure—the king as head, state councillors as stomach and heart, censors as eyes and ears, and so on.²

Yet the most important aspect, which is again not foreign to Han Confucianism was Chōng Tojōn's efforts to limit royal power by placing the king above the actual execution of daily politics. To Chōng the only important thing a king must do well was "to find a good state councillor" to invest with total responsibility for actual government.³ His Kyōngje mun'gam (Mirror for Government) actually starts with the duties of the state councillor and ends with the desirable job requirements for local magistrates; it says nothing about the king's role in good government. The job of the state councillor is defined as follows:

Post of State Councillor: It is to harmonize yin and yang above, and to pacify people below. It is also to give peaceful life to people in

---
¹Essentialism and the Rule of Heaven, Ch. 5.
²Ch. 7.
³Ch. 8.
the country, and to placate and pacify the four barbarians outside the country. The nation's punishments and rewards are bound to it; and the rulings and orders all are originated from there. 4

Thus later in the same section, Chōng writes that "Political authority must reside with the state councillor," and continues:

The helm of power must not even for one day fail to reside in government. If not, it resides in the censorate. If not in the censorate, it resides in the palace. If the helm of power resides in the government, the nation will be under control. If it resides in the censorate, the country will be in chaos. If it is in the palace, the country will be in ruin. 5

For our discussion here the most important fact about Chōng' Tojŏn's definition of the responsibility of the state councillor is that the councillor, not the throne, is held responsible for the harmony of yin-yang, or the cause of all the occurrences of portents. Since the occurrences of portents had very much to do with the political problems for the Korean people of the time, this was merely to free the throne from any kind of political responsibility so as to guarantee the longevity and stability of the dynasty. Yet this seems to be too simple, for we also find in Chōng's writing a fear of dynastic
ruin through mediocre kings:

In the age of emperors, the ruler and his state councillors were all saints, thus making enlightened rule possible in harmonious cooperation. In the age of kings, the ruler and his state councillors were both men of wisdom, thus making the government prosperous and peaceful through their mutual assistance and hard efforts. In the age of conquerers, the ruler cannot match his state councillors. Yet by giving him complete responsibility, a temporary achievement in politics can be reached.6

What Chông Tojôn visualizes here is the idealized government of the legendary emperors and kings before the decline of the Chou dynasty in China; the age of conquerors here (p'ae, or p'a in Chinese) refers to all the historical dynasties since Ch'in. Then Chông makes a realistic evaluation of the problem: "When the ruler is a man of medium quality, the nation will be well ruled only when a right man is in state councillorship. If not, the nation will fall into chaos."7 All in all, the crux of Chông Tojôn's political philosophy was to give state councillor the highest actual authority of government. If his ideas had prevailed, Yi kingship might have developed more like the Japanese imperial institution. But it did not, and it was repeatedly invoked, but only atavistically by Confucian scholar-officials for the rest of
the period under our discussion.

Chŏng Tojŏn's support of the youngest son of King T'aejo, as crown prince in the first year of the new dynasty seems to be more understandable when we take this philosophy into account. Among the eight sons of the dynastic founder, T'aejo, the one who made the greatest contribution to the foundation of the new dynasty was Yi Pangwŏn, the fifth son, who administered the coup de grace to the dying dynasty of Koryŏ by masterminding the assassination of Chong Mongju. At the age of twenty-five, Yi Pangwŏn was already too old to fulfill the proper role of a king according to Chŏng's standard. Yi Pangsoek, the youngest prince and half-brother of Pangwŏn, on the other hand, was a favorite son of T'aejo, and was a young child, thus much more amenable to "proper" education along Chŏng's standard. Chŏng Tojŏn was duly appointed to the crucial position of teacher of the crown prince.

After years of bitterness over being alienated from the center of power, Prince Yi Pangwŏn rose in 1398 to the second adventure of his life. In his coup, Yi Pangwŏn killed Chŏng Tojŏn along with his student, the Crown Prince, as well as other followers of the young prince. And so died the Confucian ideal pursued by Chŏng Tojŏn---the idea of keeping the throne aloof from politics and making the throne amenable to the rules of new politics.
in the new dynasty.

This ideal of Chŏng Tojŏn, in the final analysis, was not unique to him. Ever since Confucius failed to reach the position of actually ruling a state, the ideal of the Confucian philosopher-king survived in its tradition. Confucian scholars could not close their eyes to the harsh political realities that rarely produced men of high intelligence and moral uprightness in the hereditary royal line. In such a state, the best alternative next to the ideal philosopher-king was to find man of wisdom for the highest appointed government post and to put actual responsibility of government on his shoulders. Chŏng Tojŏn too opted for the latter alternative, which can be characterized as a "constitutionalist" approach. He failed there, yet his vision of new politics recurred again and again in the later history of Yi Korea, and portents played a key role in this unfolding atavism.

The Monarchical Authoritarianism of King T'aejong

When Yi Pangwŏn assumed the throne in 1400 as King T'aejong, the third king of the Yi dynasty, he started to concentrate power in the throne, thus establishing a "monarchist" approach to politics in Yi dynasty. Unlike Chŏng Tojŏn's "constitutionalist" efforts to raise the state councillorship to the apex of political power,
King T'aejong's "monarchist" answer was to suppress exactly that. Where Chŏng had tried to push the throne to a higher plateau, above the realm of politics, T'aejong tried to pull himself down into the middle of political involvements by assuming every responsibility Chŏng had assigned to the state councillor. Whereas Chŏng had envisioned the state councillor's control of government through the six ministries that head the bureaucracy, T'aejong bypassed the State Council in most decision-making and applied directly to the ministries in the execution of policies. This weakening of the power of the state council and the strengthening of the six ministries was, of course, to buttress royal power at the expense of the state council, which was still controlled by the original merit subjects of the founding of the new dynasty, men who were not necessarily the best friends of the young monarch.

King T'aejong, on the other hand, tried to encourage remonstrance from scholar-officials as well as to fortify the institution of remonstrance in his reign. The initiation of the "Drum for appeal" (sinmun-go) for the people was also one of his efforts to solicit remonstrance especially on the occasions of portents. Such encouragement of remonstrance from a "monarchist" king, would look self-contradictory to unsuspecting minds.
Yet remonstrances were often occasioned by portents in the period, and the ruler's alertness to occurrences of portents was taken as a primary virtue by the Confucian scholars of the period.

King T'aejong was a trained Confucian scholar in his own right and had passed the civil service examination in the declining Koryo dynasty. Concerning portents, T'aejong's basic philosophy on the relations between portents and politics was the same as that held by Chōng Tojōn. But at a crucial point of its application, his view parted from that of Chōng Tojōn. For Chōng kingship should remain symbolic with the king doing little ruling, whereas for T'aejong, the king must be the actual mediator between Heaven and man. It was exactly this difference in political philosophy that pressed King T'aejong actively seek to take over all responsibility for all portents.

The victory of T'aejong over Chōng Tojōn was also significant in that it guaranteed the secular role of kingship for the rest of the Yi dynasty. Nobody thereafter ever tried to advance kingship to the higher plateau of priesthood in the practice of Confucian politics. In concrete terms, however, the execution of royal power varied from reign to reign. The next king, Sejong, reversed his father's institutional changes by revita-
zing the state council and making it a powerful organ in charge of the six ministries. Later his son, King Sejo, reversed his father's practice by going back to his grand-father's (T'aejong's) approach. Such dialectical changes in the first century of Yi Korea, however, did not change King T'aejong's basic legacy---actual rule from the throne. But here we must note immediately that the continued secular role of the throne in Yi history does not mean that the throne was powerful in its role. On the contrary, by the time we come to the close of our discussion in this chapter, we will find that the throne actually could not prevent eventual erosion of the royal prerogatives and we will also find that portents played a significant role in the process of such erosion.

It has already been demonstrated in Chapter II how T'aejong was sensitive to all kinds of portents. His obsessive concern with drought left a permanent legend of the "Rain of T'aejong," and it was under his reign that many astronomers were punished for their tardy service. It was in his reign that the principle of the sole responsibility of the throne for portents was established to be followed as the model for the rest of the dynasty, with few exceptions.

In his "constitutionalist" scheme of government, Chöng Tojön envisioned the first responsibility of the
Indeed, in early Yi Korea we find instances in which portents were used as legitimate excuses to remove the state councillors from their posts. In 1399 (Chongjong 1) when Left State Councillor Cho Chun turned in his resignation due to portents, the king replaced him with Sim Tŏkpu on the advice of the retired King T'aejo. One may suspect some other reasons behind such a simple record found from the Sillok. Such suspicion seems to be justified by the similar case of 1401 (T'aejong 1). According to Sillok historians, T'aejong did not like Left State Councillor Yi Kŏi at the time. Yi did not know this, but neither did he volunteer his resignation. Thus Right State Councillor Ha Yun turned in his resignation under the pretext of portents, but apparently after consulting secretly with the throne. Since his fellow in the State Council had turned in his resignation due to portents, Yi Kŏi had no choice but to follow suit. King T'aejong accepted both resignations, but Ha Yun was promptly installed in another high post. Whatever the actual reasons, the significant fact is that portents in this period were taken as politically expedient and legitimate opportunities to accept state councillor's resignations.
But these seem to be about the only occasions when portents were taken as such excuses. In 1402 (T'aejong 2) T'aejong refused to accept the resignation of Left State Councillor Yi Mi, with a question, "How can portents occur because of state councillors?" After this incident he staunchly refused similar action on many occasions for the rest of his reign. The case of Left State Councillor Ha Yun's resignation in the summer of 1406 (T'aejong 6) is an excellent example showing his determined fight against sharing responsibility for portents with state councillors.

When the drought became unbearably severe in that summer, a number of billboards appeared in the streets as well as on the wall of the Pavilion of the Bell (chonggak) to criticize Ha Yun. Putting full blame on himself, King T'aejong turned down Ha's resignation. Although this incident itself had a quick solution thanks to the rain that soon followed, King T'aejong remembered this incident for a long time, and it became a tradition of sorts in his future decisions on similar matters. When a similar situation occurred in the early summer of 1417 (T'aejong 17) due to drought and summer frost, the king recounted:

When Chinsan [Ha Yun] was Chief State Coun-
cillor, people said portents were caused because of him. After his retiring we had six different chief state councillors, and yet portents did not decrease. . . . This shows that the fault is not with the service of state councillors. Until today I have been reigning over people for eighteen years, and it is I who caused all of them. Because of my son's incapability, the throne cannot be given to him right away. And I cannot kill myself, or run away, while my mind is tormented all the time in vain.  

King T'aejong throughout his eighteen-year reign had thus removed responsibility for portents from the shoulders of the state councillors and willingly put the burden on his own shoulders. It was because of this sense of responsibility that he so often talked of his retirement from the throne on many occasions of portents during his reign. Such abdication had its precedent in the Yi dynasty. When his elder brother, King Chōngjong, retired from the throne in favor of T'aejong in 1400, he did so on the pretext of portents. Since the real power behind King Chōngjong was his younger brother (T'aejong), portents here were only a pretext for saving the retiring king's face. And King T'aejong's first expressed intention of resignation in 1402, only two years after his accession to throne, may not have been quite serious though the drought, which was the main cause for the threatened abdication, was serious.
Even in this case, however, his efforts to assume full responsibility for any portent are obvious. When Cho Yongmu, Superintendent for the Office of Ministers-without-portfolio (Chungch’u-bu p’ansa), interpreted the drought as the byproduct of the same drought in China and not one "we should worry about," T’aejong answered, "No, people of olden days had always blamed themselves and did not put blame on others on occasions of portents." 23

In 1406 (T’aejong 6) the king’s desire to abdicate in favor of his crown prince became serious, "originally because of a series of portents." He confided his decision of abdication to the high officials, including the state councillors, who tried in vain to change his mind. Then more organized opposition to the abdication was shown by all the government officials and royal family members, led by the king’s uncle, Prince Uian, and Chief State Councillor Sŏng Sŏngnin. And remonstrators criticized the royal decision in extreme language, which apparently made the king happy; he commented that it was good to have strong-willed remonstrators around. 24 Later he made it known that his decision for abdication came because of his dead mother, who appeared in his dream to admonish him lest he make her starve with the year’s drought. 25 Met with strong opposition from his officials, T’aejong rescinded his decision by saying
that he did not mean to retire on any definite date.

Similar wishes for abdication were shown in 1409 and 1410, first due to a typhoon and thunder and lightning, and second due to early winter rain and thunder. In both cases the stiff opposition by his officials' stopped his retiring. From these proceedings, one thing seems to be clear. The king became tired of the hard work and heavy burden demanded by his own ideal kingship. When Yi Sukpŏn approached the throne to convince the king that his decision for abdication should not be carried out at one occasion, T'aejong asked him, "Then when can I have my freedom from this heavy burden?" To this Yi answered, "When a man reaches the age of fifty, health begins to deteriorates. It will not be too late even if Your Majesty wait until that day." And when T'aejong did abdicate in 1418, he gave two reasons for his abdication—his disease and portents—and he was just over fifty in his age.

After King T'aejong's reign, few state councillors were removed from their posts because of portents, and the principle of the king's sole responsibility for portents was firmly established. A vestige of Chŏng Tojŏn's legacy of giving actual responsibility to the state councillors was alive for the rest of the dynasty in the form of the ceremonial resignations turned in
on occasions of portents, but they were never accepted by the throne. On the contrary, such resignations were often used to encourage a tardy monarch toward self-cultivation and other procedures needed on such occasions. Once and for all, King T'aejong set a model for successors to the throne in Yi Korea—the model of a king who actually rules as much as he reigns.

It is one of the ironies of history that T'aejong became extremely overburdened as a result of his success in consolidating royal power. A look into the four final years of his life after abdication reveals that T'aejong really enjoyed himself in retirement. When the first snow fell in the tenth month of the year of his abdication (1418),

The Retired King (sangwang) made a package of the new snow and sent one of his palace officials, Ch'oe Yu, to deliver the package to the palace of Old Retired King (no sangwang) (i.e., Chongjong) with a message that the package was medicine. The old retired king knew this trick already and sent one of his men right away on receipt of the package to follow and catch the messenger, to no avail. It was a Koryo custom that people send the first snow to each other. If one accepts it, he is to give a party for the sender; but if he knows it and catches the messenger, then the sender has to give a party.29

254
More often then with his retired brother, T'aejong enjoyed leisure with his son, King Sejong. Frequently the "two kings" (yangsang), as they were called at the time, went hunting together or played polo in the palace ground with many of the royal family, as they did all through the winter of 1421-1422, only months before T'aejong's death. 30

Even in his retirement, the absolute monarchism he tried to build did not escape his firm grip. During his four years of retirement, T'aejong never relinquished his control of military affairs, and not a single important decision of government was to be made without first consulting him. And we can see this unusual situation of the period from the portentography in the Sillok, to which we now turn.

**Portentography in the Period of "Two Kings" (1418-1422)**

In the section on solar haloes in Chapter II, and in Fig. 7, we can see a record-high distribution of solar haloes during the first year of Sejong's reign. (1419) From the spring of the year to the fall, solar haloes are recorded almost every other day. As we have observed in Chapter II, solar halo is one of the several portents that had been considered significant in the early Yi period for its known relevance to the original brightness.
of the sun, the symbol of the monarch. For many reasons, as we discussed in Chapter I, different portents were seen in different ways in different times, and the distribution of every portent in time shows a certain degree of fluctuation. Yet we do not have any other case of portents that is comparable in the number of occurrences in such a short time to the sudden eruption of solar haloes in the first year of King Sejong. Nevertheless, we do not have any evidence that this was recognized as a serious portent officially at that time.

Then how did such an unusual outburst in the record of solar haloes come into existence in the Sillok? A quick answer, which is not plausible, would be that the Sillok historians fabricated those records.31 A more reasonable answer would be that the scholar-officials of the times had actually recorded more solar haloes than usual in their memoirs, which were later used in the compilation of the Sillok. This would have been possible only when there was, among the learned people of the period, a psychological state ready to notice the slightest sign of "the sun being less sunny." We can find that state of mind in the political circumstances under the "two kings." For the four years after his retirement, King T'aejong remained the dominant figure in Korean politics, and the new king, Sejong, could not
act much like a king. The original brightness of the sun (king) was dimmed ever so often by the solar haloes (the retired king).

This explanation, however, is not enough to understand why such solar haloes were frequent only in the first part of his reign, while T'aejong was behind King Sejong for four years. Although I do not have any definite answer to give now, there is a possibility that it might have been related to the punishment of the chief state councillor of the time, Sim On, and his followers in the first winter after King Sejong's succession. In that winter Sim and his followers were indicted for saying that "it is better to have orders coming from one place than from two places." This was a criticism aimed at the retired king, who continued to serve as the ultimate decision-maker in all state affairs and was holding control of the military. When T'aejong heard of this, Sim's followers were summarily punished, and Sim On, on his way back home from his mission to China, was obliged to kill himself. The case perhaps was not much of an offence, but more a move by the retired king T'aejong to eradicate possible sources that would undermine royal power, because Sim On was the father-in-law of the new king.

Whatever the real cause of the solar haloes in
the first year of King Sejong's reign, there cannot be any doubt that the Sillok historians inserted the numerous records in their compilation with a strong awareness of the dimmed brightness of King Sejong, most probably because of his father's interference. First of all, this is an indication that Korean portentology, as King T'aejong wanted, was developing with more and more emphasis on portents relevant to the monarch. By this time, no state councillors were held actually responsible for any portents, reducing all portents to the single cause of failure in government by the throne. A closer look suggests that this was not exactly what King T'aejong wanted, for portents now obviously became a weapon for historians' oblique criticism on the throne. As we have seen before, it was King T'aejong who had energetically tried to establish the theory of portents for the purpose of consolidating royal power through his claim to be the direct mediator between Heaven and man. Now his success in this began to backfire, and soon portents began to serve more often as occasions for unbridled criticism of the throne by his scholar-officials, thus developing as a formidable weapon against royal prerogatives. And such a development owes much to the massive encyclopedic learning during the reign of King Sejong.
History as the Lesson

The reign of King Sejong (r. 1418-1450) marks a significant change in the outlook of the new dynasty. When he became the fourth king of the Yi dynasty at the age of twenty-two, he was the first monarch who was born after the founding of the dynasty twenty-seven years before. And it was during his reign that Confucian scholars of a new breed, free from any qualms about betraying Koryŏ at the dynastic change, began to appear and become active. The intellectual vitality of the Sejong reign is well known today especially for its productivity in history, literature, the arts and sciences, as well as the invention of han'gul or the Korean alphabet.

The epitome of the intellectual climate of the era was the Hall for Men of Wisdom (Chiphyŏn-jŏn). It was first established in 1420, although its prototype had been in existence since Koryŏ. Beginning with ten full-time scholars, it grew gradually until finally it reached twenty full-time members, whose major duty was royal lectures for the king and lectures for the crown prince. Related to this were their efforts to collect and study all the valuable institutions of the past both in China and Korea. Essentially their primary method in scholarship was historical, and never before in Korean
history were such mammoth efforts geared to the study of the past in search of clues for a better government and better society. Their findings, more often from Chinese history, were immediately applied to institutions in Korea, and the data were often published for future reference in every area of human knowledge of the period—history, classics, rites, Chinese laws, Chinese literature, political manuals, military affairs, linguistics, including the Korean alphabet, geography, astronomy and calendar-making, medicine, and agriculture.34

Only through such concentrated delving into the past, did Koreans begin for the first time to attain a sophisticated Confucian sense of history. The growing sense of history as a positive model for government was readily transferred to the king through continuing contacts between the crown and the scholars at the royal lectures. Royal lectures were the best way to atune the king's mind to the voices of the scholar-officials in the name of Confucian teachings. Although royal lectures had been in practice since Koryo, the first three kings of the Yi dynasty did not have their lectures regularly. King T'aejong's attitude was more or less typical. When his officials suggested opening the royal lectures in 1409 (T'aejong 9), he answered,
"I am too old to be able to attend, but study by the crown prince must be encouraged."\textsuperscript{35}

What the Koreans were absorbing massively during Sejong's reign was essentially what Chinese history could teach. More than ever, the civilization of China was seen as the highest ideal worth studying. For the Koreans of the time, civilization as recorded in Chinese history was not merely a civilization of China, but the Civilization every man should emulate. Yet their active borrowing of this civilization was forming a mild intellectual tension because of the different tempers of people. An example of such tension was the controversy over the invention of the Korean alphabet. For the opponents of the invention, led by Ch'oe Malli, Deputy Chief of the Hall for Men of Wisdom (Chiphyŏn-jŏn), Korea's own writing system would merely slacken the speed of attaining the cultural level of China. King Sejong, however, did not share this opinion. For the monarch, such an attainment would be facilitated through the expediency of a vernacular script. Although the Korean alphabet is today widely acclaimed as the most scientific writing system, the main concern of the parties for and against the invention in 1444 (Sejong 26) was whether it would encourage the learning of the Civilization.\textsuperscript{36}
Included in their search for the key to better government during this reign were astronomy and calendar-making. Along with the Koreans' growing knowledge of the portentology of China from Chinese historiography, their development in astronomy and calendar-making was pushing the Koreans' understanding of portents to a higher level. The development of astronomy and calendar-making in this period has usually been ascribed by modern scholars to its importance in agriculture. But a closer look will easily convince anybody that the astronomical observations had little to do with agricultural productivity, for the development of instruments concentrated on more accurate observation of the heavenly movements. The main instrument for observation of the sky was the kanūi (simplified instrument) or equatorial torquetum, which was set on a high platform beside an instrument to measure the sun's shadows and an armillary sphere. And they were primarily intended "to give the people exact time." It was with the same spirit that another instrument, ilsông chōngai-ūi, was developed to determine accurate time from observations of stars and the sun. A thorough study of calendar-making techniques enabled the Korean astronomers of this period to develop the highest level in the sciences in Korean history, thus producing a series of publications from their researches.
Broadly speaking, all the developments in astronomy were possible thanks to the Koreans' great concern for accurate time. The degree of accuracy they were aiming at through these efforts was far above what was needed in agriculture. Therefore, their great concern for accurate time-keeping should not be seen as from any "practical" needs. Rather it was to follow the established practice in Chinese civilization which prescribed the publication of the calendar as one of the major prerogatives of the ruler. And on a secondary level, there was the need for keeping accurate time to do the sacrificial services at the right moments. Therefore, time-keepers were dispatched from the Office of Astronomy with their water-clocks to the important sacrificial rites to perform the ceremonies punctually, because "the exact timing is the most important matter in sacrificial rites." The degree of punctuality in sacrificial rites, which were of increasing importance in the Yi society, was a matter of minutes. It is obvious that farmers do not need that degree of punctuality in their farming. As a matter of fact, even in the invention of the rain-guage, which was also developed during Sejong's reign, there is no explicit mention of any agricultural relevance; it is simply written that it was "to leave records of rain-fall for future reference."
Be that as it may, the Koreans' concern for accurate time-keeping and calendar-making in the early Yi period is only one of two aspects of astronomical development of the period. And our immediate concern in this study lies with the other side of the development, i.e., portentology (or astrology). As was the case in China, \(^45\) calendar-making and portentology took separate courses of development. Regular and periodic phenomena in the sky were observed and used for exact time-keeping and calendar-making, while irregular and unpredictable phenomena were seen as portents and developed into portentology. Yet these two courses were not independent. On the contrary, the rapid advancement of calendar-making in Sejong's reign was matched by a similar expansion of knowledge in portentology. And the result of this was a growing suspicion about the traditional portentology based upon the theory of Tung Chung-shu, who tried to set an intricate system of portent-event correspondence on the general principle of portents-as-the-sign-of-political-failure.

Uncertainty about the Tung Chung-shu portentology can be seen from one quiz on the political essay (ch'ae) for the 1423 civil service examination, composed in the name of King Sejong himself:

Human affairs work below, and Heavenly ways
respond thereto above. This is nature's way (lii) from olden days. When we look into the classics and history, we find sometimes the responses, while at other times we cannot find any response. Can you explain why this has to be so? Then after several sentences on the examples from Chinese records of auspices and omens. Are these really caused by the influences of human affairs? Or are they spontaneous without being influenced?46

Then the quiz continues to express explicitly the king's doubt of the auspiciousness of white deer, auspicious grass, and so on. Here King Sejong also questioned why one reign prospers, while the other perishes, despite the appearances of the same kind of auspices for both. Yet Sejong never expressed his doubt on the principle of the correspondence between Heaven and man here or anywhere else. His mind was in the midst of growing uncertainty about the Tung Chung-shu theory of specific portent-event correspondence with the five elements applications.

B. Reaction to Confucian Portentology

---Kings Sejo and Songjong


Sejo's Attitude: Auspices Yes, Omens No

King Sejong was succeeded in 1450 by his son, Munjong, who died after two years. Munjong's son, then,
became the sixth king of the Yi dynasty, King Tanjong, at the age of twelve. But one of his uncles, Prince Suyang, a man of ambition, gathered followers toward a decisive coup in 1453, by which he took virtual control of the government and in 1455 deposed the boy king to become the seventh king, Sejo (r. 1455-1468). After several plots for Tanjong's restoration were uncovered, including one by the "Six martyred subjects" in 1456, the boy king was put to death.

The rise of King Sejo was an unforgettable as well as "unforgivable" event in the history of Korean Confucian tradition, as we shall see in the next section. His blood-drenched march to the throne reminds us of his grandfather, King T'aejong. Although T'aejong killed his half-brothers and their followers, including Ch'ong Tojon, he never committed regicide as Sejo did. More importantly, whereas T'aejong did not have to fight against the strong moral principle of the scholar-officials, Sejo had to kill or banish hundreds of highly principled scholars. Bluntly put, those who served continuously from the dynastic inception through T'aejong's reign did not have to worry about their moral integrity. But any scholar-official who served continuously into the reign of Sejo "the usurper" made himself subject to later criticism about his moral standards.
With the end of King Sejo's reign in 1468, the immorality of this monarch and his followers became an enormous burden for later generations of Confucian scholars---both as an intellectual exercise to search for some answers in the conflicting predicament of morality and politics, and as a political issue in the continuing struggle for power.

Thus Sejo's reign gave a great deal of tension to the harmonious development of Confucian tradition in early Yi Korea. And no less important than the morality question of the reign itself was Sejo's continued arrogance toward Confucianism even after his accession to the throne, which is in contrast to T'aejong's efforts to emulate as much as possible the Confucian tradition. Unlike his grandfather and father, who ruled the first half of the fifteenth century in more Confucian ways than ever before, Sejo remained a strong Buddhist throughout his life.47

Four days after the incident of the "Six martyred subjects," Sejo announced the abolition of the royal lectures as well as the organ in charge of them, the Hall for Men of Wisdom (Chipyŏn-jŏn).48 During the reign of Sejong, the Hall served as the center of learning from the Chinese past, which was to serve as the fertilizer for the growth of the Korean tradition of Con-
fucianism. The abolition of the Hall has been attributed to Sejo’s growing suspicion of it as a hotbed of scholars hostile to him. But the issue was more fundamental than that, as a recent study by Ch’oe Sŏng-hŭi demonstrates. It was an expression of the conflict between Sejo’s desire to strengthen royal power and the growing political role of the scholars of the Hall particularly during the latter half of Sejong’s reign. By the abolition of the royal lectures and the Hall, Sejo went toward undisguised autocracy with a minimum of “Confucian persuasion” between the throne and his scholar-officials. It was very natural, then, that such a monarch would attempt to play down the adverse effects of portents in his government. He refrained from seeking advice from his scholar-officials at the occurrences of portents. Rather, he tried hard to suppress such reports in the first place. The sudden disappearance of drought records for many of his reign years does not show that those years were any better than others, but that the king was very anxious not to hear any reports of droughts from his officials.

King Sejo reacted to the growing Confucianization, resulting from scholarly studies of Chinese history and institutions, by turning back the clock. As for portents, he encouraged the reports of auspices, which were
almost totally discarded throughout the first several reign periods of the Yi dynasty. He and his followers rejoiced particularly with the reported auspices of the Buddhist tradition---such as sarira and sweet dew. The unusual frequency of these portents in the Sillok is a reflection of the mentality of the throne.

Portentology on Trial

The end of King Sejo's reign signalled the resurgence of Confucian rationalism in portentology. Auspices that were highly appreciated during Sejo's reign were once again eliminated from proper portentology, and all ominous ones were meticulously observed with due awe and respect. King Sŏngjong (1457-1494; r. 1469-1494), who became the ninth king after the brief reign of King Yejong (r. 1468-1469), asked his scholar-officials for advice at every occasion of portents and attended royal lectures three or four times daily from the very beginning of his royal career at the age of twelve. As we can notice from many parts of Chapters II and III, it was during his reign that most Buddhist and Taoist exorcisms of portents were gradually abolished almost completely. By the same token, Confucian responses to portents were rapidly building up, including a massive pardon that liberated 690 former exiles. This pardon
was the king's response, after deliberations with his high officials, at the occurrence of a thunder and lightning in 1490.53

Yet amid the strong resurgence of Confucian portentology, one thing seems noticeably different from the previous practice of portentology. After the uncertainty about traditional portentology in Sejong's reign and after the reactionary efforts against portentology made by Sejo, the old tradition began to be seen with definite suspicion. Tung Chung-shu's theory relating one incident in human affairs to one portent according to the five element theory was definitely passe by now. Nobody suspected the principle that there must be some correspondence between Heavenly portents and human affairs in general, but a growing number of scholars with more knowledge of Chinese history began to question the validity of the Tung Chung-shu theory in its strict application. How can one explain in Tung's terms the fact that a virtuous reign had more ominous portents while a vicious reign was blessed by auspices in history?

Just as in Sejong's era, this vexing question was asked in the civil service examination of 1474 (Sŏngjong 5).54 Uncertainty about the traditional theory of portents was again made known in the essay question in
the civil service examination two years later.

Principles (li) of the world converge in my mind. If we search for principles, we find there is nothing beyond principles. The movements of the sun and moon have regularities, and the solar and lunar eclipses have regularities too. Early Confucians who were good in calendar calculation could tell about them for one hundred generations. And yet Confucius wrote in his Spring and Autumn Annals (Ch'un-ch'iu) all the solar eclipses without omission. Why? Earlier Confucians had also said that if the ruler cultivates his virtue and governs well, then the expected eclipses would not occur. If there is regularity, how is it possible? The sun is the essence of yang and the moon is the essence of yin. Thus there is only one sun and only one moon, and no more. Yet ten suns appeared at once during the reign of Yao, and two suns appeared in Sung China. Can there be any rationale to explain these?

The question continues to pose the same difficulty in the understanding of tidal waves, hot spring, and the change of oranges in different temperature zones. Then it asks the examinee to write on his study of li (principle), for "the li of the world are innumerable, and only when a man penetrates them through, can he be called a Confucian scholar."

Growing doubts about traditional portentology can
also be seen from the changing attitudes of the Koreans toward the basic texts on the portentology of the period. As already noted, portentology in the Chin-shu (History of Chin) and Han-shu (History of Former Han) were the most eloquently written in the Tung Chung-shu tradition. And these were used as the basic texts in the interpretation of portents throughout the Koryo and early Yi periods. A record shows that the Chin-shu was also used as the basic reference in calendar-making even as late as 1475 (Songjong 6) in Korea.\textsuperscript{57}

At one of the royal lectures in 1485 (Songjong 16), Commentator Hwang Kyeok criticized the theory of specific correspondence of portents, to certain lucky or unlucky human affairs in a given span of time, as a stretch of logic and unallowable.\textsuperscript{58} This criticism was aimed at all traditional portentology that tried to interpret portents in specific portent-event correspondences often in terms of the five element theory, as we can see in the Chin-shu, Han-shu, and Koryo-sa. Another probable reason to discourage such a specific correspondence theory was that it had undesirable political implications. For instance, General Nam I's incident occurred largely because of a firm belief among the people involved that a comet was a sign for revolutionary change, according to the established theory of specific correspondence.\textsuperscript{59}
So when an official reminded the throne of the high attainment of astronomical studies in Sejong's reign and recommended similar efforts, King Songjong answered, "Though we have to know astronomy, I am afraid of wicked people who might perchance fabricate nefarious words to agitate people if we revere it too much." 60

Let us take one more example of similar criticism from the royal lecture for the same king six years later in 1491 (Songjong 22):  

His Majesty went to an evening royal lecture. The lecture was on the portentology section of the Wen-hsien t'ung-k'ao. After the lecture, Recorder Yi Sang said, "this portentology part is a writing of prognostication, and the ruler must not take a lecture on it. The Book of Changes writes to observe Heaven's patterns (ch'ŏnmun, t'ien-wen), and the Book of History writes about the courses of the sun, moon, and stars and also about armillary spheres. 61 Thus Heaven's pattern is what the sovereign has to observe. But this book says that when a certain star shows a certain color, then a certain response follows. And it says if a certain shape occurs, then a certain response follows. This indeed is a theory of obstinate sophistry. I beg Your Majesty not to take any lessons on such things."

His Majesty looked around to his right and left. There Expositor Kim Únggi (who was the authority on astronomy at the time) replied, "Sages
observed Heaven's pattern above and Earth's contours below. Therefore Heaven's pattern is one thing the sovereign has to understand. Yet this book is made of theories of various schools compiled by Ma Tuan-lin, and indeed has points of sophistry. When Your Majesty studies it, only the worthy parts should be taken."

Yi Sang said once more, then, "The way is far and hard to fathom. This is not a book to copy." His Majesty then concluded, "This book really has points of forced logic. But if one desires to know about Heaven's pattern, there is no other way but to study it. Whether this part or that word is worth taking or not, that I shall decide." 62

As one of the best encyclopedias available at the time, Ma Tuan-lin's Wen-hsien t'ung-k'ao was perhaps the best reference for King T'aejong, who used it often. 63 By the reign of King Sōngjong, those Chinese books with encyclopedic information began for the first time in Korean history to be viewed with highly critical eyes. Those were all intellectual products from Han through T'ang China with a touch of Tung Chung-shu's Confucianism. Here we see Koreans' learning from China's Confucian tradition shifting from wholesale introduction to the stage of critical absorption. It was a sign of intellectual maturity developing during the reign of King Sōngjong.
From "Heaven's Wrath" to Disharmony in Cosmic Moral Order

When King T'aejong assumed voluntarily responsibility for portents, he did so because it was conducive to his desire to strengthen royal power. He detested the scheme of power-sharing and sharing the responsibility for portents, as Chŏng Tojŏn proposed. For King T'aejong and the scholar-officials of his reign, portents were Heaven's wrath and therefore whoever was responsible for them was ipso facto the one with the Mandate of Heaven to rule the country.

In the actual execution of his responsibility for portents, however, King T'aejong could depend heavily upon the rich arsenal of exorcisms to ward off the portents. Whenever portents occurred, he mobilized Buddhist, Taoist and shamanist exorcisms on the one hand, while going to more respectable Confucian responses on the other. Yet fifty-some years later, King Sŏngjong was deprived of this abundance of religious exorcisms in his fight against portents. Whereas a Buddhist rain prayer in the early dynasty was seen largely as an earnest effort to placate Heaven's wrath, and hence the throne's expressed sincerity toward Heaven, the same response to drought in the reign of Sŏngjong, or any other un-Confucian exorcism for that matter, was increasingly seen as an element to tarnish royal virtue.
Therefore, Songjong's scholar-officials declared solemnly that the rain after the long drought in 1482 (Songjong 13) was the result of moral devotion on the part of the throne and not the effect of the rain prayer performed at Hūngch'ŏn-sa Temple just before the rain.64

Exorcism became obsolete, because there was nothing to exorcise under the new Confucian outlook, or more precisely the Neo-Confucian outlook. The Confucian pantheon a la Tung Chung-shu was giving way to Neo-Confucian pan-moralism encompassing man and nature as a single moral continuum. The king remained as mediator of Heaven and earth, but he was no longer a priest in the service of "pleasing Heaven." His primary role now was becoming more and more the teacher of his people, and he had to do this by serving as the model of human morality.65

By the time of King Songjong, most religious exorcisms were dropped, as we have seen in the previous chapter, and one more drop meant one additional Confucian burden for the monarch by allowing his subjects more chances for remonstrance in place of religious exorcisms. The cumulative result was that the king had to appeal more often for scholar-officials' counsels and had to listen to them and read more memorials turned in by them, often with more tolerance of the increasingly severe
criticism from below. The shifting emphases on the Heaven-man moral continuum ushered in an age when a model king had to keep his door wide open to his scholar-officials' criticism of his government. Under the circumstances, remonstrance became a rapidly growing institution with increasing influence in politics.

Remonstrance became part of government organization from the early Koryŏ period, and it is believed that it served as a stronghold of limiting royal power during the Koryo period. Yet it was definitely more significant in the Neo-Confucian politics than in any previous period. The late addition of the Office of Special Counselors (Hongmun-gwan) to the existing two censorate organs—the Office of Inspector-General (Sahon-bu) and the Office of Censor-General (Sagan-won)—was an evident manifestation of this growing power of remonstrance in the Yi government structure. Apprehension of the rising Confucian scholars' muscle was expressed by King Sŏngjong in 1482 (Sŏngjong 13) when he was worrying about impending sabotage by remonstrators:

In the former dynasty, remonstrators used to resign and retire to their home in protest, thus closing the office for two or three days. Only upon the king's persuasion two or three times would they return to office. This dynasty has not been long in existence. Yet are
they going to do the same already?\textsuperscript{68}

We have already seen a round of powerful remonstrances at the end of Koryŏ, which was very much instrumental in the radical reforms which paved the way for the birth of the Yi dynasty. In the militant Confucian outburst at the close of the Koryŏ dynasty, remonstrance played a key role in the self-assertion of the Confucians against Buddhists and Taoists. As a major form of political discussion, remonstrance remained the same. But its key-note could not remain the same as in Koryŏ---the rationalist criticism of superstitious practices. Now it had to be changed to the new situations within the Confucian context. Participants in this form of political discussion were almost forced to find new issues within the broad context of Confucianism. Sŏngjong's reign was a time of search for new ideological direction in the Confucian tradition, and the search was to bring up some preliminary battles among the scholar-officials of the period.

C. The Birth of Neo-Confucian Portentism

---King Sŏngjong

Issues: "Trivial" and "Shallow"?

King Songjong's apprehension over the rising power of remonstrance apparently became a nightmare for his
son, King Yŏnsan (r. 1495-1506). The twelve-year reign of King Yŏnsan is well documented in Korean historiography for the two bloody literati purges of 1498 (Mok sahwa) and 1504 (Kapcha sahwa), as well as for the monarch's debauchery, which is recorded profusely in the Sillok as well as in unofficial historical memoirs. And it is well accepted among historians that the later factional struggles in Yi politics actually originated from the literati purges and that the literati purges had in turn their origin in the growing conflicts between the old guard and a new breed of scholars in Sŏngjong's reign.

These conflicts had many sources. The old guard entrenched through generations of government service was much better off economically, while the new breed of scholars was not affluent. An enormous number of records tell of the personal enmities between some of the major figures in both camps of the contending scholars, and of their different scholarly orientations---Conservative scholars were more literature-oriented, while the younger scholars were more inclined to emphasize moral principles. Yet the intellectual difficulties developing as the conflicts between these two groups of scholars grew are largely unknown. Opinions on this
matter include the sweeping generalization that such conflicts were inevitable because of the development of Neo-Confucianism in early Yi Korea and the view that there was not much intellectual tension, as Edward Wagner and Sin Sokho would suggest. Wagner muses:

A striking aspect of factional conflict in Yi Korea is the contrast between the depth of the factional division in the society and the shallowness of the issues under contention.

A similar opinion, specifically on the conflicts in Sŏngjong's reign, is expressed by Sin as follows:

Newly emerging young scholars in two censorial offices, the Office of Special Counselors, and college students, who were imbued and armed with Confucian teachings, tried to suppress the luxurious life of the nobility. They attacked the high officials holding posts since the reign of Sejo with trivial matters and even went to the extreme of demanding that the meritorious subjects of the Sejo reign not be used. All the nobility were angered by such an insistence, and Im Sahóng in particular.

In their pioneering studies of the literati purges of the period, these historians maintain that the issues were "shallow" and "trivial." It is premature and irrelevant to try to characterize the issues when we do not know the issues. Contrary to such observations, I believe, it will be shown in the following pages that
the issues were of paramount significance for the intellectuals of the period, and the study of the issues on the intellectual level will better define Korea's Confucian tradition in the period. Since the economic and personal grounds for the conflicts are well covered, let us go into a deeper level of contention to find out what the fundamental intellectual problem was, with particular emphasis on portentology.

**Lineage of Neo-Confucianism**

It is well recognized that Kim Chongjik (1431-1492) was at the beginning of all these political purges of the Yŏnsan period through his teaching of a new breed of scholars in Sŏngjong's reign. According to the followers of Kim Chongjik, and modern scholars as well, the teacher-disciple lineage of Korean Neo-Confucianism goes back to Chŏng Mongju, who was assassinated by Yi Pangwŏn (King T'aejong) in 1392 in his determined effort to protect the Koryŏ dynasty. It is significant that the lineage shown in TABLE IV omits all the famous scholar-officials in the pre-Sŏngjong period, including Chŏng Tojŏn, Kwŏn Kŭn, Pyŏn Kyeryang, Chŏng Inji, and Sŏ Kŏjŏng. In other words, Neo-Confucian scholars of the Yi dynasty admitted among themselves through this claim of disciple-teacher relations that the dominant
TABLE IV. Lineage of Neo-Confucian Scholarship

Chŏng Mongju (1337-1392)

Kil Chae (1352-1419)

Kim Sukcha (1389-1456)

Kim Chongjik (1431-1492), son of Kim Sukcha

Kim Koengp'il (1454-1504)

Chŏng Yŏch'ang (1450-1504)

Cho Kwangjo (1482-1519)

political thinking in the period before Sŏngjong was something that they could not accept as a worthy legacy.

This is a continuation of what I tried to show in the discussion of the Confucian tradition of Korea at the dynastic change in the preceding chapter. Indeed, Yi I (1536-1584), one of the best Neo-Confucian scholars of Korean history, has this comment on it:

Someone asked, "When did the Chinese scholarship start in our country?" Master answered, "It started toward the end of the previous dynasty. But Kwon Kŭn's Iphakto has points of discrepancies. Though Chŏng Mongju is called the founder of I-hak (li-hsueh), he was
in my opinion a protector of the dynasty but not much a Confucian. Thus tohak (t'ao-hsueh) started with Cho Kwangjo, and Confucian scholarship was firmly established with Yi Hwang.75

According to Fung Yu-lan, li-hsueh can be seen as a later development of t'ao-hsueh, with emphasis on Chu Hsi's synthesis of the philosophy of li.76 Putting aside any subtle difference in the choice of words by Yi I here, it is clear that Yi I did not consider that Ch'ong Mongju deserved his position in the lineage table above. Even though modern scholarship slavishly followed the old cliche that Neo-Confucianism became the dominant intellectual climate with the birth of Yi dynasty and remained so throughout the dynasty, the late Professor Pak Chong-hong appears to have been increasingly uncomfortable with such an interpretation. While admitting that a new kind of scholarship was introduced by the late Koryo scholars, Professor Pak was not sure how well they could have mastered the depth of the new philosophy.77 He also suggested a further study before we accept the lineage table, as shown above, for the table makes the most obvious omissions of Ch'ong Tojôn and Kwôn Kûn, among others, who were definitely closely related to Ch'ong Mongju.78

Since the man following Ch'ong Mongju in the table,
Kil Chae, was an insignificant figure in politics in the early Yi period, let us go to Kim Chongjik or his successor to see when a new tradition was to set in.

Kim Chongjik is identified as one of the key figures in the first phase of political struggles among the scholars. But what made him different from his peers in Sŏnjong's reign? In a way, he was not different from other scholar-officials of his period. His rapid rise in the government was largely due to his recognized literary skills. As Yi Hwang (1501-1570) noted, he was "not a man of scholarship, but his life-time task was merely in cultivating literature, as we can see from his collected writings." Yu Chagwang, who eventually became the arch-enemy of Kim's followers, as we shall soon see, once praised his literary mastery by comparing him to "Han Yu of Korea." This was the dominant intellectual trend of his time, and it was because of his successful attainment in the trend that he was accepted as a peer by the leading scholar-officials in the first place.

**Teacher of the "Primary Learning"**

What Kim Chongjik taught, however, was different from what he practised as a government official. Instead of preaching strongly the cultivation of literary skills, he recommended the "Primary Learning" (Sphak, Hsiao-hsueh)
as the basic text from which anyone who set his mind to scholarship would have to start. This was what he taught to his principal disciple, Kim Koengp'il, who took the Primary learning as the basic of his self-cultivation for the rest of his life. Kim Chongjik's followers eventually formed a sort of political discussion group early in Sŏngjong's reign which included Chŏng Yŏch'ang, Nam Hyo on, Kang Êngjong, and others. The group was recognized by Im Sahong, who eventually became an arch-enemy of the group, and was called the "followers of the Primary learning" (sohak chi kye) as early as 1478 (Sŏngjong 9). Obviously the followers of Kim Chongjik in these early days were not taken seriously among the scholar-officials of the time, including their first critic, Im Sahong. In fact, an attendant to a royal lecture in the same year saw them as a laughingstock jeered by most scholars of the period.

The primary learning, or the Small learning, was not unknown to earlier Koreans. This text of moral inculcations was used in the early years of the Yi dynasty in training Chinese interpreters. Then from the early years of Sejong's reign, some efforts were made to buy an edition of the book with better annotations from China, and it was several times printed in Korea for use in teaching Korean boys before the age of
But because it was considered, as Kwŏn Kŭn did, as an important primer for a school boy to read before going to the basic classics, it was not highly regarded by scholars. The fact that only a small group of Kim Chongjik's followers developed a dedication to the Primary learning in Songjong's reign shows that it was not highly regarded even in the latter half of the fifteenth century. And we have an evidence that a distinguished young scholar of the early sixteenth century confessed he did not know "what the Primary learning was all about" when he was young. It was not until the early sixteenth century that the text became a primary book in learning rather then a mere primer to learning.

This book of moral lessons was often regarded as the writing of Chu Hsi himself, although the actual compilation was done by one of his students under his direction. But Chu Hsi gave his full endorsement to the text, thus giving it enduring importance in the Neo-Confucian tradition. In one of his royal lectures, Chu Hsi considered the Primary learning and the Great learning as the two basic texts in the Confucian efforts to recover the lost Golden Age. It was in this spirit that Ki Chun (1492-1521) deplored in 1517 (Chung-jong 12) the erroneous scholarship in Korea which would
not give the Primary learning and the Great learning their proper place.\textsuperscript{91}

Within decades, however, the once-ridiculed followers of Kim Chongjik were becoming an object of annoyance among the established scholar-officials. One episode from the life of a distinguished literary figure of the period is illuminating in this respect:

Sŏ Kŏjong was at the literary helm \textsuperscript{\textit{munhyŏng}}, meaning \textit{tae chehak}, or Director of the Office of Literary Arts of the country for twenty-six years, and yet did not resign. One day he asked one of his nephews, "What do the people think of me?" His nephew answered, "All the people hate your holding of the literary helm for so long." With a lament, Kŏjong said, "If I retire, Kim Chongjik will undoubtedly succeed to the position. This is what I do not like." Some people observed that the literati purge of 1498 (Nio sahwa) had sprouted here.\textsuperscript{92}

Therefore, when Sŏ Kŏjong (1420-1488) retired finally from the literary helm, he recommended Hong Kwidal (1438-1504) to succeed him, thus arousing much criticism apparently among Kim's followers.\textsuperscript{93} This story is apocryphal and may well be a later invention.\textsuperscript{94} Nevertheless, the fact remains that by the time Kim Chongjik was appointed to the post of Head Royal Secretary in 1484 (Sŏnjong 15), it is described in the Sillok that
Kim's followers were now "many in number," and that people began to criticize them as a "faction of the leader from Kyŏngsang Province." (Kyŏngsang sŏnpbae tong)95

Sŏ Kŏjŏng was one of the most productive scholars of the period, starting his career in Sejong's reign and serving continuously for seven reigns, mainly as a compiler of many scholarly books, including Tongguk t'onggam (Comprehensive Mirror for Government in Korea). He happened to have as his maternal grandfather Kwon Kūn, the man who studied under Yi Saek of late Koryŏ and then held the literary helm in the early Yi dynasty for many years. With such an illustrious family and with success in his career, Sŏ Kŏjŏng and many other men with similar background had good reasons to look at the neophytes led by Kim Chongjik with suspicion.

**Neo-Confucian Historicism as a Political Weapon**

What, then, was the basic issue that the new scholars brought up against the establishment? Their intellectual inspiration came from Chu Hsi's historicism, which tries to pass stern moral judgment on the past so as to set the moral guideline for the generations to come, just like their emphasis of the Primary learning as the basis of personal moral cultivation. Such an intellectual reorientation during the reign of Sŏngjong was
possible only through the active introduction of Chinese thought in the earlier period, especially during Sejong's reign. And ironically So Kojong was deeply involved in helping to build such an intellectual climate, and his major historical product, the Tongseuk tongseam, was an unmistakable example of his contribution to the ultimate erosion of what he stood upon.

As the title of the work shows, Sŏ Kŏjong modelled his historiography after Ssu-ma Kuang's Tzu-chih t'ung-chien (Comprehensive Mirror for Government). Sŏ Kŏjong borrowed the methodology as well as its title from this great historical work done by the eleventh-century Sung conservative politician who fought against Wang An-shih's reforms. As Ssu-ma Kuang himself put it, he used the Tso Commentary of the Spring and Autumn Annals (Ch'unch'iu Tso-chuan) as his model to write "everything pertaining to the rise and fall of dynasties and the good and ill fortune of the common people, all good and bad examples that can furnish models and warnings." \(^96\)

In his study of Chinese historiography, Naito Torajirō finds the appearance of this history a turning point in the Sung intellectual milieu:

Whereas the previous scholarship emphasized erudition in a wide range of learning, the new learning aimed at studies of historical developments to consider the models and
warnings therefrom, according to the method of the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. In the old tradition emphasis in scholarship was on literary art such as how to decorate ritually and artistically the writings in use to compose decrees, memorials and so on. The new era, on the other hand, tried to go in depth in search for the models and warnings underneath rather than what was there on the surface.  

Writing history in traditional China was always meant to provide manuals for good government; thus one of Balazs' essays is aptly titled, "History as a Guide to Bureaucratic Practice."  

What made Ssu-ma Kuang's historiography different from the previous historical writings was that he started, or rather revived, critical historiography by using simple annalistic methods. Since the T'ang dynasty, historical writings in China had been dominated by encyclopedic manuals, which were very handy for the literati in their preparation for the civil service examination and for other references. Such encyclopedic erudition in scholarship was an expression of the successful bureaucratization of T'ang China.  

With the rise of a historical approach in place of encyclopedic manuals for government, the historians' criticism on historical development started, first by Ssu-ma Kuang only implicitly, then gradually more ex-
plicitly. The problem of historical legitimacy through the use of praise and blame (p'ao-pien) was already utilized by Ou-yang Hsiu in his Wu-tai shih (History of Five Dynasties), and it was here that Chu Hsi's rendition of Ssu-ma Kuang's work through his Tzu-chih t'ung-chien kang-mu (often called Kang-mu) became very significant. Going back to the Spring and Autumn Annals in his methodology, Chu Hsi started to make his own moral judgment as a historian very explicitly, so as to clarify historical legitimacy, cheng-t'ung, as much as possible. Cheng here means to "rectify the wrong of the world," and t'ung to "unify the disunity of the world." And the basic idea behind such an historical judgment was "great righteousness and clarification of names" (taeui myongbun, ta-i ming-fen), a term that became increasingly important in the Yi political discussions, as we shall soon see. It was with the rise of Chu Hsi, then, that history changed from a manual for government to a mirror for moral attainment, and historian became the ultimate judge of such attainments.

For political reasons, however, the historiography of early Yi Korea could not go to the level of stern moral criticism of Chu Hsi's historical method. But we can see a parallel development in early Tokugawa Japan after Fujiwara Seika's active introduction of Neo-Confu-
cian teachings at the turn of the seventeenth century. Hayashi Razan (1593-1657), who succeeded Fujiwara at the literary helm of the Tokugawa Bakufu, compiled Honcho tsūgan (Comprehensive Mirror for Japan), which was completed in 1670 under Bakufu sponsorship. Compared to the earlier historical writings, this work was remarkably rational under the Confucian influence, thus denying much of the mythical paraphernalia of early history, such as the Three Imperial Regalia. Yet it had its limitations, as it was modelled after Ssu-ma Kuang's method in general. The most significant of its limitations was the lack of moralistic criticism taught by Chu Hsi's historiography, with the matter-of-fact acceptance of the Bakufu system, although understandable as a product of the Bakufu sponsorship. 101

It was against this lack of critical assessment of legitimate historical development a la Chu Hsi that had the Mito School follow immediately with their own version of the History of Japan (Dai Nihon-shi) in the spirit of the Neo-Confucian taigi meibun (taeũi myŏng-bun in Korean pronunciation, which we have discussed earlier). In so doing, they found a living model in the spirit of a Ming loyalist exile to Japan, Chu Shun-shui (1600-1682), who worked on the compilation. And their ideological clarification of the legitimacy of
the Japanese imperial institution here is seen by modern scholars as a great contribution in undermining the position of the Bakufu vis-a-vis the Emperor in the modernization process of Japan.

Now let us go back to Sō Kōjōng of fifteenth-century Korea. The first half of the fifteenth century in Yi Korea was a period of intensive learning of Chinese culture under the able leadership of Kings T'aejong and Sejong. What Sō Kōjōng tried to accomplish in this active cultural emulation was to apply the historical method of Ssu-ma Kuang to the history of Korea, a parallel development to Hayashi Razan's efforts in Japan two centuries later. Unlike in Japan, however, a Chu Hsian reaction to the Sō Kōjōng historiography did not immediately follow in Korea. The major historical writing to borrow Chu Hsi's title "Kang-mu" came into existence in Korea with An Chongbok's Tongsa kangmok, which appeared in 1790, a full three centuries after Sō Kōjōng.

Why did Tongsa kangmok take a full three centuries to appear after Sō Kōjōng? It was, I believe, because of the tremendous intellectual tension in dealing with the immoral past of the Yi dynasty, particularly the question of King Sejo's usurpation and the collusion of many scholar-officials of the time. Until such a time as proper historicistic justice was done to the
immoral past of the dynasty, which came very slowly, as we shall see in the following pages, historians in the early Yi dynasty were psychologically unprepared to accept Chu Hsi's historiography in actual historical writings.

This, however, does not mean that the Koreans shied away from Chu Hsi historicism. They willingly accepted Chu Hsi's historicism by the latter half of the fifteenth century. But instead of writing history with that spirit, Korean scholar-officials sharpened it as a political weapon to attack the establishment that was polluted by the immoral past. Gradually and carefully the followers of Kim Chongjik came out into the open with a view reproving Sejo's usurpation of the legitimate dynastic line. Their proposal not to allow any of Sejo's merit subjects to serve in the government of King Songjong and Kim Chongjik's poem criticizing a Chinese usurper were only two examples of their efforts to emulate Chu Hsi's historicism. In this sense, Kim Chongjik's poem on a Chinese usurper, which later started the first literati purge, was a prologue to the yet-unwritten Korean version of Kang-mu.

*So in as Man against Portentism*

It was in the spirit of Neo-Confucian moral judgment
that the idea of the "amoral man" began to earn a significant place in the political discussions of Yi dynasty Korea. The idea of "small man" or "amoral man" (soin, or hsiao-jen in Chinese) as the opposite image of the Confucian ideal man, "superior man" (kunja, or chun-tzu), was of course nothing new with Neo-Confucianism. As a matter of fact, we can find some classical definitions of the terms in the Confucian Analects:

Confucius said, "The gentleman understands what is right; the inferior man understands what is profitable."

Confucius said, "There are three things that a gentleman fears: he fears the will of Heaven, he fears great men, he fears the words of the sages. The inferior man does not know the will of Heaven and does not fear it, he treats great men with contempt, and he scoffs at the words of the sages."

Confucius said, "The gentleman is broad-minded and not partisan; the inferior man is partisan and not broad-minded." 102

Since the idea of a morally superior and inferior man---chun-tzu and hsiao-jen---is one of the basic concepts in the Confucian theory of human nature, it is not strange that the Koreans had toyed with the idea in their political wrangles even before the introduction of Neo-Confucian politics, though we have not many instances. 103
But it was not until the reign of Sŏngjong, and more specifically, in 1477-1478 (Sŏngjong 8-9), that the idea of the "amoral man" or soin had become of poignant relevance to the discussion of politics for the first time in Korean history. The first indication of political turmoil in the reign of King Sŏngjong occurred in 1477 with a minor legal case, which eventually became the cause of the conflict involving two high officials who were related to the royal family by marriage---Hyŏn Sŏkkyyu and Im Sahong.¹⁰⁴ In this confrontation King Sŏngjong decided to reprimand Hyŏn for his being an "amoral man." The meaning of soin here is not very different from the traditional use of the term, as we can see from a remonstrator's criticism of Hyŏn as a man as sly and wicked as Lu Ch'i of T'ang and Wang An-shih of Sung.¹⁰⁵

Thus subsided the controversy, which might have been put into oblivion easily if the sequel to it had not developed the next year. Unlike the first phase, when the high officials related to the royal house were at each other's throats, the later development in 1478 was much more significant in the issues involved. This time the opposing parties were Im Sahong on the one hand and the followers of Kim Chongjik on the other. As we saw at the beginning of this section, Sin Sŏkho's
study of this incident points out the difference between the new scholars and the old guard in their conflicting economic interests and scholarly appetites. And Edward Wagner sees it as a conflict caused by Im's opposition to growing censorial power. \(^{106}\) While it is true that Im admonished the throne to be discreet in accepting censorial remonstrances, such advice was a commonplace at the time, and actually the censorial bodies did not raise any objection to Im's advice. Then what was the fundamental issue that divided Im and the followers of Kim in 1478?

The incident of 1478 began independently of that of the previous year only to merge with it at its close. The year 1478 did not have much of a spring, with drought and fire followed by a rain mixed with soil. As usual, the king announced an appeal for counsel upon the portent of the soily rain, and this appeal was answered with two major memorials. The first, by Yi Simwŏn, a royal relative, proposed to purge the high officials who served King Sejo from any further government services. The latter, presented by Nam Hyoon, argued for restoration of the tomb of the deposed consort of King Munjong and mother of deposed King Tanjong (Prince Nosan as he was then called) to its rightful place as the tomb of the queen. Both also proposed appointing some of the
morally superior men in the country to government posts through recommendation only. These people happened to be followers of Kim Chongjik's teachings. As the monarch himself observed at the time, these proposals were largely "irrational arguments and ludicrous words." And the king's high officials as well as those condemned agreed with the royal opinion. 107

It was at this juncture that Im Sahong attacked the problem at its base by writing a memorial to the throne:

I heard of the prohibition of the wine prompted at the advice of the censors at one of the lectures for the throne. Wine is what people drink. Only when the ruler meets with a great calamity, does he go to self-cultivation, And the prohibition of wine is only one part of the accompanying rituals. Now if the sign of drought is seen as a portent by others, then I would say it is not so dry as we can tell from the barley which is growing so well; we can even expect a good harvest. If the soily rain is seen as a portent by others, I would say that the anomalies of Heaven and earth have shown irregularities from the olden days, and the soily rain happens to be only one of them. What portentousness can there be! If fire is taken as a portent, I would say that when someone starts a fire by mistake at a place where houses are built side by side, and when it meets with an unruly wind, it is natural
that the fire will spread wide. All of these are not outstanding portents, and the sudden ban on wine because of them is inappropriate. 108

The young scholars of the Office of Special Counselors (Hongmun-gwan) and the Office of Royal Decrees (Yemungwan) submitted a long rebuttal in which they criticized Im Sahong point by point and then castigated Im for having the mind of soin, because:

This Im Sahong's views on portents quoted above is none other than the theory of Wang An-shih concerning the so-called "Three unnecessaries." 109 Sahong had flattered the throne by predicting a good harvest this coming fall and cheated the throne by saying that the portents of Heaven and of men are unnecessary to fear. 110

The memorial also attacked Sixth State Councillor Im Won-jun, father of Im Sahong, for being evil and greedy. Then for the first time it revealed that the real instigator of the political turmoil the previous year was Im Sahong and recommended expulsion of the father and son.

King Songjong did not easily comply and reprimanded the remonstrators for their failure to raise the question at the time they were appointed. But when Yi Simwon, a member of the royal family and close relative of Im, approached the throne with reassurance that the Ims were really soin according to his own "very intimate knowledge of them for a long time," the king decided to
give it more consideration. Finally the king decided to follow the young scholars' advice, and Im Sahong and his associates were found to be soin after all and were all banished. Also included in the banished group was Yu Chagwang for his part in the criticism of Hyŏn Sokkyu the previous year. 112

It was from this incident that the idea of soin became a formidable political weapon in attacking the opposing parties in Yi politics. And Im Sahong and Yu Chagwang left their names as the prototype of soin in Korean history, often compared with Wang An-shih, the soin of China, as Koreans of the Yi dynasty believed. After this incident, Im Sahong was never free from being attacked as a soin. It was so when he was released from banishment in 1480, 113 and again when his office certificate (chikch'ŏp) was regranted in 1486 (Sŏngjong 17) in a collective pardon occasioned by spring thunder. 114 It was only through his collusion with the next king, Yŏnson, that he could at least temporarily shake off this ignominy to attain new political heights during Yŏnson's reign.

The incident of 1478 developed in an unexpected direction, though it was not a totally unexpected consequence in the final analysis. When the young scholars responded with their memorials to the king's appeal for
counsel on the occasion of the portentous soily rain, their primary concern was rectification of moral wrongs of the past. Armed with a new vision that only morally superior men and not men of mere erudition should stay in government, the young scholars opened a moral crusade to do justice to the immoral past along Chu Hsi's historicistic teaching. Although their case was overstated, partly because of their political ambition to attract more attention from the throne and from their fellow scholar-officials, the question was neither trivial nor shallow. To render historical justice to their past on the basis of their highest moral standards was the burning intellectual duty of the young scholars who were more and more deeply exposed to Chu Hsi's historicism.

This, however, does not mean that there were no other conflicts beyond such a pure and simple ideological battle between the newly emerging young scholars and the established old guard. Other conflicts were unmistakably there, such as conflicting economic opportunities, which have been well covered by Korean historians of the period. Yet such an explanation of historical events with a theme of "son's revolt against the father" is not adequate enough. After all, Oedipian rebellion is a perennial phenomenon in society; for this very reason it is jejune as a historical explanation, because it
fails to give any answer to why this universal nature of man became suddenly a poignant factor in, say, 1478.

A closer look at the events leads us to believe that the crucial issue was not even the proper role of remonstrance. Rather a more reasonable explanation lies in the question of the portentousness of nature's anomalies. Im Sahong did not cast any doubt, at least outwardly, on the importance of remonstrance in Confucian politics. All he tried was advice to the throne to be discreet in accepting the advice of the remonstrators—-itself a piece of remonstrance. Im Sahong did not even expressly object to the rectification of the past either, though he was part of the establishment. But Im's expressed denial of the portentousness of natural anomalies was tantamount to destroying one great pillar upon which Neo-Confucianism, and the Yi dynasty, stood. It was because of his known scepticism of portentology that Im Sahong was castigated as an incorrigible soin for the rest of his life and for the rest of the Yi dynasty.

Im Sahong’s anti-portentology and the young scholars' embrace of Neo-Confucian portentism were both logical developments from the growing uncertainty over Tung Chung-shu portentology, which we have seen growing since the reign of Sejong. Whereas Im took the radical stand of denying portentology, the young scholars embraced Chu
Hsi's teaching and decided to conserve portentology in a broader moralistic application. For the Neo-Confucian scholars thus emerging, the castigation of Im Sahong was their first victory in the ideological battles to come. And their second important victory was soon to follow in the massive pardon of 1490, which exonerated 690 former officials and scholars who had been banished. When a bolt struck a man just outside a palace gate in that year, Sŏngjong announced this pardon, which included those punished for one reason or another during King Sejo's seizure of power. This pardon, therefore, was the first great leap toward the rectification of the dynastic history in the spirit of Chu Hsi historicism and an impressive victory for the Neo-Confucian scholars of the period.

Another minor consequence of this portent, yet significant for our discussion, was the hiring of Chŏng Yŏ-ch'ang through recommendation. As we can see from the table of Neo-Confucian lineage in Korea produced earlier, Chŏng was a distinguished disciple of Kim Chongjik and had been recommended at the incident of 1478, without success. More significant for our discussion is the fact that recommendation of "neglected superiors" (yuil) to their "rightful" places in government on the occasions of portents received gradually increasing attention from
the Neo-Confucian scholar-officials in Yi Korea. This of course was the Neo-Confucian answer to the problem of sŏin—to expel sŏin on one hand and to search for the morally superior men, who often would not actively seek government posts, on the other hand. We shall examine this further when we come to the efforts of the Cho Kwangjo group to institutionalize the recommendation of the "neglected superiors" in the reign of Chungjong later in this chapter.

D. Violent Reactions to Neo-Confucianism

---King Yŏnsan

Against Historicism: the Purge of 1498

The political turbulence of the reign of King Yŏnsan (r. 1495-1506) can be summarily seen in the first two of the four literati purges of Korean history. Concerning the first purge of 1498 (Yŏnsan 4), or Muo sahwa, traditional historiography relates that this was started by a series of aggravated feelings and enmity between some of the old guard and the followers of Kim Chongjik, especially that between Yu Chagwang and Kim Chongjik himself. To this explanation, modern scholars have added some other factors that contributed to the violent political struggles, such as conflicting interests and the growing muscle of remonstrance. The purge itself
started when it was discovered that Historian Kim Ilson included in his history drafts a poem of Kim Chongjik that obliquely criticised Sejo's usurpation. When the discovery was made in the process of compilation of the Sillok for the reign of King Sŏngjong in 1498, followers of Kim Chongjik were all interrogated on suspicion of high crime. Dozens of Kim's disciples were punished in one way or another. Five scholars, including Kim Ilson, were immediately executed, twenty-six were banished to various places, and Kim Chongjik himself was posthumously punished. Because the purge started with the draft history prepared by Kim Ilson for the future use in compiling the Sillok, this purge has been known as "History Purge" (sahwa), a homonym in Korean of "literati purge" (sahwa).

In his study of the literati purges, Edward Wagner develops his thesis that a purge was "the climax to sustained conflict between the censoring organs and the more highly constituted authority of the government and the palace." Therefore, concerning the relevance of Kim Chongjik's criticism of the Sejo usurpation to the purge of 1498, he believes that "this moral wrong of forty years in the past had no intrinsic connection with the political realities of 1498." Wagner then finds the purge of 1498 "an oblique attack, levelled against Kim
Chongjik and his disciples as symbols of the menace of the rapid growth of the censorial power. But he finds that the censorate of the period was not composed of the disciples of Kim Chongjik and so he admits that he can give "no clear suggestion" to the question of why the attack was made on that imperfect symbol.\textsuperscript{122}

This difficulty in Wagner's interpretation comes from his disregard of the moral problem as related to Sejo's usurpation. And such disregard has been common to all historians dealing with this question. Contrary to this common belief, however, we have already seen how important the young scholars' application of Chu Hsi's historicism to rectifying the moral wrongdoings of the past was in strengthening their voices in politics during the twenty-five-year reign of King Sŏngjong. We have also noted that a thunderbolt in 1490 made the first step toward such rectification of the dynastic past possible.

Such efforts by young Neo-Confucian scholars in the reign of Sŏngjong to rectify the immorality of Sejo's usurpation were not trivial matters, but matters of cardinal significance. As a portion of the commentary to the \textit{Great Learning}, the basic text of Neo-Confucian teaching states:

There are few men in the world, who love and at the same time know the bad qualities of the object of their love, or who hate and yet know
the excellence of the object of their hatred. This commentary then concludes that only a morally cultivated man can make moral judgments on others, thus regulating one's family, then one's state, and then the world. If King Sŏngjong, or any other king for that matter, were blinded by his love of his grandfather, the usurper King Sejo, to the moral wrong of the past reign, it would be the responsibility of the scholar-officials serving him to recognize it. If Sŏngjong could not render historicistic rectification to the dynastic ancestors, who were his family in a narrow sense, how could he be seen fit to rule a Neo-Confucian state?

When the young scholars of 1478 raised the question of restoring the tomb of King Munjong's consort to its rightful place as the tomb of a queen and proposed to purge the old guard who had served Sejo in his government, they were raising the banner of Neo-Confucian historicism for the first time. Though Sŏngjong did not accept all of the proposals, he was gradually turning toward the Neo-Confucian scholars by punishing Im Sahong for his anti-portentology and then by the massive pardon of those punished by Sejo's usurpation.

King Yŏnsan, however, was different from his father, Sŏngjong, in his handling of the rising Neo-Confucian historicism. Probably with the ideological guidance
of some of the old guard, such as Im Sahong, he correctly sensed the infringement on royal authority in Neo-Confucian historicism. From the lofty Neo-Confucian level of the problem of historical morality, King Yŏnsan tried hard to pull the political discussions down to the earthly level of the question of loyalty and power. After the "History purge," any advocacy of the historical reassessment of Sejo's reign became lese majesty, punishable by death. The first literati purge was King Yŏnsan's effort to purge Neo-Confucian historicism in order to consolidate royal power. And in this sense, it was still a "history purge," or better a "purge of historicism."

Against Portentism: The Second Purge of 1504

While his struggle against Neo-Confucian historicism was sudden and successful in the early part of his reign, his fight against the other pillar of Neo-Confucian teaching—portentism—touched a long time to develop into its full swing. The twelve years of King Yŏnsan's reign from 1495 to 1506 were a period of mounting opposition to the established portentology and to Neo-Confucianism in general. Although it is almost impossible to discern his real character after all the character assassinations traditional historiography applied to this
model "tyrant," we can say that he was not the happiest man in the world when he became the tenth king of the Yi dynasty in 1495 at the age of eighteen. When he was still a young prince, his mother was put to death in 1482 as a result of palace intrigues. From the early days of his reign he tried to make some retributions to the tragic memory of his mother, and this is taken as the major cause of the second literati purge by traditional historians.

Unlike the first literati purge of 1498, the second one in 1504 took much longer in running its full course (almost nine months from the third month to tenth, including one intercalary month), and the roster of the victims was much longer. Again unlike the previous purge, the victims of 1504 included not only young scholars, but also court ladies, eunuchs, and even a queen (Yŏnsan's grandmother). One theme running through all the punishments during the year was the king's obsessive drive to stop any sign of insubordination to the absolute authority of the throne. And this is interpreted by modern historians as a battle between the court-centered politicians and the government-centered scholar-officials,124 or as Yŏnsan's efforts to exterminate censoring organs.125

These are certainly valid views. Yet there is
another perspective that can explain in broader terms the political repercussions in Yōnsan's reign against its intellectual background. From the beginning Yōnsan's fight against portentology was related to his efforts to make some retributions for this mother's memory. In the fall of 1496 (Yōnsan 2) an unusually early snow and some other portents gave the officials an opportunity for remonstrance. For some months censors were attacking the additional rewards given to merit subjects and the king's proposed shrine for his dead mother. Now they jumped at the opportunity to relate their argument to the newly occurred portents.126

In responding to this, King Yōnsan allowed himself a little deviation from the conventional course of response by expressing his doubt about the censorate's argument relating the anomalies to such actions planned by the throne. On this comment, his scholar-officials made a vicious attack comparing the king with Wang An-shih:

Wang An-shih once said, "Heavenly anomalies are unnecessary to fear, the dynastic ancestors are unnecessary as models, and the people's words are unnecessary to care about.127"

As the censors pointed out in this memorial, King Yōnsan was more or less violating all three counts by following Wang's unforgivable teachings. His expressed doubt about the portentousness of Heaven's anomalies was the first
"unnecessary" of Wang; his excessive efforts to redress his dead mother, who was put to death by none other than his father-king, was tantamount to following Wang's second "unnecessary"; and his persistent resistance to the voices of his censors, the acknowledged mouth of the people, was none other than the third "unnecessary."

In the next year King Yonsan's reaction to portentology became a little emboldened when thunder in the first month of 1497 offered another opportunity for a doctrinal confrontation. Yonsan would not accept the portentousness of the anomaly, maintaining that a modicum of yang started to grow from the winter solstice and the first month should be counted as springtime. Therefore, thunder in the first month was not portentous, according to his argument. When the scholar-officials came back with the authority of the Monthly Ordinances (Yueh-ling) of the Book of Rites, which state that all thunder between the ninth month and the first month should be portentous, the king then shifted his ground to put the blame on the censors: "You discard your work and leave a backlog of legal cases to stand for so long on strike in the palace court-yard. This, to my opinion, is the cause of the portent."128

This reminds us of Im Sahong, the "villain" or soin of the 1478 incident, who was removed from his post of
Chief Royal Secretary for his expressed denial of the portentousness of Heavenly anomalies. For the nineteen years inbetween, Im Sahong was repeatedly to receive royal favors of one kind or another because of the close marital ties he had with the royal family. Two of his sons married a daughter of King Yejong and a daughter of King Sŏngjong respectively. Repeatedly these favors were criticized by the scholar-officials on the grounds that he was the son of 1478. When his name was included in the roster of first sons of merit subjects, who were to receive an advancement in rank in 1497 (Yŏnsan 3) despite the continued reports of observed daytime Venus, memorials poured in criticizing the royal insolence toward the Heavenly portents, thus, in effect, arguing that Im's undue honours were the cause of the portents. Yŏnsan this time tried to placate his officials by assuring them that he was "not unafraid of Heavenly portents," and yet tried to resist the prescription of his critics by saying, "Concerning this day-time Venus, however, how can it be due to Im Sahong and others? Did we not have it before, too?"

Such irresolute resistance shown by King Yŏnsan did not help the throne, and his position became more vulnerable when a thunderbolt struck a pillar of the Sŏnjŏng Hall in the early summer of the same year.
opening the throne to a fresh round of criticism. On an appeal for counsel, which was announced reluctantly after the portent, even Yu Chagwang, who had been punished for his collusion with Im Sahong in 1478, memorialized for the king to be alert and respectful for the portents. King Yŏnsan finally acquiesced further and rescinded his announced plan to advance Im’s rank, a decision welcomed by his subjects.

He continued to be more conciliatory toward his officials’ requests, returning to the government 500 ǒok of rice he brought into the palace for dubious reasons and rescinding his previous order for local magistrates to catch deer for the king. Most of all, King Yŏnsan resumed the long-neglected royal lectures from the seventh month of this year as a gesture for better communication between the throne and scholar-officials. The Sillok historians attached the following comment after this round, which resulted in another loss for Im Sahong.

People of the time said in accusing Im Sahong, “In the beginning Sahong was punished for his support of the theory of anti-portentology. Now he has lost his rank again because of a Heavenly portent. Indeed, Heaven’s retribution is dreadful.”

Im Sahong was to experience additional disgrace before he finally reached the helm of power after the second literati purge in 1504. An interesting fact is
that King Yōnsan was the second person after Im Sahong in expressing doubt about the portentousness of Heavenly portents in this period. It is highly probable that Im Sahong, from the early years of Yōnsan's reign, was behind the king's growing doubts concerning portents; however, we lack any concrete proof of this except that Im is seen in traditional historiography as the major instigator of the second purge.

Whatever relation he had with Im Sahong in the early years of his reign, King Yōnsan's growing doubts about portentology had little to do with the first purge of 1498. I have already pointed out that the purge of 1498 should be regarded as the old guard's struggle against the rising Neo-Confucian historicism. If portentology itself had little to do with the first purge, his doubts about portentology had been growing long before the first purge. In early 1498, just before the first purge, King Yōnsan made his doubts known on the portent of a mountain collapsing. When state councillors reported the portent, he responded that it could be explained by the fact that the earth, frozen during winter, started to melt in the early spring, causing the mountain slide. It cannot be a serious portent, according to him, and even if it were, it should be seen as a sign of a "weak monarch and strong subjects," for the portent signified
prospering \textit{yin} and weakening \textit{yang}. Then only days before the unfolding of the first literati purge of 1498, we find King Yŏnsan more determined in his denial of the portentousness of an earthquake. When the king's brother-in-law and Chief Royal Secretary, Sin Sungson (1450-1506), turned in his resignation due to the special counselors' criticism of royal in-laws' interfering in the government as the cause of the portent, Yŏnsan firmly stood behind his brother-in-law:

Young men in the Office of Special Counsellors (Hongmun-gwan), reading the words of the men of olden days in vain, say this. But there is no sense. Sometime earlier, when there was thunder, they took it as caused by the failure of state councillors. How can it be so? You shall not resign.\textsuperscript{136}

With obvious vacillations King Yŏnsan's doubts on portentology was slowly growing during the years between the two purges, from 1498 to 1504. A daytime Venus of 1499 was seen as a sign of "prospering \textit{yin} and declining \textit{yang},"\textsuperscript{137} and the same portent of 1503 was seen as insignificant because, according to the king, it occurred so often and he could not stop his work because of the usual happenings.\textsuperscript{138} We find him also saying: "I can not believe that eclipses have anything to do with the ruler."\textsuperscript{139} All in all, King Yŏnsan was gradually

315
developing his view of anti-portentology, but was not yet ready during the inter-purge years to go all the way to defy the established portentology. Thus he sometimes criticized the theory of portents, sometimes followed the established rules at the appearance of portents, sometimes even tried to hide or suppress reports of portents. For instance, when a comet appeared in the fourth month of 1500, he tried to silence the report, because if the censors were to hear the news, they would no doubt make a fuss. 140

King Yŏnsan's anti-portentology became crystal-clear only in the process of the second literati purge of 1504. After various groups of scholar-officials were punished for different reasons or for unclear reasons, King Yŏnsan ordered in the fifth month of 1504 the investigation and punishment of those who had remonstrated and vacated their offices when the thunderbolt hit the pillar of the Sŏnjŏng Hall in 1497. 141 The next day a royal message was sent to the government to ask:

Until now many guilty men have been executed. If there occurred a Heavenly anomaly right at this hour, would you say as they did to relate the portent to the executions? Concerning executions like this, are they wrong or right? Is this tyranny? 142
Then he announced a statement answering such questions for himself:

Some rulers are wise, and others are not. Some work hard in governing, while others do not. It all depends upon each ruler, and this is one thing his subjects cannot teach. Whether a ruler is wise or not, Heaven must be aware of it. If it is a wise ruler, Heaven would know him. But even if he is not wise, Heaven can not make him wise. People below cannot on account of this criticize their ruler. . . . When there is a Heavenly anomaly, then emperors and kings will carry self-cultivation in awe. Yet that should not be related to failure in any particular matter. Now that the guilty ones are punished, how can this be tyranny?143

(Italics mine)

This was a significant precedent in the history of portentology in Korea, for it was meant to prohibit once and for all any discussion of politics by relating it to portents. It was the death sentence to portent politics.

Now the message from the throne was loud and clear. So when summer hail was reported, during the month, from a northern province, royal secretaries volunteered their view before the throne:

Though there were many occasions of hail, yet we have never heard of any hail as large as a piece of tile, as reported now. This is a
great anomaly. Yet the Way of Heaven is unfathomable. How can anyone say that this anomaly is caused by men of sorrow and vengeance.\textsuperscript{144}

Now the great purge of 1504 was running through its last phase, and the king was confident of no disturbing reaction from his subjects any more.

With undisguised exultation in his apparent triumph, King Yönsan could now say that the drought of that very year had nothing to do with the throne's lack of efforts.\textsuperscript{145}

By the seventh month of the year, 1504, the demise of portentology seemed to have been complete:

His Majesty brought out the stem of a flower from the inner court to show it to his subjects, including the state councillors, and said, "Many people of olden days took the flowering in autumn as portentous. Sometime ago there was a remonstrator, who asked to stop a royal outing, taking the accidental fire at Ch'ang-gyöng Palace the day before as a portent. If people like him see this flower, they will undoubtedly take this as a portent." State councillors and others answered, "The flowering of peach or plum trees in winter can properly be seen as a portent. Now this one stem of a flower has accidentally bloomed thanks to the recent rain. How can we call it a portent? Even with the flowering of plums and peaches, only when they are in full bloom, then and only then we can call it a portent."\textsuperscript{146}
With such interpreters around him, it is obvious that no portent could remain as portentous any more.

The Lapse of Neo-Confucianism

Often the second literati purge of 1504 (Kapcha sahwa) is seen as a struggle, particularly between the court-centered officials and the government-centered officials. Wagner in his effort to delineate the growing role of remonstrance in this period saw in King Yŏnsan's undisguised attack on the "very root of the political turbulence of that day, the concept of remonstrance itself." Few historians would doubt that the most obvious cause of the political purges in Yŏnsan's reign was Yŏnsan's desire to exercise his sovereign power with more freedom from his scholar-officials.

To view the 1504 purge as Yŏnsan's efforts to free himself from remonstrance is then no doubt true. Yet there seems to be another perspective. And our question can be rephrased: Why was the consolidation of royal power necessary for this particular king, even though he had to utilize violent means, and not to other kings before him? Was it his personal drive for naked power, as we find with many tyrants in history? Or was it more from a threat developing afresh in the long-established institution of remonstrance? As traditional historians of the
Yi period wrote, King Yōnsan was no doubt a tyrant.

But this alone does not fully answer our question as to why King Yōnsan had to fight so hard against the principle of remonstrance by scholar-officials that had been instituted since Koryŏ. The answer seems to be in the change in the intellectual outlook among the scholar-officials with the rise of Kim Chongjik followers from the late fifteenth century. And in the question of power sharing, the new scholars' orientation was definitely for "constitutionalism."

We have already seen "constitutionalism" in Chŏng Tojŏn's effort to keep the throne aloof from politics by giving the authority to rule to the state councillor. Chŏng failed with the rise of T'aejong, the monarchist, and Chŏng's ideal went dormant. After that the principle of the throne's direct rule was never challenged in the Yi dynasty. Neo-Confucian scholars, who emerged as a strong political influence in Sŏngjong's reign, built their "constitution" upon the two pillars of historicism and portentism. According to their Neo-Confucian "constitution," the ruler had to be the moral leader of his nation and his level of moral attainment was to be reflected upon the two mirrors of historical judgment and nature's portents. As a collective whole, scholars declared that they were the organ of reading the signs from history and nature and thus retained the role of...
"king without a crown." It was they who would interpret the "constitution" of history and nature, whereby the ruler has to rule his country.

Here we see one cycle completing itself to connect Chŏng Tojon with Neo-Confucians. Chŏng wanted the "constitution" to be written down on paper as a permanent institution of the new dynasty, and the Neo-Confucians found their "constitution" from the moral continuum of space-time. Chŏng Tojon invoked the institution of the ancient "Golden Age" recorded in the Chou-li (Rites of Chou), and the followers of Kim Chongjik were inspired by a new political philosophy from Neo-Confucian cosmic moral order. If there was a great difference in the intellectual assumptions held by these two "constitutionalists," their ultimate ideal in the problem of power sharing remained the same. And both were dangerous to the eyes of the monarchists.

The two literati purges during the reign of King Yŏnsan were increasingly violent reactions of the monarchists to the rising Neo-Confucian "constitutionalists." The first purge was against Neo-Confucian historicism; the second purge against Neo-Confucian portentism. At the close of the second purge, King Yŏnsan seemed to have successfully suppressed the growing Neo-Confucianism at its roots. Now Yŏnsan began to tailor his government
organization to his needs.

First King Yŏnsan found the royal lectures all harmful, because the success of a king did not depend upon the amount of learning he earned, he said. Furthermore, he claimed that he had already achieved an adequate degree of scholarship and did not need any more. So finally in the fifth month of 1506, the Office of Royal Lectures was simply abolished. To discredit the Neo-Confucian "constitution" that he saw as undermining his sovereign authority, King Yŏnsan's institutional changes continued with the abolition of the Office of Censor-General and the Office of Special Counselors in the same year. Of the three censoring organs, the only one left now was the Office of Inspector-General. And this organ with the original function of inspecting officials and not the throne, was functioning only in its minimal role without traditional power of sŏgyŏng, the veto over appointment of officials. The national college (Sŏnggyun-gwan) was turned into an entertainment center instead of raising any more young scholars. Freedom of remonstrance was thoroughly gagged, as portents were no more to serve as occasions for such speech, and the route of communication between the main body of scholars and their king was completely broken.
Since any meaningful remonstrance with the throne was possible on the occasions of portents, King Yŏnsan had to stop any report of such observations in the first place. After the second literati purge of 1504, he began openly to order officials not to report one portent after another. In 1505 he prohibited any report of meteors and daytime Venus. More and more he became confident that nobody would dare submit any political matter for discussion, not to mention any opinion or judgment on the moral attainment of the throne, on the occasion of portents. At least officially the theory of portents, or portentology, disappeared. Toward the end of 1505, therefore, Yŏnsan could boast by asking his officials if there were still anybody who would take the thunder-lightning of the tenth month of the year as portentous.

His scholar-officials had no choice but to play to the tune of the king. So they said in one voice that the unusual cold in springtime was nothing strange and the appearance of a deer inside the city-wall was not ominous, and so on. Then an over-night snow was reported by the Office of Astronomy in the fourth month of 1506. King Yŏnsan's first reaction was that it was not unusual, and his secretaries did not hesitate to agree with his opinion. On second thought,
however, the king began to question the report. He ordered an interrogation of the astronomer who made the report, under torture if necessary. For, according to his opinion, snow could not have fallen in such a warm weather and it must have been a plot to deceive the throne. 159

It was a logical development that the Office of Astronomy was altogether abolished in the seventh month of 1506. Time-keeping and calendar-making were taken over by a new Bureau of Calendar (Saryŏk-so). Any further observations, reports, or discussions of the anomalies of nature were stopped. 160 Then the king tried to apply his anti-portentology decree retroactively to punish those who had at any time in the past remonstrated with the throne on the grounds that "failure of certain human affairs leads to the occurrence of certain portents." 161 Portentology now became dormant.

As for the other pillar of Neo-Confucianism, King Yŏnsan had already purged historicism from the government by his decree in the second month of 1506:

After passing the civil examination, what is the use of reading history any more? Those who read history find matters such as Heavenly anomalies and ridiculously discuss them as the results of certain human affairs. This is extremely undesirable. From now on it is
firmly prohibited for the civil officials, except for those in charge of literary matters, to carry history books and to gather for discussions.\textsuperscript{162}

Here we see the merger of King Yŏnsan's two purges of historicism and of portentism. The two different political purges of 1498 and 1504, then, were nothing but two separate incidents from the changing climate of opinion from old Confucianism to a new one called Neo-Confucianism. And the picture toward the end of King Yŏnsan's reign was a very bleak one for Neo-Confucianism in Korea.

E. Victory of Neo-Confucianism

---King Chungjong

\textbf{Historicism on the March}

The coup of 1506 that deposed Yŏnsan and enthroned his half-brother, Chungjong, did not come at the hands of the oppressed Neo-Confucian scholars of the time, but at the hands of the old guard alienated from the center of power during Yŏnsan's reign. It was primarily the old guard's revolt against the petty tyranny of Yŏnsan. Be that as it may, the "restoration" (panjŏng) of King Chungjong brought a period of debunking the immediate past, thus reviving the broken tradition of Neo-Confucianism and taking up where the reign of King Sŏngjong
left off. All the issues relating to the moral rectification of history which were raised in the reign of Songjong, were solved one after another according to the wishes of the newly rising scholar-officials.

(1) Restoration of the Tomb of Munjong's Consort

We have already seen how this question of historiography prompted a big political hassle in King Songjong's reign in 1478, which had eventually led to Im Sahong's remarks, that the soily rain would not portend anything meaningful, thus triggering his own dismissal. And it was this moral historicism that led to the first literati purge of 1498. Seven years after the fall of Yonsan, when lightning hit two pine trees in the dynastic shrine in the second month of 1513 (Chungjong 8), the scholar-officials raised their voice for the restoration of the tomb, the same proposal that had failed to materialize in Songjong's reign.163

After two months of memorials and royal rejections, King Chungjong decided finally to agree with historicistic judgment and this was nothing less than an indirect acknowledgment of the immorality of the usurpation of King Sejo, his great grandfather. It took half a century to go that far, and it was to take two more centuries, in the reign of King Sukchong (r. 1674-1720), to fully recognize Sejo's immoral usurpation by reinstituting
the deposed boy king to his rightful place in the
dynastic ancestral shrine as "King Tanjong."

(2) Canonization of Chōng Mongju

The proposal to enshrine Chōng Mongju (1337-1392)
for his unbending loyalty to the Koryo dynasty was first
made in 1510 and then in 1514. Opposition by high
officials carried the day with the opinion that such
a decision should not be lightly made, because that
question had never been raised since the founding of
the dynasty.\textsuperscript{164}

Chōng Mongju, who had emerged as the last stumbling
block to the rise of the new dynasty in the last years
of the Koryo dynasty, was assassinated by Yi Pangwŏn,
who became the third king of the Yi dynasty. More im-
portantly, however, Chōng had been identified as the
father of Korean Neo-Confucianism, largely because the
followers of Kim Chongjik in the reign of Sŏngjong traced
their scholarly lineage back to him.\textsuperscript{165} In a way, then,
this move to install his name in the National Confucian
Shrine was the resurgent Neo-Confucian scholars' effort
to exult their own system of views into a national ortho-
doxy, which would inevitably bring some benefits to Neo-
Confucian followers in the years to come.

No less important was the fact that it was a part
of their full-dress reassessment of their past in accor-
dance with Neo-Confucian historicism. So when this question was again raised in 1517 (Chungjong 12) by Chŏng Sunbun, he also proposed to honour Sŏng Sammun, and Pak P'aengnyŏn, two of the "six loyal subjects" of deposed Tanjong, who were executed for their abortive plot to assassinate the usurper king, Sejo, and to restore the boy king in 1456.\footnote{166} Moral judgment of history was now applied not only to the obvious immorality involved in the usurpation of Sejo, but also the more remote past in the dynastic foundation. By the successful enshrinement of Chŏng Mongju in 1517, Neo-Confucianism in Korea recorded another victory in its continuing efforts to render moral justice to Korea's past.

(3) Deletion of Chungjong Merit Subjects

The 1506 coup that brought the restoration of King Chungjong was a rather strange event. As already noted, it was not carried out by the oppressed Neo-Confucian scholars, but largely by the old guard who were well ensconced in the Yŏnsan government, although they were gradually alienated toward the later years of the reign. Therefore, when the roster of merit subjects was prepared a few days after the coup, it was mostly filled with the names of the same old people who served the tyrant.

The most prominent example in the list was Yu Cha-gwang, the villain of the first literati purge of
1498 and a prototype of the soin thereafter in traditional historiography. With his last-minute participation in the coup plan, Yu Chagwang had successfully listed his name in the fourth place in the first class of the merit roster, behind only the Big Three who actually led the coup. The roster included 117 merit subjects in four classes, who received land, slaves, and titles. There also were a large number of minor rewards bestowed upon minor merit subjects of some two hundred people. From the day after the announcement of the roster, criticism began to mount over some undeserving rewards. Criticism was particularly harsh in the case of Yu Chagwang, quite understandably when we consider his role in the purge of 1498, and continued until he was finally removed from the roster and then banished in 1507 to remain so until his death in 1512.167

In 1519 (Chungjong 14) this issue was brought up in a more violent fashion by the young scholars led by Cho Kwangjo, and their success in the revision of the roster served as one of the major causes of the third literati purge of that year (Kimyo sahwa). The deletion of almost three quarters of the merit subjects from the original roster 13 years after it had been made had every reason to be met with great dissatisfaction on the part of those deleted. It was no coincidence
that the purge of 1519 followed this revision by only four days. 168

(4) Toward the Restoration of Lady Sin

Just as efforts for the deletion of undeserving merit subjects were a contemporary manifestation of the Neo-Confucian spirit of historicism, there was another difficult problem of moral rectification. The question of whether the deposed Lady Sin was to be restored to queenship was not raised as a problem until the two magistrates Kim Chŏng and Pak Sang memorialized the throne in the summer of 1515 (Chungjong 10). But when it was once brought up, it came with a full set of repercussions. 169

Lady Sin was the wife of King Chungjong before he became the king in 1506. But she was also daughter of Sin Sugūn, brother-in-law of the deposed King Yŏnsan, who was killed by the coup leaders for his cooperation with Yŏnsan. Since the coup leaders killed Sin, it was politically expedient for them, with the memory of King Yonsan’s bloody revenge of his mother still fresh, to press the new king to oust the blameless Lady Sin.

Because this happened only a week after the coup and a new queen, Changgyŏng, was soon appointed to replace Lady Sin, nothing could be done for the ousted Lady Sin for more than ten years. But Queen Changgyŏng died
after child-birth in early 1515, leaving the future succession unsettled. At the time, King Chungjong's favorite in the court was Lady Pak, who wanted to push herself into the now-vacant queenship, with obvious support from the throne itself. However, such promotion for Lady Pak could present a serious problem in the future succession, because the oldest prince was Lady Pak's son, while the only legitimate prince born of the queen was only a few weeks old. With full grasp of the potential difficulties, Chief State Councillor Chŏng opposed the throne's proposal.

It was in this situation that the Kim-Pak memorial was submitted at the appeal for counsel announced on the occurrence of hail, an earthquake, and a five-legged cow. Their argument was that by restoring Lady Sin the legitimate heir would be free from the kind of danger that could come from appointing Lady Pak. Furthermore, this would undo some of the moral injustices done to the lady, thus gaining some intellectual satisfaction in accordance with Neo-Confucian historicism. To do so, it would be necessary to punish posthumously some of the prominent merit subjects who were responsible for the moral wrong committed in deposing Lady Sin. Since the deletion of merit subjects was what the young scholars had wanted for so long, the Kim-Pak memorial was like
aiming "to kill two birds with one stone."

However, as it turned out later, this proposal had one significant flaw. Remonstrators led by Chief Censor Yi Haeng (1478-1534) pointed out this flaw. If Lady Sin were restored and bore a son, the succession problem would be more complicated than anything arising from Lady Pak's promotion. Furthermore, the possibility for Lady Sin, if restored, to avenge her father was not unthinkable. Yi Haeng did not deny the importance of moral rectification, but he argued that if by doing this Lady Sin would endanger the royal succession, it might as well be avoided. In other words, Yi Haeng made his argument more convincingly on the same practical ground, and his view was vindicated two years later by the fact that a third candidate was selected as the new queen instead of either Lady Sin or Lady Pak.

In his fight against the Kim-Pak memorial, however, Yi Haeng, as Chief of the Office of Censor-General (sagan-won), committed a serious mistake by asking for severe punishment of Kim and Pak. Though some high officials, including Chief State Councillor Ch'ŏng Kwang-p'il, opposed such punishment in fear of blocking the "route of communication," the censors led by Yi Haeng insisted and King Chungjong was obviously in the same mood. So Kim and Pak were banished.
It was at this point that Cho Kwangjo (1482-1519) found an opportunity to make himself known to the court by pointing out the mistake committed by Yi Haeng and his fellow censors. Cho passed the civil service examination only the day before the punishment of Kim and Pak. When he was appointed to a lower censor post, Cho Kwangjo immediately stood up to pinpoint the blunder Yi Haeng made. Putting himself completely aloof from the actual question of selecting the next queen, which had already run its full course anyway, Cho attacked his fellow censors, including Chief Censor Yi Haeng, for violating fundamental principles in their eagerness to punish Kim Chong and Pak Sang. Indeed Yi Haeng and his colleagues betrayed their role of protecting the route of communication between the throne and his scholar-officials by trying to punish Kim and Pak for their memorial submitted at the royal appeal for counsel. And the occasion, as usual, was made possible by portents.

The Revival of Portentism and Beyond

Here a question of historicism concerning the restoration of Lady Sin made a full turn into a question of portentology. Of course, Yi Haeng did not explicitly deny any part of portentology and probably did not mean
to either. But since the only social function of portents in Korean politics of the period was to serve as an opportunity for "Confucian persuasion" of the throne by his scholar-officials, any efforts by censors to suppress such an opportunity of remonstrance was tantamount to the denial of portentology. This was where Cho Kwangjo could make the best of it for rapid advancement in government. And this was where Yi Haeng erred, earning the name of soin and being pushed into voluntary retirement.172

After the fall of King Yonsan and Im Saong, there was nobody, except Yi Haeng's inadvertant blunder, who would argue for the separation of Heaven and man, or for the independence of human affairs from Heavenly portents. Wang An-shih, as the progenitor of the tradition of anti-portentology, was once more firmly denounced at one of the royal lectures in 1511:

His Majesty attended an evening royal lecture. The lecture was on the annals of Emperor Shensung from the Mirror of Sung China (Sung-chien), and it came to the portion about Wang An-shih saying that anomalies are accidents of nature and have nothing to do with gains and losses in human affairs. Discussant So Seryang said, "The theory that anomalies are accidents of nature and have nothing to do with human affairs not only misled Emperor Shensung, but also have been misguiding the rulers ever since.

334
At the time solar eclipses, earthquakes, and other portents had never ceased to occur, and all of them were what Wang An-shih had brought." His Majesty said, "The words of Wang An-shih are wrong. Human affairs are felt below and Heavenly portents respond thereto above."

Yet the portentology revived in the reign of Chung-jong was not exactly the same as before King Yonsan. In 1517, for instance, Nam Kon opposed the idea of having the new queen pay homage to the ancestral shrine on the grounds that portents had shown a disharmonious waxing and waning of yin-yang. This argument was picked up by Kim Chong, who rejected any such specific corelations between Heavenly portents and human affairs, proposing that "portents should not be seen as resulting from any specific human affairs." Only the cultivation of royal virtue can mitigate portents, according to Kim Chong, and then Cho Kwangjo who soon seconded him. 174

One of the best specimens of the representative view of portents of the period is found in the memorial submitted in 1517 (Chungjong 12) by Chief Censor Yi Songdong:

The above that is immeasurable and the below that is unfathomable---their shapes are separated in distance and look as if there is no mutual relation. And yet every act of man, either virtuous or vicious, reaches Heaven
without failure and Heaven responds like a shadow or an echo. Heaven and man are of one and the same ch'i. Since ch'i relates them together, what is felt in human affairs is duly responded by Heaven---this is the li of nature. . . . In the past, auspices were seen as the joy of Heaven, and omens as the anger of Heaven. The joy and anger of Heaven, however, are not the joy and anger of Heaven, but the joy and anger of the people of the world. The joy and anger of the people of the world depend upon how the ruler acts. If every act of the ruler does not go out of the bounds of the highest good, then the people of the world will be in joy. When they are in joy, their minds will be in harmony. Once harmonious ch'i is made to permeate the above and the below, then Heaven and earth will naturally respond thereto with harmonious ch'i. If the ch'i of Heaven and earth are in harmony, then yin and yang will be normal, wind and rain will be timely, hundreds of things will grow; and wicked phenomena will not occur. Thus the world is elevated to the realm of the bright and broad. 175

After discussing what would come if the ruler stayed out of the bounds of the "highest good," Yi Sŏngdong goes on to say that the ultimately good government rests on every act of the ruler. 176 This is one of the longest memorials we can find in the Sillok. King Chungjong praised the memorial as "so beautiful" that

336
he confessed reading it three times for himself.177

This excellent piece of portentistic discourse seems to reflect very well the natural philosophy, or rather the lack of natural philosophy, of Neo-Confucianism... In Neo-Confucian thinking, natural phenomena exist only as extensions of man's moral concern. So portentism departs from the old portentology in two points: (1) Any existence of an anthropomorphic Heaven is specifically rejected, as we can see from the memorial of Yi Songdong above. In place of Heaven's joy and anger—held by Tung Chung-shu and Chōng Tojōn—the omnipresent Neo-Confucian material element ch'i is introduced to explain in more rational terms the relationship between Heaven and man, or Nature and man. (2) The prime and only cause for all kinds of portents is reduced to the degree of the moral attainment of human society, and then it is further reduced to a matter of the moral attainment of the ruler. The first stage of reductionism is more or less the product of old Confucianism (Classical or Tung Chung-shu portentology), but the second stage of reduction was the invention of the Neo-Confucian philosophers. Now, thanks to the double reduction, portents were to be seen only as a yardstick to measure the moral attainment of the king, who had to make incessant efforts to arrive at
and stay in the "highest good," as the first sentence of the Great Learning inculcates.

One significant outcome of this reductionism is the emergence of the politics of soin ("small man" or "amoral man") in the period. We have already seen how Koreans in the reign of King Sŏngjong started to develop the prototype of soin in Im Sahong, for he, according to the young Neo-Confucians of the time, tried to distract royal judgment to his personal gain through his flattery of presenting the theory of anti-portentology. After the fall of Im Sahong and King Yŏnsan, the idea of soin became a little different from the original definition rendered in the case of Im Sahong. Now there were few people if any who would voice a theory of anti-portentology, thus no one could be held as a soin for the same reason as the case of Im Sahong. Instead, whenever serious portents occurred, people began to attack somebody who could have served as a stumbling block in the throne's efforts for higher moral attainment. The portent was becoming the sign of the existence of such soin in government.

This development was unmistakable from the early years of King Chungjong's reign. When the throne announced an appeal for counsel in 1507 (Chungjong 2) occasioned by portents including hail, the portents were seen as "the response to the soin's working in
government," or as "the sign of the soin's getting his way to invite chaos to the nation."178 Such attacks were aimed at the first class merit subjects, especially Yu Chagwang. Two years later, a series of Venus-in-daytime was seen as the sign of soin in power.179 So King Chungjong once said that an expected solar eclipse would not occur if the ruler could keep up with good government, which was "to use the wise and to expel the wicked."180

The Literati Purge of 1519: Soin against Soin

It is well known that the third literati purge of the Yi dynasty in 1519 (Kimyo sahwa) was in part caused by the Cho Kwangjo group's castigation of the old guard, including Nam Kon, as soin.181 As a student of Kim Chongjik himself, Nam Kon was originally not a man far from the tradition that the young scholars of the early part of Chungjong's reign inherited from the Kim Chongjik tradition. In less than half a year after the Chungjong restoration, however, Nam Kon and Sim Chông were rewarded for uncovering a cloak-and-dagger plot against the leading merit subjects. The plotters charged the merit subjects as corrupt soin. And one of the men behind the assassination plot was Cho Kwangjo himself, and apparently for this reason Nam and Sim
were picked up as a new model of sain thereafter by the rising scholars led by Cho Kwangjo.182

This seemingly minor incident manifests the radical reformism embraced by the young Neo-Confucians in the early years of Chungjong's reign. The involvement of Cho Kwangjo and some other leaders of the young "scholars of 1519" is found in the Sillok record, but other personal memoirs written after the purge of 1519 are silent on this involvement.183 Surely such revolutionary adventurism would not be appropriate to the image of Cho Kwangjo, the enshrined sage of Korean Confucian tradition. And this story was not included in the writings of the scholars of the later period, because the later scholars identified themselves as in the Cho Kwangjo tradition and not in the Nam Kon tradition.

The radical reformism we see in this adventurous plot to bring changes in government through assassination was the keynote in the rising political muscle of the Cho Kwangjo group during the years of Chungjong's reign up to the literati purge of 1519 (Chungjong 14). The young scholars' determination to render historicistic judgment upon the living or the recently dead merit subjects was to arouse a great deal of consternation among the merit subjects, their descendents and friends. The Cho Kwangjo group's overnight remonstrances in the
court-yard for the abolition of the Office of Taoist Affairs (Sogyŏk-sŏ), which we have already reviewed, was another expression of their radical reformism. By this, they wanted to add the final touch to the triumph of Confucian rationalism that was started with similar zeal at the end of the Koryo dynasty by Chŏng Tojŏn and his followers. Although the issue was not a fresh one, and few if any came out to oppose their efforts to abolish the last vestige of Taoist exorcism, their uncompromising assertion of the principle before the throne had inevitably aroused a great deal of ire on the part of the king, who had rendered powerful support to their cause until this time.

The radical reformism of the Cho group also exploited another significant issue that ultimately led to their downfall—the recommendation examination (ch'ŏn'gŏ-kwa, or hyŏllyang-kwa). Appointment of officials through recommendation was one of the three major channels of the civil service in Yi Korea, although the formal examination was by far the dominant one of the three. And we have already seen that the followers of Kim Chongjik, after their first failure in similar efforts in 1478, had successfully raised the question of appointing Chŏng Yŏch'ang on the occasion of the thunderbolt hitting a man outside the palace in 1490 (Songjong 21).
Yet recommendation was limited to lower officials and used sparingly, usually on occasions of unusual portents. The Cho Kwangjo group's success in instituting this channel as a formal and regular route of recruiting a large number of "neglected men of virtue" (yuil) was the first such happening in Korean history. 188 As Sin Sŏkho pointed out, the necessity of the recommendation came with the changing emphasis from literary arts to the study of the classics. 189 In a way it served as another factor to push Nam Kon, the recognized literary master of the period, into strong opposition to the Cho group. As King Chungjong had once admitted, apparently under the influence of some of the scholars of the Cho group, literary arts were only a branch and the classics was the root of scholarship for the new era. 190 But such concern for the classics was not anything new, for it was a built-in element of Confucianism, though it was reemphasized strongly by Neo-Confucian scholars.

For the young scholars gathered under Cho Kwangjo, the ills of the society and the government were that the men of virtue could not be fully utilized under the established government civil service examination with its sole emphasis upon knowledge, especially in the field of literary arts. To know does not mean to act accordingly. For the highly moralistic Neo-Confucian scholars, this truism was felt more acutely. And the
young radicals wanted to solve the problem through their conviction that the crux of good government was in recruiting men of virtue who could help achieve the moral rectification of the people by acting as models for emulation. Men of mere knowledge can very much be soin, or amoral men, who would only invite ruin to the world. This is where the recommendation was so relevant to rising concerns over the problem of soin in politics.

The recommendation has also had a long history in China, and Chu Hsi himself supported at least a partial use of the method in his time. The idea of doing away with the regular examination entirely and filling government posts with recommended men of virtue was a nostalgic ideal of the Neo-Confucian scholars and "an idealistic regret" of the Confucians over the Legalistic contaminations of government, to borrow Nivison's expression.

If the idea of the recommendation held by the Cho Kwangjo group came from Chu Hsi, they obviously decided to go all the way rather than to stop in the middle, as their teacher did, in adopting the method in government. From the earliest known political action, that is, the 1507 plot for the assassination of some of the top merit subjects, the Cho group wanted to replace the old govern-
ment civil service examination with the recommendation system. Although it is not clear what might have been done if they had stayed in power long enough, the wholesale replacement of the civil service examination with recommendation was a possibility. Ideals, however, always get corrupted in practice. And it was only one such case of the corrupt ideals that three sons of Right State Councillor, An Tang, were included among the twenty-eight final passers of the first recommendation in 1519. An Tang was placed somewhat irregularly in the state councillorship by the strong support of the Cho group, and in his proximity to the throne he was serving the young scholars in the role of spokesman for the group. Even to the most unsuspecting eyes, the passing of his three sons at once was enough to arouse suspicion.

The source of tension on a more basic level was the degree of reformism in the Confucian tradition. In a well-known position statement in the Analects, Confucius said that he was a transmitter and not an innovator. It was through Kang Yu-wei's metamorphosis of Chinese tradition in meeting with the West that Confucius was reinterpreted as a reformer or revolutionary thinker. What Confucius did was far from what he claimed in this statement, according to Fung Yu-lan, and Confucius was an innovator in the guise of transmitting. The fact
remains, however, that any radical institutional changes in Chinese history were generally frowned upon, as we can see in the case of Wang An-shih's reforms. And significantly enough for our study of the Korean cases, Wang An-shih was the model of the soin in Yi Korean political discussions, as we have repeatedly seen above.

Opposition to and purge of the Cho Kwangjo group in the third literati purge of the Yi dynasty in 1519 (Kimyo sahwa) was primarily aimed at this radical reformism. The frequent display of extremism by the Cho group aroused a great deal of apprehension among the growing number of scholars, touching their conservative instinct. Under their aegis, too many institutional changes were tried too often in too short a period of time with too many extremes. So their introduction of recommendation was viewed as "one of the extreme cases of many institutional changes in recent years" by the opposing group of scholars.198

The exemplary spirit of the Confucian conservatism of the period can be found in the case of the staunch and consistent opposition raised by Chief State Councilor Chŏng Kwang'il (1462-1538) throughout the reform period of the Cho group. Chŏng raised opposition to almost everything the radical group tried to accomplish against the established practices. But more interestingly, he also raised his opposition when the Cho group was indicted for treason, and he even opposed the repeal
of the recommendation system after the fall of the radicals, even though he was one of the champions in opposition to the introduction of the system. For Chŏng Kwangp'ıll, any sudden change one way or the other was very undesirable, and he wanted to see the result of the institution, once introduced, instead of repealing it right away.199

His consistent conservatism secured him an honorable position in later historiography in the Yi period as one of the leaders of the reform movement led by Cho Kwangjo. Of course, this is a total distortion of the fact, for Chŏng was consistent in opposing any radical reforms tried by the Cho group. Other conservatives, on the other hand, were castigated by traditional historiography as soin, because Nam Kon and his group wanted to eradicate such radical reformism once and for all by rendering most harsh punishment.

Here we come across the soin again. But was this soin the same as the soin defined in the case of Im Sahong as described earlier? The earlier definition of soin was one who denies portentology to woo personal favors from the throne by removing ideological restraints from the king's exercise of power. Such soin could not exist any more after the fall of King Yŏnsan and Im Sahong, because nobody would deny portentology any more. Now
everybody knew what a portent meant to his society, and nobody wanted to be ostracized as 

\textit{soin} for his denial of portentology. Portentology (including portentism) was put away into the sacrosanct shrine of Neo-Confucianism, and it did not play much of a role in the later political discussions, including the literati purge of 1519. Sacred is sterile; portentism enshrined did not produce any more debate.

The only thing that mattered now was history. With exactly the same spirit they brought to their historicistic reassessment of their immediate past, including the Sejo’s usurpation, the scholars began to criticize their political opponents. As a result, the young radicals called their conservative opponents 

\textit{soin}. To the conservative eyes, however, the radicals were \textit{soin}. So when the earthquake of 1518 started a court debate on the question of \textit{soin}, one conservative scholar-official said:

\textit{The earthquake of yesterday was one of the worst among all recent portents. Your Majesty has already expressed that this was a sign of the waxing yin and waning yang. What can it be other than the existence of soin? Indeed, there are soin. Yet it is hard to tell them. They look like men of principle (kunja) in appearance, and soin inside only. Since these soin are often men of many talents, why would they reveal their true nature through the ex-}
posure of their marks of soin? They act most righteous. If the throne reveres the olden days, they are quick to find such a tendency. Then regardless of the impossibilities posed by the given circumstances, they pretend to guide the throne according to the ways of yore, only to carry out their own desires in actuality. To the conservatives, the radical reformism of the Cho Kwangjo group was nothing but soin's pretension to the ways of yore aimed at personal gains.

Nam Kon, as the leader of the opposition to the Cho group, left his name as a later model of an incorrigible soin in traditional historiography. But Nam Kon himself apparently believed that he was a man of principle, as we can see from his biography of Yu Chagwang, another soin according to traditional historiography for his role in the first literati purge of 1498 (Yonsan 4). Nam Kon wrote in part:

The political turmoil of 1478 was when righteous men attacked wicked men. The literati purge of 1498 was when the wicked trapped the righteous. In that twenty-year period, there was one victory and one defeat, thus alternating good government and chaos. In the use of punishments, men of principle are loose and generous. In reverse, however, the soin always stop only after killing all their enemies. If the men of principle in 1478 had exhausted their use of punishments, how could there have been the purge
Was it not this regret over incomplete punishments in 1478 that drove Nam Kon and his group to a Pyrrhic victory over the Cho Kwangjo group?

Thus the concept of soin gives us another perspective on the literati purge of 1519 (Kimyŏ sahwa). In this purge, each of the opposing parties—conservatives and radicals—found the other party to be soin. Each believed its own legitimacy in the tradition of Neo-Confucianism, the revitalization of the Confucian vision. Both parties shared the same political philosophy with same portentism and same historicism. Yet on the question of how their vision could be achieved, they parted from each other. The radicals were more optimistic, while the conservatives were less so. But they were all Neo-Confucian in their basic intellectual orientations.

It is an irony of history that Nam Kon left his name in the Korean historiography of the Yi period as a model of the soin, although we can hardly find any radical reformism from the later history of the dynasty close to that held by the Cho Kwangjo group. Perhaps it was not ironic, after all. For in the Neo-Confucian culture of Yi Korea, moral vindication of a public man was to be achieved through his self-sacrifice by the
immoral society. Cho Kwangjo survived in history thanks to the unbroken vision he carried to his tomb; and Nam Kon died in history because he survived in a political struggle to have an opportunity to try, and to fail, his vision. The literati purge of 1519 was the first struggle among the Neo-Confucian scholars themselves, a sign of the successful introduction of Neo-Confucianism in Korea. More significantly for later Korean history, it was the first symptom of factional struggles to come in the soil where monarchical power was effectively emasculated under the sacrosanct dominance of portentism and historicism.
CONCLUSIONS

In this study changes in Korean portentology are examined to shed light on largely unexplored, and sometimes misinterpreted, areas of Korean political and intellectual history. The first major landmark in the history of portentology in Korea is found at the beginning of the eleventh century, half a century after Koryŏ's introduction of Chinese institutions including civil service examination. The Koreans had, for the first time, mastered the skills of observing and recording for themselves the myriad portents that were considered important by the Chinese. From this they began to devise their own calendars by borrowing the basic data from the Chinese. These skills made inclusion of more records of portents in the Koryŏ-sa possible, thus indicating that the Koreans internalized the Chinese theory of portents, largely along the line of Tung Chung-shu's interpretations.

Nevertheless, the prevalent intellectual outlook in the Koryŏ period was religious—shamanistic, Taoistic, and Buddhistic—but not Confucian. To be sure, Confucianism was indispensable in the Koryŏ period as a source of knowledge and as an instrument of the preservation and development of literary skills. However, like Tung
Chung-shu's Confucianism, which barely survived in China during the Han and T'ang dynasties, Korean Confucianism in the Koryŏ period had never claimed a leading role in politics.

With the rise of the militant young Confucians led by Chŏng Tojŏn in the final years of Koryŏ, Confucian teaching began to emerge as the guiding, and the dominant, spirit of politics. This spirit helped to inaugurate the new dynasty in 1392. With a zealous rationalism, dormant under the dominance of Buddhist and Taoist-shamanist religions in the Koryŏ period, Chŏng Tojŏn's group of scholars created strong opposition to the superstitiousness of traditional religious responses to portents. The result was the transformation of portentology from a religious to a political sphere. Now instead of trying to exorcise portents by an array of religious rituals, more emphasis was given to their political implications, and they were seen more and more as signs of failure in government.

The new intellectual climate was instrumental in the dynastic change from Koryŏ to Yi Korea in 1392. However, because of the political significance of the dynastic change in Korean history, modern scholars take this point of Korean history as the beginning of the Neo-Confucian orthodoxy of the Yi dynasty. Yet the temper and tone of Chŏng Tojŏn's anti-superstition movement is more similar
to Han Yu's rhetoric, and his portentology is that of Tung
Chung-shu, not Chu Hsi. Certainly the representative
Confucian scholars, such as Chōng Tojōn and Kwon Kūn,
used considerable Neo-Confucian terminology to talk about
human nature (hsing) and reason (li), the basic concepts
in Neo-Confucian speculations. Yet the new trend re-
mained more or less on a highly intellectual level among
a small number of scholars and did not become relevant to
the society of Yi Korea until the late fifteenth century,
one hundred years after the dynastic change.

As it developed in Yi Korea, Neo-Confucian politics
demonstrated a strong tendency toward ethocracy, where
moral value was taken as the highest goal in government.
All human experiences in time and space were reduced to
ethocratic interpretations, producing etho-historicism
and etho-portentism. History and portents became two
mirrors to reflect the moral attainment of government,
and especially of the ruler.

The politics of early Yi Korea were not ethocratic.
To put it bluntly, the fratricide committed by King T'ae-
jong and the regicide committed by King Sejo in the fif-
teenth century were hardly acceptable to the later poli-
tical milieu of Neo-Confucian dominance. In the early
Yi period, the scholar's primary concern was the institu-
tional development of the government, but not the moral
inculcation of the people. Their scholarly efforts were geared to encyclopedic compilations of past records, and not to the philosophical concerns typical of Neo-Confucianism. And their attitude toward the shamanistic, Taoistic, and Buddhistic traditions was more tolerant than that of later scholar-officials. In short, they had not yet recovered from their long habit of subordination to the religious dominance of the Koryŏ period.

With the increasing transplantation of contemporary Chinese civilization in the early reigns of the Yi dynasty up to King Sŏngjong (r. 1470-1494), and under the enormous scholarly achievements, especially in the reign of King Sejong (r. 1419-1450), the Confucian tradition of Korea was rapidly becoming Neo-Confucian. It was from the mid-Sŏngjong period in the last quarter of the fifteenth century that Neo-Confucian ethocracy began to attain political significance in Korea, under the aegis of Kim Chong-jik. To the young scholar-officials under his guidance, moral uprightness was the prime qualification of the scholar-officials as well as of the ruler. Armed with wisdom acquired from the study of massive historical works these scholars began a moral crusade for good government. They severed themselves from the past generations of Confucian scholars, whom they castigated for allowing the moral corruption of history, especially in their
involvements with the usurper king, Sejo. These young scholars urged ethocratic historicism in the belief that they, with their keen sense of man’s destiny in moral attainment in this world, must be the actual makers of history. With the great fervor of new converts, the young scholars pressed their cause with constant moral persuasion of the king, especially through their contacts with him at royal lectures and audiences.

The initial success of the new breed of scholars, in the later years of King Songjong’s reign, was a mere prelude to the struggles to come between the Neo-Confucians and the old guard scholars. When the old guard found a support in King Yŏnsan (r. 1495-1506), who correctly saw the political danger of Neo-Confucianism, for instance in Neo-Confucian portentism, to his exercise of royal prerogatives, Neo-Confucianism was put to a violent trial. The ethocratic ideal of Neo-Confucianism was challenged, resulting in two literati purges, the first two of the four similar purges in this period. The first purge was directed against Neo-Confucian historicism, the second against Neo-Confucian portentism.

Because portentology was already well developed as an institutional channel for remonstrance, the only protection of the government from an absolute monarch, the denial of the portentousness of unusual natural phenomena
was tantamount to a blocking of the route of communication, and denial of the Confucian politics of persuasion. When the coup of 1506 expelled King Yŏnsan, it was perhaps not so much from opposition to his anti-Neo-Confucianism as it was from the alienation of his close associates. Nevertheless, the success of the coup meant the victory of Neo-Confucianism in Korean history.

The "restoration" of King Chungjong was not just the restoration of a king, but the accession of the Neo-Confucian scholars to power. The literati purge of 1519 was different from previous ones. For the first time in Yi history, it was a struggle between the two factions of Neo-Confucian scholar-officials. Both sides were followers of Kim Chongjik's teachings, and they used the same rhetoric in attacking each other. The literati purge of 1519 was but the first eruption of factional struggles resulting from the political vacuum of emasculated royal power created by the victory of Neo-Confucianism. Even though the government organization would demand strong leadership by the throne as the final arbiter, the victory of Neo-Confucianism made such strong leadership impossible. Only strong kings with developed political skills could rule the country, but incompetent kings were more numerous than able ones in the later period of the Yi dynasty. Naturally the power vacuum
under incompetent kings was filled with struggles among scholar-officials, thus inviting the well-known "factional struggles" of the Yi dynasty after the sixteenth century.

The victory of Neo-Confucianism, with its strong moral sense, also helped to bring strict social stratification to Yi society. The emergence of the chungin (the "middle people") as a distinct social class, and the discrimination against the sons of concubines, were developments related to the new orthodoxy. Scholarly concerns shifted from the encyclopedic erudition of the early Yi period to the metaphysical speculations. Sohak (the Primary Learning) became the primer for every pupil in elementary education, and in 1510, for the first time in Korean history, the Confucian classics were translated into Korean vernacular.¹ From the mid-sixteenth century, private academies, modeled after the one established by Chu Hsi, began to emerge as the major educational institution for safeguarding the national orthodoxy, as well as becoming the hotbed of factional struggles.² It was such intellectual milieu that produced the greatest Neo-Confucian thinkers of Korea—Yi Hwang and Yi I—in the latter half of the sixteenth century.

One cannot help but ask the significance of the victory of Neo-Confucian portentism in Korea. For instance, it is generally agreed that Neo-Confucianism in
China and Japan inhibited the rise of modern science. Can we not say the same of Neo-Confucianism in Korea? The answer is definitely yes, and different "spirit of science" can be shown to have existed in the pre-Neo-Confucian and the Neo-Confucian periods.

The first example is from 1441 (Sejong 23) when Yi Korea was not yet under the influence of portentism. When there was a report of yellow rain that spring, Prince Anp'yong submitted a thorough "scientific" report to disprove the portentousness of the phenomenon:

When the people of the capital talked loudly of the yellow rain last night, I ordered my men immediately to go and see those places in the palace where water was locked up after the rain. All were mixed with pine flowers, and I could not tell the truth. Then I checked the containers filled with water from the same rain last night, but could not find any such thing. If this were what Heaven had sent down, why should it fall on the ground, yet not into the containers? Furthermore, the color of the water was not really yellow, but rather like a mixture with pine flowers. When I tasted it, it was bitter, again like pine flowers. When I let my servant mix pine flowers with plain water, it became exactly the same as the yellow rain water, and people could not tell one from the other. From the 25th of this month, the wind became gradually gustier and made pine
After some deliberations, King Sejong and his officials decided to agree with Anp'yoong's report.

The difference is obvious when this is compared with a typical example of the attitude of Neo-Confucian portentism. In 1520 (Chungjong 15), the observation of the two suns was reported to the court from Chonju, Cholla Province. The Royal Secretariat and the Office of Astronomy suspected a mistaken observation, and the king wanted to verify the report. But the Chief and Left State Councillors expressed the opinion that such a verification was unnecessary. According to Nam Kon, Left State Councillor, who was the arch-enemy of the Cho Kwang-jo group purged the previous year, all that counted was the throne's self-cultivation and not whether the report was true or false. King Chungjong could only follow the advice of his state councillors.

In Neo-Confucian portentism, natural phenomena existed only as extensions of the cosmic moral order, and never as independent happenings with their own logic. For the rest of the Yi dynasty, portentism continued to be the
only way of seeing unusual natural phenomena. Neither the monarch nor his officials raised any official doubt about portentism. Once firmly established as the orthodox view, portentism became inflexible; it left little room for imagination or for science. From the king to the Confucian college student, everyone knew exactly what to do on the occurrence of a portent. Portentism ceased to play any role in politics, for no differences of opinion developed concerning the significance of any given portent. Only because of its basic function as a check on the royal prerogatives did portentism survive after the victory of Neo-Confucian portentology in Korea. But as long as the throne was not despotic, as the later Yi kings were not, portentism had little function to serve. In a practical sense, then, portentism was no longer a politically useful tool after the early sixteenth century.

The fact that portentism was officially unchallenged during the rest of the Yi dynasty, however, does not mean that anti-portentology in the cases of King Yŏnsan and Im Sahong disappeared completely with the victory of Neo-Confucian portentism. Although it was never discussed in the court, Kim An'guk (1478-1543) for instance expressed his doubts about the portentousness of natural phenomena. As in the cases of Im Sahong and King Yŏnsan,
Kim An'guk's view was criticized by his fellow Confucian scholars for its similarity to Wang An-shih's. Yet the tradition obviously continued underground, to be more outspokenly expressed later by sirhak scholars. Yi Ik (1681-1763), for instance, wrote of his disbelief in portentism as well as his concurrence with Kim An'guk's opinion.

In Korea portents were observed and interpreted throughout history from the Three Kingdoms period down to the twentieth century; political portentology, however, ran its full and most productive life-cycle between 1392 and 1519.
NOTES

ABBREVIATIONS USED:


SL: Sillok (Veritable records) for each reign period.


INTRODUCTION

1 The enormous data of unusual natural phenomena in East Asia has been praised, on the one hand, as a scientific achievement, and censured, on the other, as fabrication for political purposes. In Chinese history, the former group of scholars include Ho Peng Yoke, Joseph Needham, F. Richard Stephenson, and Yao Shan-yu, among others. About the latter group, there is a still unsolved controversy over the portents in Han China. According to Bielenstein, the number of recorded portents for different reigns of Han would indicate the popularity of the reigns—the number of portents is an independent variable to measure the popularity of the rulers—as reflected by contemporary officials. Eberhard, however, could not find any such relationship to measure the popularity of emperors for contemporary scholar-officials. Eberhard therefore believes the falsification of portent data was made by later historians instead of contemporary officials. As we shall see in the course of this study, both opinions seem to be unapplicable to the case of portents in Korean history. For the works of those scholars working on the scientific value of the data, see Chinese Science, 1 (1975). For the latter, see Hans Bielenstein, "An Interpretation of the Portents in the Ts'ien-han-shu," Bulletin of Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities (Stockholm), 22 (1950), pp. 127-143; Wolfram Eberhard, "The Political Function of Astronomy and Astronomers in Han China," in John K. Fairbank, ed., Chinese Thought and Institutions (Chicago, 1957), pp. 33-70.

For the Korean records, only the solar eclipses were put to a similar criticism as reliable sources, from Iijima Tadao, "Sangoku shiki no niushoku kiji ni tsuite," Tōyō gakuhō, 15 (1926), pp. 410-424; and Otani Mitsuo, "Sangoku shiki no niushoku kiji ni tsuite," Chōsen gakuhō, 62 (1971), pp. 1-20. We shall have more about it in Chapter I.

2 A Chinese historian has already characterized the politics of the early Sung China as "ethocracy," a rule in which the elite in control is characterized by a particular status and function with regard to moral values, just as a theocracy functions with regard to religious values. See James T. C. Liu, "An Early Sung Reformer: Fan Chung-yen," in John K. Fairbank, ed., Chinese Thought and Institutions (Chicago, 1957), p. 131.
CHAPTER I

1 See above (n. of Introduction) for Iijima and Ōtani. Ōtani generally confirms Iijima's findings, but tends to give some credit to the possibility of Koreans' own observations in the Unified Silla period, particularly from the eclipses recorded for 787.


3 For instance, Yi Hongjik limits the reliability of the Samguk sagi records from King Naemul (356-401) for Silla, from King Kunch'ogo (346-374) for Paekche, and from King T'aejo (53-145) for Koguryo. See his "Samguk sagi," in Han'guk-ui kojon paekson (Sindonga Supplement, January, 1969), p. 83. No scholar until today has ever tried to question Iijima's thesis after its first appearance half a century ago. Most recently Ko Pyöngik tried to develop a more favorable case for the historiography of the Samguk sagi in "Samguk sagi e issseo ūi yōksa sosul," in his Tonga kyosōsa ūi von'gu (Seoul, 1970), pp. 69-101. Yet he follows Iijima's thesis to admit Kim Pusik's padding with "as many as sixty-six solar eclipses," from Chinese sources. See p. 92. Ko's favorable view of Kim Pusik's historiography is challenged by Kim Ch'ŏlchun. Yet Kim Ch'ŏlchun also accepts Iijima thesis by writing that Kim Pusik "mechanically copied the records on diplomatic affairs and on solar eclipses to insert into his Samguk sagi from Chinese histories." See his "Koryo chunggi ūi munhwa ūlsik kwa sahak ūi songkyŏk," Han'guk sa yon'gu, 9 (1973), pp. 59-86, especially p. 63. Eleven kinds of natural calamities in the Samguk sagi are studied, in their relations to famines and the assistance of the poor people in the Three Kingdoms period, by Yi Hoyŏng, "Han'guk kodae sahoe ūi chaeheae wa kubinch'ae," Sahak chi, 5 (1971), pp. 5-50. The tables of monthly distributions of the eleven calamities, including floods, droughts, locust, frost, sleet, typhoons, disease (epidemic), earthquakes, snow, fires, famines, are made by this author for the period. This study, however, seems to have little concern for the portentousness of those phenomena, and thus has little to do with my study.

5. I use "authentic" here to denote that certain historical records are not intentionally fabricated by historians but based upon certain facts, even though the facts were distorted and garbled in the long process of repeated reinterpretations by historians. Thus "authentic" here means roughly the same as "genuine and authentic" in J. Barzun and H. F. Graff, The Modern Researcher (New York, 1957), p. 90.

6. Although we cannot tell who were responsible for those six chapters, the names of the people responsible for the monograph section of the Koryo-sa are known. See Kim Ch’ŏlchun, "Koryo-sa," in Han’guk ŭi kojŏn paeksŏn (Sindonga Supplement, January, 1969), p. 93.

7. Taejong SL, 8, 14a.

8. KS, 110, 37b and 41b.

9. Ibid., 101, 12b-21a.

10. KS, 4, 15a; 95, 20a-b. The year of completion is not known, but Yi Pyongdo estimates it as 1034 (Tŏkch’ong 3). 11 See his Han’guk-sa. Chungse (Seoul, 1961), p. 228, n. 2.

11. KS, 95, 20a-b, "Hwang Churyang."


14. KSC, 16, 39b-40a. This part is fully translated in Section (6) of Chapter II below.

15. KSC, "Pŏmye," 1b. The same phrase is found in Sŏ Kojong, Tongguk t’onggam, "Pŏmye."

16. KS, 42, 23b.
For the details of this incident, see Chapter II, B, (3).

Chapter II has a short subsection on the "Rain of King T'aejong," in Section (14) of Part A.

For the meteor and the death of Yi Sunsin, see Section (10), Part A, of the following chapter.

Many cases of punishments are documented under several sections in Chapter II. The significance of the different attitudes is discussed in Chapter IV.

King Yonsan's growing antagonism against portentology is one major theme I will develop in the latter part of Chapter IV.

Astronomers, geomancers, medical doctors, and interpreters became known as chungin ("middle people") in the Yi period. Many functionaries in government and the sons of concubines were absorbed into this social class between the yangban and the commoners. We do not know much about the origin and development of this social class, let alone its relation to the development of astronomy or other sciences in Yi Korea. For a summary of the present scholarly achievements on the topic, see Sin Haesun, "Chung-gan kyech'ung," in Kuksa p'yŏnch'an wiwonhoe, ed. Han'guk-sa, 10 (Seoul, 1974), pp. 595-629.

Daily records of the Office of Astronomy apparently existed in several forms, and at least a couple of them were salvaged by Wada Yuji in the early twentieth century. But the portions he saw fifty years ago, Ch'ŏnbyŏn t'ŭngnok (Register of Portents) and P'ungun-gi (Records of Wind and Clouds), are no longer available today. See Sang-woon Jeon, Science and Technology in Korea (Cambridge, 1974), pp. 98 and 129.

Circumstantial evidence includes Song Chudok, Sŏn-gwan chi (Guide to the Office of Astronomy), 1,27a-31a, where there are details of how to make observation reports for various portents. Chaei-go (Kyujanggak Collection, NS, No. 1313) has a selected list of portents for the period of 1624-1655, with about 30 illustrations.
of solar and lunar eclipses and portents. The illustrations make it rather uniquely informative in our understanding of how the original reports might have been made.

26 According to the statistics in Korea, there were 1.4-2.5 triplets for every 100,000 births for the year 1938-1939. See Chosen kosei kyokai, Chosen ni okeru jin­ku ni kansuru sho tsukkei (Seoul, 1943), pp. 64-65.

27 Sejong SL, 78, 27b.

28 For the number of days to travel between the capital and the local areas of Korea in the Yi period, see O Suk­kwon, Kosa ch'waryo, Ha, 32a-50a, "P'alto ch'ongdo."

Chapter II.


2 Otani Mitsuo, op. cit., p. 2.

3 My tabulation is made from the Samguk sagi, Koryō-sea and the Sillok for the different dynastic periods. For details of the sources and their critical evaluations, see Chapter I.

4 KS, 7, 4a-b; 64, 37b. KSG, 4, 35b-36a.

5 Ibid.

6 KS, 11, 27b; 47, 13a.
Obviously he soon was reinstated in his post, for we find him active as chief of the field observation team of a solar eclipse in King Sejong’s reign. See Sejong SL, 39,33b.

9 KS, 64,37a-b.

10 KS, 84,5b.

11 KS, 120,4a, "Yun Sojong."

12 For instance, see Yonsan'gun ilgi, 20,4b.

13 T'aejo SL, 15,11a.

14 Sejong SL, 26,21b. Yonsan'gun ilgi, 48,15b.

15 Inje SL, 21,25b.


17 KS, 47,22b; 48,3b-4a; 48,24b.

18 T'aejo SL, 13,12a-b; 14,4b.

19 Songsong SL, 222,16b.

20 Yonsan'gun ilgi, 57,8a-b.

21 Ibid., 57,9a.

22 Yollyosil, 35, "Wonja chōngho."

23 See Needham, SCC, III, pp. 473-477 for various types of haloes and terminologies used in China.


26. KS, 47,17b.


29. Sejong SL, 28,3b.

30. Ibid.

31. Munjong SL, 6,31b.

32. Sŏngjong SL, 8,12a.

33. See above on the portentography in traditional Korea, particularly my comparison of the Sillok data with those from the Sŏngjong-wŏn ilgi.

34. T'aejong SL, 3,12b-13a.

35. Yi I, Sŏktam ilgi, "Sŏnjo 1/2/-.

36. Yŏnsan'gun ilgi, 57,15a.

37. Chungjong SL, 37,22a-b.

38. Ibid., 37,34a.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid., 37,34a.

41. Ibid.

369
42 Yŏllyŏs'il, 7, "Kimyo sahwa."


45 Si, 5, "Wŏlmyŏng-sa tosol-ga."

46 Ss, 9,9b.

47 KS, 47,44a-58b for the reign of Injong; KS, 49,27a-36a for the reign of Kongmin.

48 Chungjŏng SL, 39,1b-2a.

49 Ibid., 39,2b-3a.

50 KSC, 14,13b.

51 KS, 42,25b. KSC, 29,10a.

52 Si, 1, "Yŏno-rang Seo-nyŏ."

53 Ssc, 8,18a.

54 For Im, see KS, 130,24b-25a. For Cho, see KS, 131,7b. For Kim, see KS, 131,13b.

55 Yi I, Sŏktam ilgi, "Sŏnjo 13/2/-."  

56 KS, 48,11b-12a.  

57 KS, 48,12a-b.  

58 KS, 48, 27a.  

59 KS, 48,35a. KSC, 15,19b.

For the astronomical achievements in the reign of King Sejong, see Sang-woon Jeon, Science and Technology in Korea (Cambridge, 1974), pp. 3-4, and passim. Clearly this was the first time in Korean history that Koreans mastered all the techniques of the calendrical sciences of China and even surpassed them.

Munjong SL, 3, 29a.

Yollyosil, 37, "Imo alsŏng Ch'oe Seil chi ok," reports the lunar occultation of a constellation in 1701. Yi I seems to relate the factional struggles of his time to the sudden disappearance of the moon. See his Sŏktam ilgi, "Sŏnjo 11/10/-."

KS, 47, 32b.

Venus seen in the daytime in 1510 was interpreted in later history as the omen for the forthcoming Japanese pirates. See Yollyosil, 7, "Samp'o waebyon."

Yonsan'gun ilgi, 2, 12a.

SS, 15, 8b-9a.

SS, 41, 2a.

KS, 48, 10b.

KS, 48, 10b-11a.

91 Songjong SL, 13,17b through 14,3a.
92 Ibid., 13,22a. Yolvyosil, 6, "Songjong."
93 Yonsan'gun ilgi, 37,14a.
94 Ibid., 37,16a-21b.
95 Ibid., 37,19b.
96 Ibid., 63,6b.
97 Ibid.
98 Yi I, Sōktam ilgi, "Sōnjo 5/10/-
99 Ibid.
100 SS, 25,3b.
101 SS, 9,38b-39a. A similar version is found in SS, 42,5a.
102 SS, 41,7b.
103 SS, 43,3a has it that there was a comet and earthquake. But SS, 10,43a has it as a meteor and earthquake. SS seems to be correct, because (1) there is no record of a comet in SS for the spring of 673 in the annals section, though there is one in the fall of the next year; (2) meteors, not comets, are more often seen as the omen of death, as we shall soon see.
105 KS, 48, 14b.
106 Sejong SL, 11, 2b.
107 Yongsan'gun ilgi, 60, 11a.
108 Chungjung SL, 21, 42a. The portion of KSG quoted here is in KSG, 5, 1a.
110 Yu Songnyong, Chingbi-rok, Ha.
112 JMP, 10, 1a-3b.
113 KS, 3, 5b. KSC, 2, 32a.
114 KSC, 11, 1b.
116 KSC, 9, 5b-6a.
117 KS, 20, 38b. KSC, 13, 40b.
118 KS, 21, 21a: 53, 19b.
119 KS, 133, 14b. KSC, 30, 15a-b.
120 Taehyong SL, 12, 1b.
121 Ibid., 20, 30a.
122 Ibid., 23, 17b.
Harmonizing yin-yang was one of the foremost duties of the state councillors, according to the Kyong-guk taejon, 1, "Kyonggwan-jik." The resignation of state councillors at the occurrences of portents will be discussed in the early part of Chapter IV.

The thunder and lightning in the winter of 1493 brought on the removal of chief state councillor. See Songjong SL, 283, 21b-46b.

See also historians' comment on the last page.
138 More will come in the last part of Chapter IV.

139 SS, 9,12a.

140 KS, 5,2a.

141 KS, 22, 33a.

142 KS, 55,19a.

143 KSC, 27,29a.

144 KS, 135,40b; 55,21b. KSC, 32,30a.

145 Taejong SL, 16,2b.

146 Munjong SL, 13,13b.

147 Taejong SL, 23,9a.

148 Sejong SL, 56,17a-b.

149 Sejo SL, 5,18b.

150 Songjong SL, 274,4a-9a.

151 Yonaangun 11gi, 50,17b-18a.

152 SS, 2,2b-3a. SSG, 3,1a.

153 SS, 24,2a.

154 SY, 4, "Hyŏn yuga hae hwahom."

155 SS, 8,11a.

156 SS, 8,11b.

376
157 see \textit{SS}, 9, 4a and 5a.
158 \textit{KS}, 3, 23b; 54, 16a-b.
159 \textit{CMP}, 63, 3b.
160 \textit{KS}, 5, 3b; 54, 7b. \textit{KSC}, 3, 42a-b.
161 \textit{KS}, 4, 35b.
162 \textit{CMP}, 63, 3b.
163 \textit{KS}, 6, 23a.
164 \textit{KS}, 12, 23b.
165 \textit{Taejo SL}, 1, 39a.
166 See \textit{Taejo SL}, 3, 8b; 13, 12b for prayers at the ancestral shrines; 12, 1b for prayers at Buddhist temple; and 13, 12b for one at the Temple of Heaven.
167 The problem of the Temple of Heaven will be taken up later in Chapter III.
168 According to \textit{CMP}, 61, 13b, this resumption of the rain prayer at the Temple of Heaven occurred in 1415. But the editor of \textit{CMP} comments that this must be a mistake because Yu was not yet a state councillor in 1415. \textit{Taejong SL}, 31, 50a supports the editor's opinion, and the correct year was 1416, not 1415, and the \textit{SL} points out that Yu was Left State Councillor in 1416. \textit{CMP} also points out that this was influenced by Pyon Kyeryang's staunch championing for the cause of the Temple of Heaven. More discussion is in Chapter III.
169 \textit{Sejong SL}, 86, 5b.
170 \textit{Ibid.}, 101, 6b.
The name, hwan'gu, was to be revitalized in the declining years of Yi dynasty under the imperial dress. Again this was not particularly for prayers, but as a symbol of authority, harking back to Sejo's efforts. For hwan'gu of Sejo's reign, see Sejo SL, 5,26a-31b; 6,2b-14a. For its revival in the Indian summer of the Yi dynasty, see CMP, 54,1a-5a.


T'aejong felt it unfortunate that there were no distinguished monks like Chigong or Naong in his time; see T'aejong SL, 30,2a. CMP, 63,5a-b, has it that in 1413 T'aejong abolished Buddhist rain prayers once and for all. This is wrong.

Songjong SL, 141,13b.

Ibid., 180,5b and 9a.

Ibid., 143,2b.

Yonsan'gun ilgi, 41,31a-b.

See Murayama Chijun, Chosén no semboku to yōgen (Seoul, 1933), pp. 71-161.
**Kungmu-dang (Hall of Nation's Shamans) will be further considered with other indigenous-Taoist traditions in the early Yi period in the next chapter.**

**CMP. 223,19a-b.**

**Yi Nunghwa, Han'guk togyo sa (Seoul, 1959), pp. 158-181.**

**Taejong SL, 13,36b.**

**Yejong SL, 6,37a. Sejong SL, 29,3a and 9a; 32,6b. Sejo SL, 20,35a.**

**Songjong SL, 203,11b.**

**Song Hyon, Yongjae ch'onghwa, 7 (in Taedong yan'ung, V. 1), p. 45.**

**Yi Kyugyong, Qiu yonmun changjøn san'go, 24, "Kiu-je yong pyønjøng sol."**

**Song Hyøn, op. cit., 7, p. 45.**

**Murayama Chijun, Shakuson, Kiu, Antaku (Seoul, 1938), pp. 130-135.**

**Taejong SL, 31,49b.**

**Sejong SL, 28,30b-31a.**
202 Chungjong SL, 8, 47b.
203 Sejong SL, 72, 6a.
204 Taejong SL, 27, 39a. This crown prince was later decrowned, to be replaced by one of his younger brothers, who became King Sejong.
205 Taejong SL, 27, 41a and 42b.
206 Sejong SL, 72, 18b; 104, 5b.
207 Ibid., 125, 7b. Munjong SL, 5, 56b; 8, 33b. For the history of irrigation in Yi Korea, see Yi Kwangmin, Yijo suri-sea yonigü (Seoul, 1961).
209 Hong Sŏngmo, Tongguk sesigi, "Tenth Day of 5th Month."
210 Yollyosil, 15, "Imjin waeran taega sosu,"
211 Taejong SL, 13, 40b.
212 Ibid.
213 Ibid., 30, 6b.
214 Ibid., 30, 8a-b.
215 Ibid., 31, 36b-37a.
216 Ibid.
217 Ibid., 31, 51b and 56b.
218 Sejong SL, 28, 26b.
219 Sejong SL, 8, 5b-6a.
220 T'aejong SL, 31, 37a-b.
221 SS, 1, 14b.
222 SS, 43, 7a, "Kim Yusin, Ha."
223 See above on thunder and lightning. Also Yi Nüng-hwa, Han'guk taejo-sa (Seoul, 1959), pp. 94-98.
224 KS, 125, 5b-6a, "Ch'oe Hongjae."
225 KS, 54, 30b-31a, 17, 13b. KSC, 10, 42b.
226 Sejong SL, 93, 27b; 105, 14a.
227 Songjong SL, 82, 1a.
228 Ibid., 72, 7b-16a, especially 10a.
229 Ibid., 82, 1a.
230 Chungjong SL, 13, 50b ff.
233 Kyongguk taejon, Pyöngjön, 4, "Kumhwaw.
235 Ibid., 151, 11b.
236 KSG, 6, 10b-11a.
237 KSG, 6, 10a. KS, 10, 20b.
Since I did not methodically read through the Sillok after the reign of Chungjong, I cannot definitely say how many more will be found from the latter part of the Yi dynasty. According to CMP, however, there are at least eight more after the period covered in this study. See CMP, 12,12a-13b.


This succession problem became one of the major issues in the rise and fall of Cho Kwangjo, which I will discuss in the last part of Chapter IV. Lady Pak's ambition is pointed out in Yi Sangbaek, Han'guk-sa, Kunse chŏn'gi (Seoul, 1962), p. 545.

Kim Ch'ŏngguk, Sajae ch'ŏgŏn (in P'aerim, v. 5).

Yi I, Sŏktam ilgi, "Sonjo 9/2/- "

Vollyŏsil, 35, "Wŏnja chŏngho."

Joseph Needham points out that "such trials would have been absolutely impossible in China." See his SGG, II, 574-576.
253SS, 25,6b.

254SS, 4,7b.


256Sejong SL, 50,42a-b.

257Songjong SL, 44,2a.

258Yi Ik, Songho saesol, Sang, p. 136, "Yongnyok."

259CMP has one case of quadruplets in 1791 (Chöngjo 15), the period I did not cover in this study. CMP, 11,11a.

260This statement is made according to KS. KSC, however, has one record in 1225 (Kojong 12).

261According to SS, the reward was 100 sok, for the case of 670. But SY and SSC have it as 200 sok. See SY, 2, "Munho-wang Pommin."

262KSC, 4,8a; 4,15b-16a. CMP, 11,10a.

263It was usually ten or five, except in one year that it went down to three in 1437 (Sejong 19). Sejong SL, 76,1a.

264Chöngjong SL, 2,3b.

265Sejong SL, 53,2a.

266Yonsangun ilgi, 43,22b.

267CMP, 11,11a.

269 SY, 1, "T'aejong Ch'un'ch'u kong."

270 SS, 15, 8b. CMP, 12, 19a.

271 T'aejong SL, 22, 43a.

272 Sejong SL, 42, 2a-b; 50, 14a; 51, 17b; 70, 6b-7b; 81, 18b.

273 Ibid., 55, 24a-b.

274 Sejo SL, 39, 4b.

275 Yejong SL, 4, 21b-22a.

276 Yonsan'gun ilgi, 50, 18b and 24b; 51, 2a-b and 3b.

277 Chungjong SL, 2, 29b.

278 Yollvosil, 18, "Yu Hong."

279 KS, 19, 6a; 48, 6a-b. KSG, 11, 43a-44b and 51b.

280 KS, 19, 15b. KSG, 12, 4a.

281 KS, 63, 1b.

282 KS, 128, 6b.

283 KS, 63, 23a.

284 T'aejong SL, 21, 3b-4a. Sejong SL, 32, 21a-23a. CMP, 61, 15a-17a.

285 Chungjong SL, 10, 18a.

286 T'aejong SL, 17, 52b.

384
Hong Sŏngmo, *Tongguk sesi gi*, "Ipch'un" of the First Month.


For Sejong's responses, see *Sejong SL*, 77,18a-22a; 78,9a and 15a.


Sy, 3, "Wonjong hŭngpŏp Yŏmc'hŏk myŏlsin."

Yi Nunghwa, *Chosŏn pulgyo t'ongs a* (Seoul, 1917), Sang, pp. 51-52.


Sy, 3, "Hwangnyong-sa kuch'ŭng-t'ap."


Ks, 34,5b-6a. *KSC*, 23,29b-30a.

Chapter III

1. KSG, 120.40b. KSC, 35.27b.


10. Chu Hsi ignored Han Yu, but not totally. See his Chu-tzu chuan-shu, 52.1a. Also see Carson Chang, op. cit., p. 59.


13 Fung Yu-lan wrote a monograph on this problem in "Why China has no Science," International Journal of Ethics, 32 (1922), pp. 237-263. In his Chung-kuo che-hsueh shih, p. 920, he writes, "When he speaks of the investigation of things, he really has in mind only a system of moral self-cultivation. . . . It is a mistake. . . . to regard Chu Hsi as here displaying a truly scientific spirit, or to consider him as seeking only for pure knowledge." Translation is by D. Bodde in "The Philosophy of Chu Hsi," Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies, 7 (1942), pp. 40-41, n. 12. Needham is not clear regarding his stand on this key word in Chinese science; he writes, "the phrase had meant mainly the study of human affairs, with observation of Nature taking a secondary place." in his SCC, II, p. 510.


15 Ibid., p. 358, n.


17 Quoted from Chu-tzu chuan-shu, 49,25a, by Needham, SCC, II, p. 492.

18 Needham, SCC, II, p. 492.


21 Chu Hsi, Chu-tzu ta-chuen, 14,23b-24a.


27We cannot find anything about Liu in Fung Yu-lan's philosophy of China available in the West today. But this "materialistic" philosophy of Liu Tsung-yuan occupies an important part in the massive *Chung-kuo ssu-hsiang t'ung-shih*, edited by Hou Wai-lu, or in a more concise work by Yang Yung-kuo, *Chien-ming Chung-kuo ssu-hsiang shih*, both published in Peking in 1962. Western scholarship has yet to assess this line of new interpretations by the mainland Chinese philosophers.

28*Sung-shih*, 327,11a-b.


31 Tongmun-sŏn, 52. "Sang simu sŏ" by Ch'oe Sŭngno.


33 KS, 3,1b.

34 KSC, 9,47b.


37 KS, 120,39a-b. "Kim Chasu."

38 KS, 98,34a. Also in Tongmun-sŏn, 52, "Chaei sang-sŏ," by Im Wan.

39 KS, 98, 34a-b.

40 KS, 98, 37a-b.

41 For the rebellion of Myoch'ŏng, see Yi Pyŏngdo, Koryo sidsa ǔi yŏn'gu (Seoul, 1948), pp. 174-233.

42 KS, 13,33a. KSC, 8,4b; 12,41a; 13,2b.

43 Ku Chieh-kang, Han-tai heuh-shu shih-lueh (Shanghai, 1948), pp. 37-38. At least some of these Korean resignations must have mere imitations of the Chinese practice they learned it from Chinese history. The case in point is that of Ham Munjun, who turned in his resignation in 1185 with no desire to actually resign, according to KS, 99,15a. KSC, 13,8b.

44 KS, 105,25a. KSC, 20,40b.

46. Tongmun-son, 53, "Chin simu so" by Yi Saek.

47. See Yi Nunghwa, Han'guk pulgyo tongsa, Sang (Seoul, 1918), pp. 312 and 315.


49. KS, 39, 19b.

50. KS, 118, 23b; 63, 19b.


52. Yi Nunghwa, Han'guk pulgyo tongsa (Seoul, 1918), Sang, p. 311.

53. KS, 120, 31b-33a.

54. Ibid.

55. The essence of them is found in chronological order in Yi Nunghwa, Han'guk pulgyo tongsa (Seoul, 1918), Sang, pp. 332-334.

56. KS, 117, 35b.

57. Yi Nunghwa, Han'guk pulgyo tongsa (Seoul, 1918), Sang, p. 334.

58. See Yi Sangbaek, "Yubul yanggyo kyodaesui kiyon e kwanhan il yon'gu," in his Choson munhwa-sa yon'gu non'go (Seoul, 1947); and Han Ugun, "Yomal sonch'o ui pulgyo chongch'aeak," Seoul National University, Souldaehakkvo nonmunjin (Immun sahoe), 6 (1957), pp. 1-80.

More discussion on the nature of the Confucian tradition at the dynastic change will come in the early part of the next chapter.

For the learning process of Neo-Confucianism by Ch'ong Tojôn and Kwôn Kûn, See Pak Ch'anghong's recent study in "Han'guk ch'ŏrhak-sa," Part 10, Han'guk sasang, 13 (1975), pp. 373-400.

Kim Yong-t'aë, Han'guk pulgyo-sa (Seoul, 1970) (in Han'guk munhwa-sa taegye, VI), p. 274.

Yi Nu'nghwa, Han'guk pulgyo t'ongsa (Seoul, 1918), Chung, pp. 321-323.

King Kongyang's proposal to appoint Monk Ch'anyöng to the royal preceptorship failed to win the endorsement of his officials. See n. 63 above.

T'aegyo SL, 12,1a. See the studies by Yi Sangbaek and Han Ugun quoted in n. 58 above. Also Han Ugun, "Sejong cho e issōsōi tae pulgyo sich'aek," Chindan hakpo, 25+27 (1964), pp. 66-154.

Kwôn Kûn, "Pulssi chappyŏn sŏ," in Ch'ong Tojôn, Sambong-jin, "Pulssi chappyŏn."

Yi Nu'nghwa, Han'guk pulgyo t'ongsa (Seoul, 1918), Sang, pp. 300-301.

His collected works, Yangch'ŏn-jin, have many such writings, but a quick source would be Yi Nu'nghwa, Han'guk pulgyo t'ongsa (Seoul, 1918), Sang, pp. 362-374.

See, for instance, CMP, 85,4b-6a for an exaggerated and stereotyped description of T'aegjong's fight against the heterodoxies.

This is generally agreed by Yi Sangbaek and Han Ugun. See n. 58 above.
87 Chŏngjong SL, 6,7a.

88 Kim Yongt'ae, Han'guk pulgyo-sa (in Han'guk munhwasa taegeye, VI, Seoul, 1970), p. 280.

89 Ibid., p. 281.

90 Han Ugûn, "Yŏmal sŏnch'o ŭi pulgyo ch'ongch'aek." Sŏul taehakkyo nonmujin, Inmun sahoe, 6 (1957), p. 80.

91 T'aejong SL, 2,8a-b.

92 Sejong SL, 121,35a-b.

93 Ibid., 124,19b.

94 Ibid., 122,12b.

95 Ibid., 124,16a; 125,1a.

96 Munjong SL, 7,5b-6a and 8a; 16a; 22a-b; 9,34a-35a; 39b; 46a-47a; 10,3b-9a. and passim.

97 Sejo SL, 11,14b-16b.

98 Sejong SL, 163,23a.

99 Yi I writes that Nam Sago correctly predicted the death of a famous scholar, Cho Sik, in 1572, from his observation of a star. See his Soktam ilei, "Sonjo 5/1/-" Buddhist dominance in this field is also noted by Murayama Chijun, Chosen no fusui (Seoul, 1931), pp. 348-353.

100 For the toch'ām prediction of the birth of Koryŏ dynasty, see Yi Pyong'o, Koryŏ sidae ŭi yŏn'gu (Seoul, 1948), pp. 3-11.

101 See Needham, SGG, II, p. 382. Confucius apparently was discouraged for not having futurologic sign for his own political future. See Analects, 9;8.
Murrayama Chijun believes that the alleged prediction about the birth of Yi dynasty with its capital in Seoul was genuine. See his *Chōsen no ō-it-sui* (Seoul, 1931), p. 678.

For instance, one more discussion is found in *Yollypsil*, 21, "Uí ch'ŏndo kyohak*

---

102 *T'aecho SL*, 4, 7a.
103 *T'aecho SL*, 4, 13b-14a.
104 Song Chudok, *Spoon'gwan chi*, 1, 12a.
105 *T'aecho SL*, 5, 5b-6a.
106 Ibid., 6, 6a.
107 *Ch'ongjong SL*, 1, 6a.
108 *T'aecho SL*, 10, 4b.
109 For instance, one more discussion is found in *Yollypsil*, 21, "Uí ch'ŏndo kyohak*.
110 *T'aecho SL*, 6, 10b.
111 *Ch'ongjong SL*, 6, 11b.
112 *T'aecho SL*, 33, 60a.
113 Ibid., 34, 30a.
114 Ibid., 34, 38b.
115 The *Chungang Ilbo*, April, 1976.
116 *Sejong SL*, 34, 6b-7a.
117 *T'aecho SL*, 2, 11a.
118 Ibid., 12, 5a.
119. Taejöng SL, 7,7a-b; 31,10a-b.

120. Sejong SL, 13,19a; 18,15b. For Taech’önggwan, see Yi Nünghwa, Han’guk togyo-sa (Seoul, 1959), pp. 241-247.


122. Sejong SL, 29,6a.


125. Ibid., 248,3b.

126. Ibid., 261,7b-8a.

127. Yŏnsan’gun ilgi, 61,2b and 5b.

128. Chungjong SL, 1,28b.

129. Ibid., 13,52b through 14,1b; 21,57b-58a; 27,5b-11a.


131. Chungjong SL, 46,38b-47,1b.


136 See Chōn Haejong, Hanjung kwan'gye-sa yǒn'gu (Seoul, 1970), Chapter II.

138 Needham, SCC, III, pp. 200 and 545.
139 T'aejong SL, 6,5b.
140 Ibid., 14,31a.
141 Ibid., 21,1b-2a. For the corresponding area for Korea and other areas, see Needham, SCC, III, Fig. 94 after p. 250.
142 CMF, 3,18b-20a.
143 Sejong SL, 30,25b.
144 Yonsang'un ilegi, 46,7a.
145 Chu Hsi, Chu-tzu chuan-shu, 50,5a.
147 Ibid., p. 111.
148 T'aejo SL, 1,51b.
149 Ibid., 2,5a.
150 T'aejo SL, 6.13b.
151 T'aejong SL, 22.34a and 44b.
152 Ibid., 34, 34b-35a.
153 Sejong SL, 86, 5b; 101.9a; 105, 9b; 125.1b-2b.
154 Sejo SL, 6, 13a ff. passim.
155 Songjong SL, 143, 20a-b; 21b-23a. Some attention is given to the Temple of Heaven in the early Yi period.
157 T'aejong SL, 31, 44a-46b.
158 See Pow-key Sohn, op. cit., pp. 38-43; and Han Yongu, "Nulchae Yang Sôngji ui sahoe chôngch'i sasang," Yôksa kyoyuk, 17 (1975), pp. 67-134.
159 Sejong SL, 29, 29a-30a.
160 Ibid., 48, 3b.
161 Sejo SL, 4, 23b.
162 An Chôngbok, Tongsa kangmok, p. 103.
163 T'aejo SL, 1, 36b-38b. See also Chong Inji, Hagyokchae-jip. Translated into modern Korean (Seoul, 1972), pp. 51-53 and 396-397, "Yôngbi och'on-ga só."

397
For the inculcation of "so chunghwa" to the children of late Yi Korea, see one of the basic texts used in the period, Pak Semu, Tongmong sŏnsŭp (Seoul, 1971), p. 89.

KSC, 19, 23b.

T'aejong SL, 13, 33b.

SY, 2, "Minho wang Pŏmmin."

Sejong SL, 1, 6b. For the circumstances of the abdication, I have something more to say in the next chapter.

Sejong SL, 98, 28a.

Chungjong SL, 84, 56b-57a.

Ibid., 88, 9b-10a.

Sohn, Powkey, believes that Confucianism and Sinism
were both used by the yangban as their checks upon monarchical prerogatives. See his conclusion to the first chapter of his dissertation. I cannot agree with him on this point. Pow-key Sohn, op. cit., p. 47.

Chapter IV.

1Ch‘ong Tojon, Sambong-ji, 10, pp. 217 and 491, "Simmun ch‘ondap."

2For Tung Chung-shu in this relation, see Chapter III, part A.


4Bib., 5, p. 79, "Kyengje mun‘gam, Sang," "Chaesang chi chik."

5Bib.

6Bib., 7, "Chos‘on kyongguk ch‘on, Sang," "pp. 120-121. 'Chaesang yonp‘yo."

7Bib.


9See above n. 4.
10 Ch'oe Sung-hui, "Chosŏn ch'ogi-ui on'gwan e kwan-han yŏn'gu," Han'gukhak nonjip (Kyemong-dae), No. 1 (1973), pp. 125-169.

11 Tongmun-ston, 24, "In chaei kuŏn kyŏsŏ" by Kwŏn Kŭn.


13 See Chapter II, especially the section on drought for the "Rain of King T'aejong."

14 This has already been discussed in the beginning part of this chapter.

15 Ch'ŏngjong sl., 2,17b.

16 T'aejong sl., 1,19b-20a.

17 Ibid., 4,10b-13b.

18 Ibid., 12,7a-8a.

19 Yŏll'yŏsil has this incident in the year of ŭryu, that is 1405 (2, "Ha Yun"). But the Sillok has it on the next year.

20 T'aejong sl., 33,36b-37b. Also briefly in Yŏll'yŏsil, 2, "Ha Yun."

21 Ch'ŏngjong sl., 6,1b-4b.

22 T'aejong sl., 4,3a.

23 Ibid., 4,2a.

24 Ibid., 12,17a-19b. Kim Sŏngjun tried to find other reasons for this event about T'aejong's expressed
desire for retirement. His study omits one similar case in 1402 when Kim wrote that there were four times that T'aejong expressed such desires in 1406, 1409, 1410, and 1418. See his "T'aejong ui oech'ok chego e taehayo," Yoku sa hakpo, 17*18 (1962), pp. 571-623.

25 T'aejong SL, 12,25a.
26 Ibid., 18,6a-10a; 20,21a-23a.
27 Ibid., 18,12b-13a.
28 Sejong SL, 1,23b. T'aejong SL, 36,4a.
29 Sejong SL, 1,32b-33a.
30 Ibid., 15,1a ff.
31 See Chapter I for discussion of the reliability of portentography.
32 Yollvolsil, 3, "Kang Sangin chi ok."
34 See the study of Chiphyon-jon by Ch'oe Sunghui cited above (n. 33), where the author maintains that the enormous scholarly work during the Sejong's reign in Chiphyon-jon was not so much to introduce Chinese institutions as to search for the key to better government from the historical experiences of the Chinese (pp. 55-56.). A good summary of his findings in this paper is found in his "Yangban yugyo chôngoh'i ui chinjon." in Kuksa p'yônch'an wiwonhoe, Han'guk-sa, Vol. 9 (Seoul, 1973), pp. 123-130.
35 For royal lectures in the Yi period, see Pow-key Sohn, Social History of the Early Yi Dynasty, 1392-1592, (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of California,

36 Sejong SL, 103,19b-22a.


39 Sejong SL, 80,26b.

40 Ibid., 77,7a-11b; Tongmun-sǒn, 50, "Ilsŏng chǒng-siŭi myong, pomnye" by Kim Ton; Also Jeon, op. cit., p. 73.

41 Jeon, op. cit., pp. 79-82.

42 Needham, SGG, III, p. 189.

43 Sejong SL, 100,2a.

44 Ibid., 96,7a-b.


46 Sejong SL, 19,28b-29a.

47 Sejo’s devotion to Buddhism is discussed in the previous chapter.

48 Sejo SL, 4,14b.


51 See section on drought in Chapter II.

52 See sections on sarira and sweet dew in Chapter II.

53 See section on thunder and lightning in Chapter II.

54 Songjŏng SL, 40, 5b-6a.

55 Ibid., 65, 19b-20a.

56 Ibid.

57 Ibid., 52, 6b. The astronomical chapters of the Chin-shu are translated with annotations into English by Ho Peng-yoke (Ping-yu Ho), The Astronomical Chapters of the Chin-shu (Paris, 1966).

58 Songjŏng SL, 185, 9b-10a.

59 See section on comets in Chapter II.

60 Songjŏng SL, 185, 10a.

61 For Chinese armillary sphere, see Needham, SCC, III, pp. 333-334.

62 Songjŏng SL, 251, 2b-3a.

63 T'aejŏng SL, 30, 2a-b.

64 Songjŏng SL, 141, 13b.
65 See Chapter III for the Chinese development.


67 Hongmun-gwan became one of the "three censoring organs (samsa)" only in the Sŏngjong's reign, although it was initiated in the Sejo's reign as a purely academic institution. See Ch'oe Sŏnhui, "Hongmun-gwan ūi sŏngnip kyŏngwi," Han'guk-sa yŏn'gu, 5 (1970), pp. 97-111.

68 Sŏngjong SL, 143, 14a.

69 This is usually covered by any survey history of the period. For details, see Sin Sŏ kho, "Ch'ŏn se iso jidai no shin-kyu tairitsu," in Kindai Ch'ŏn-shi kenkyū (Seoul, 1944), pp. 303-406.

70 Different opinions on the causes of factionalism in Yi Korea are reviewed in summary by Yi Chongaek, "Tang-jaeng ūn wae issŏnnun'ga?" in Sindong, August, 1966, pp. 144-148.


73 This is recognized as a sort of standard table of the lineage. See Yi Hongjik, Kuksa tae sajon (Seoul, 1968), p. 1021. Takahashi Toru, "Ch'ŏnjugakutaikan," in Ch'ŏn-shi kōza (Seoul, 1926), p. 6. Kim Yuk (1580-1658), in his Haedong Myŏngsin-nok (Distinguished Subjects of Korea) listed these scholars in the same order in the first chapter of his book, immediately after the three pre-Yi Confucian scholars.

75 Yi I, Yulgok chŏnsŏ, 31, 59b-60a, "Örok; Sang."

76 Fung Yu-lan, Chung-kuo che-hsueh shih (Hong Kong, 1970), p. 895.


78 Pak Chonghong, "Yugyo," Han’guk saron, 3 (1975), pp. 231-232. Here Professor Pak seems to be suggesting including scholars such as Chŏng Tojon and Kwŏn Kŭn in the tradition, rather than redefining the tradition from his doubts.

79 Yi Hwang, T’oegeye chŏngŏ, Ha, "Onhaeng-nok" 5, 5a.

80 Ch'oya ch'ŏmjae, kwŏn 6, "4th year of King Yŏnsan."

81 Kim Yuk, Haedong myŏngsillok, 1, "Kim Koengp’il," pp. 11-12.

82 Songjong SL, 91, 20b-21a; 29b. See also Nam Hyoon, Sau myŏnghaeng-nok (in Taedong yangǔng, Vol. 1), p. 104. Yi Hongjik, Kuksa tae sajŏn (Seoul, 1968), p. 762, has it that this was begun during the reign of Yŏnsan—an obvious mistake. For the biographies of the people involved, see Kim Yuk, Haedong myŏngsillok, 1, pp. 13-15; 38-39; 40-41.

83 Songjong SL, 91, 29b.

84 T’ongmun-gwan chi, 8, "Kosa," p. 177.


86 Kwŏn Kŭn, Yangch’ŏn-jip, 11, "Non munkwa sŏ."

88 Chungjong SL, 29.47a-b.


90 Chu Hsi, Chu-tzu ta-chuan, 15.1a-19a, "Ching-yen kang-i."

91 Chungjong SL, 29.47a-b.


93 Ibid.

94 According to an official roster of major office holders in Yi Korea, the post was succeeded from Sŏ Kŏjong to Ŭ Segyŏm in 1489, to Hong Kwidal in 1494, then to No Kongp'il in 1498, and so on. See Ch'ŏngson ko, Sang, p. 715, "Munhyŏng."

95 Sŏngjong SL, 169.6b.


99 This is pointed out by Balazs, op. cit., p. 143.

100 Naitō Torajirō, op. cit., pp. 277-283; 644-645.


103. See Section (1) of Chapter II, for the memorial presented by Yun Sojong.


105. Songjong SL, 84,3a.


107. Songjong SL, 91,30a-b; 16a-20b.

108. Ibid., 91,25b.

109. Wang An-shih's anti-portentology is discussed in the first part of Chapter III.


111. Ibid., 91,36b; 41a-44b.

112. Ibid., 91,49b.

113. Details of Im's punishments can be found in Sin Sokho, op. cit., pp. 345-349; Wagner, op. cit., pp. 30-31.

115 For instance, Sin Sŏkho's view in his op. cit.

116 For the emphasis given to remonstrance, see Wagner, op. cit., p. 27.

117 See Chapter II, section on thunder and lightning.

118 Wagner, op. cit., p. 28, translates this "idle literati."

119 Xonsan'gun ilgi, 30,25a.

120 Here I have in mind the studies by Sin Sŏkho, E. Wagner, Seno, and others.

121 Xonsan'gun ilgi, 30,22a. Wagner, op. cit., p. 183-184, has a good table on the people who were put to punishment.

122 Wagner, op. cit., pp. 48-50; 121.


125 Wagner, op. cit., p. 51.

126 Xonsan'gun ilgi, 18,18a.

127 Ibid., 18,18b. For Wang An-shih's view, see the first part of Chapter III.

128 Ibid., 21,19b-20a.

129 The political turmoil of 1478 is discussed above in this chapter as a precursor of the first literati purge.

130 Xonsan'gun ilgi, 24,1a.
131. *Yonsan'gun ilgi*, 24, 26a-b.

132. Ibid., 24, 29a.

133. Ibid., 24, 29a.

134. Ibid., 29, 5a.

135. Ibid., 29, 3b-4a.

136. Ibid., 30, 3a-b.

137. Ibid., 32, 11b.

138. Ibid., 51, 3a.

139. Ibid., 48, 16a.

140. Ibid., 37, 14a-b. See also section on comets in Chapter II.

141. See above in this chapter, and section on thunder and lightning in Chapter II.

142. *Yonsan'gun ilgi*, 53, 42a-43a.

143. Ibid., 53, 43a.

144. Ibid., 53, 37b-38a. For another similar response, given to the throne by a royal secretary, see Ibid., 54, 12b.

145. Ibid., 54, 13a.

146. Ibid., 54, 34a.

See also the section on meteors in Chapter II.

For the full translation, see above on the section on thunder.

I have already discussed the details that led to this major institutional change in the sections on comets and on earthquake (Chapter II).

This lineage problem of Neo-Confucianism in Yi Korea is discussed above in this chapter with the lineage table, Table 6.

The coup plan was partially related to the Halley comet of 1456. See the section on comets in Chapter II.

Wagner, op. cit., 71-73; 74; 103-104.

The revision of the roster was completed on the tenth day of the eleventh month, 1519, and the purge started on the early morning of the fifteenth day of the same month.

Chungjong SL., 22,53b.

Ibid., 22,30b.

Ibid., 22,66a.

Ibid., 26,36b.

Ibid., 14,30a.

Ibid., 29,2b-5b.

Ibid., 31,5b.

Ibid., 31,6a.

The translated part here is only its beginning, the entire memorial being about twenty times longer. Chungjong SL., 31,5b-11a.

Chungjong SL., 2,52b; 54a-55b.

Ibid., 10,24b-25a.

Ibid., 10,51b.

182 Chungjong SL, 2,17 through 3,54a.


184 See above on Taoism (Chapter III).

185 Sin Sokho, op. cit., pp. 92-98.


187 Songjong SL, 242,26a-27b.

188 Yollvosil, 8, "Hyollyangkwa p'abok."


190 Chungjong SL, 13,27b.


192 Ibid., pp. 186-189.

193 See Chungjong SL, 2,20b; 21b.

194 See Wagner, op. cit., pp. 97-98 for the background of the appointment.


Chung-jong SL., 37, 38b.

Ch'ong's attitude is well documented in Sin Sōkho, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-30.

Chung-jong SL., 33, 13a.

See above for this political conflict of 1478, when Im Sahong and Yu Chagwang were banished as the result.

Quoted from *Choya hoet'ong* by Seno Umakuma, "En-san cho no nidai kagoku," *Seikyū gakusō*, 3 (1931), p. 41.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adalla</th>
<th>阿達羅 (E)</th>
<th>chiao</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An Chŏngbok</td>
<td>安鼎福</td>
<td>Chigong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Hyang</td>
<td>安語</td>
<td>chikch'ŏp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Tang</td>
<td>安大生</td>
<td>Chin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Wŏn</td>
<td>安平 (大生)</td>
<td>Ch'in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anp'yŏng</td>
<td>安平（大生）</td>
<td>Chinhŭng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bakufu</td>
<td>巴庫夫</td>
<td>Chinju</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ch'adae</td>
<td>賀大台</td>
<td>Chinp'yŏng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chae</td>
<td>賀大台</td>
<td>Chinsan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chaech'o</td>
<td>賀大台</td>
<td>Chin-shu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ch'aek</td>
<td>賀大台</td>
<td>Chiphyŏn-jŏn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chajang</td>
<td>賀昌</td>
<td>chiri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ch'amji</td>
<td>賀美姬</td>
<td>ch'o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ch'ang</td>
<td>賀陽</td>
<td>Cho Chun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chang Pogo</td>
<td>張寶高 (保高)</td>
<td>Cho Hyodong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chang T'ien-chueh</td>
<td>張天覺</td>
<td>Cho Ilsin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changgyŏng</td>
<td>張昌</td>
<td>Cho Kwangjo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ch'anggyŏng</td>
<td>張昌</td>
<td>Cho Pak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ch'angp'yŏng</td>
<td>張昌</td>
<td>Cho Wich'ŏng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ch'anyŏng</td>
<td>張昌</td>
<td>Cho Wŏnjang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheju</td>
<td>張平</td>
<td>Cho Yŏngmu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chen</td>
<td>秦正</td>
<td>Ch'oe Chimong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cheng</td>
<td>秦正</td>
<td>Ch'oe Ch'ung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ch'eng</td>
<td>秦征</td>
<td>Ch'oe Ch'unghŏn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ch'eng-Chu</td>
<td>秦征</td>
<td>Ch'oe Hang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cheng-t'ung</td>
<td>秦征</td>
<td>Ch'oe Hongjae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chep'o</td>
<td>秦採</td>
<td>Ch'oe Kihu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chi</td>
<td>秦志</td>
<td>Ch'oe Kiu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chi</td>
<td>秦齊</td>
<td>Ch'oe Walli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ch'i</td>
<td>秦氣</td>
<td>Ch'oe Sagyŏm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
kwago
Kwangjong
Kwangp'yong
kwi
Kwôn Ch'ae
Kwôn Kûn
Kwôn Kyôngjung
Kwôn Pu
Kwôn Tan
Kyeryong
Kyông Taesûng
Kyônggi
Kyôngguk taejôn
Kyônghor-ru
Kyôngje mun'gam
Kyôngsang
Kyôngsang sŏnbae tang
kyôngyôn
Lao-tzu
li
Liang
Liao-tung
li-hsueh
Liu Tsung-yuan
Lu Ch'i
Ma Tuan-lin
manp'a sik
mi
Min
Ming
Mito

Mo-tzu
Muak
Muhak
muin
mun
Mun Hyoryang
Mun Kahak
munhyŏng
Munjong
Munjŏng
Munju
Minmu
Mio sahwa
Myoch'ŏng
Myongjong
Nam Chae
Nam Hyoŏn
Nam I
Nam Kon
Nam ŏn
Nam Sago
namdan
Namdang
Naong
Nihongi
no sangwang
Noe ŭmsin
noin-sŏng
nu
ŏjultŏk
Oktang

子岳學邃
孝為文文文
可為學學
衡文文文文
定文文文文文文
正文文文文文文文文文文文文文文文文文文文
士禪清清
在溫恰寒閣古壇堂翁記王信
本上音人星
悉老老老王

418
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ūian</td>
<td>聖安(大)</td>
<td>Yao</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ūich'ŏn</td>
<td>高天</td>
<td>Yejong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ūijong</td>
<td>毅宗</td>
<td>Yemun-gwan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ŭlsa sahwa</td>
<td>乙巳士福</td>
<td>Yi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ŭmyang sanjong togam</td>
<td>阴阳席定都监</td>
<td>Yi Chagyŏm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ungjin</td>
<td>熊津</td>
<td>Yi Chehyŏn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmun-sa</td>
<td>愛門寺</td>
<td>Yi Chiham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wang</td>
<td>韩</td>
<td>Yi Chŏm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wang An-shih</td>
<td>王安石</td>
<td>Yi Haeng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wang Ch'ung</td>
<td>王充</td>
<td>Yi Hwang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wang Hŏso</td>
<td>王許召</td>
<td>Yi Hyŏn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wang Kyu</td>
<td>王基</td>
<td>Yi I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wang Shou-jen</td>
<td>王守仁</td>
<td>Yi Ik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wang Sŏng</td>
<td>王承</td>
<td>Yi Kŏi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wangsa</td>
<td>魏</td>
<td>Yi Kŭngik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wei</td>
<td>魏</td>
<td>Yi Kyubo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wen-hsien t'ung-k'ao</td>
<td>文献通考(明)</td>
<td>Yi Kyugyŏng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wi</td>
<td>雁</td>
<td>Yi Mu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wŏlmyŏng</td>
<td>諭明(明)</td>
<td>Yi Pangoen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wŏlsŏng</td>
<td>韓</td>
<td>Yi Saek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wŏndan</td>
<td>韓</td>
<td>Yi Sang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wŏn'gak-sa</td>
<td>韓</td>
<td>Yi Simwŏn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wŏn'gu</td>
<td>韓</td>
<td>Yi Siyong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wu-tai shih</td>
<td>武台hist</td>
<td>Yi Sŏngdong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yang</td>
<td>阳</td>
<td>Yi Sŏnggye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yang Sŏngji</td>
<td>尹松吉</td>
<td>Yi Sukpŏn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yangban</td>
<td>尹班</td>
<td>Yi Sunsin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yangch'on</td>
<td>尹崇</td>
<td>Yi Ŭimin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yang-ch'ŏn</td>
<td>尹 stressed</td>
<td>yin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yang-chu</td>
<td>尹纠结</td>
<td>yin-yang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yangsang</td>
<td>雨上</td>
<td>Ying-p'ing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

422
Yǒllyósil kisul

Yǒn Kaesomun
Yǒnbok-sa
Yongmyǒng-ak
Yǒngnyu
Yǒngsŏng

Yǒngsŏng-dan
Yǒnsan
Yǒsa chegang
yu
Yu Chagwang
Yu Chǒnghyŏn
Yu Hanu
Yu P’aeng
Yu Songnyong
Yu Sŏngdan
Yu Tûkso
Yuan
Yueh-ling
yuil
Yun Sindal
Yun Sojong
Yungch’ŏn
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources:


Chaei ko. Kyujanggak MS, No. 1313.


Choson wangjo sillok. Kuksa p'yŏnch'an wiwŏnhoe ed.
朝鮮王朝實錄. 国史編纂委員會.

T'aejo Sillok, 1413.
T'aejong Sillok, 1426.
Chongjong Sillok, 1431.
Sejong Sillok, 1454.
Munjong Sillok, 1455.
Nogang gun ilgi, 1469.
(Chongjong Sillok)

Sejo Sillok, 1471.
Yejong Sillok, 1472.
Sosong Sillok, 1499.
Yonsan'gun ilgi, 1509.
Chungjong Sillok, 1550.
Injo Sillok, 1653.

Choya ch'ŏmjae. Imanishi Collection, Microfilm No. 93.
朝野僑載

朱熹. 朱子全書.

朱熹. 朱子大全 (四部備要)

增補文献備考. 古典刊行會

洪萬宗. 句五志

洪錫謨. 東國歲時記

荀子. 章句通註


Sillok. See *Choson wangjo sillok*.


Sung-jong-won ilei. Kuksa p'yŏnch'an wiwŏnhoe ed. 1961-

Taehan pulgyo yŏkkyŏng wiwŏnhoe. *Han'gul taejanggyong* (or Tripitaka). Seoul: Tongguk yŏkkyŏngwŏn, 1966-

427
이준. 陰崖日記. 禔林.

이철원. 燒翁稗説.

이황. ト'요의 朝鮮. 朝鮮文化研究院. 1958.

이길. 索箋. 退溪全書.

이근. 崱軒. 朝鮮文化研究院. 1967.

이경익. 燃藜室記述

이규영. 五洲衍文長箋散稿.

이색. 收隱集. 1972.


Secondary Sources in Korean:


全相運. 韓國科學技術史.


書愛觀志 玄岩寺. 韓國叫名著.


韓佑勳. 正祖丙午所寫錄劄分析的研究. 什論大論文集.


韓佑勳. 世宗乙卯 諸錄明對佛教施政.


韓佑勳. 咸末鮮初對佛教政策. 什論大論文集.


韓永愚. 鄭道傳思想研究. 研究.


韓永愚. 鄭道傳社會政治思想. 韓國史論.

Hong Isŏp. Chosŏn kwahaksa. Seoul: Ch'o'ngumsa, 1946.

洪以燮. 朝鮮科學史.


洪淳相. 韓日古代文化交涉史研究.


玄相允. 朝鮮儒學史.


金哲畯. 韓國古代社會研究.
Also in his Han’guk kodae sahoe yŏn’gu cited above.
金哲埈. 高麗中期의 文化意識와 史學의 性格: 韓国史研究.
金哲埈. 高麗史, 韓國의 古典面影 (新東亞).
Kim Songjun. "T’aejong ŭi oech’ŏk chegŏ e taehayŏ,”
金成俊. 太宗의 太戚除去에 대하여. 歷史學報.
Kim T’aeyŏng. "Chosŏn ch’o gi sajŏn ŭi sŏngnip e taehayŏ,”
金泰永. 朝鮮初期 神典의 成立에 대하여. 歷史學報.
金德樸. 韓國思想史.
Kim Uigyu. "Koryŏ kwanin sahoe ŭi sŏngkyŏk e taehan sigo,”
Yŏksa hakpo, 58 (1973), pp. 61-75.
金毅圭. 高麗官方社會의 性格에 대한 試考. 歷史學報.
金煬泰. 韓國佛教史. 韓國文化史大系.
高栢翊. 阿西亞의 歷史像.
高栢翊. 東亞交涉史의 研究.
Kuksa p’yŏnych’an wiwŏnhoe, ed., Han’guk-sa. Seoul:T’amu­
dang, 1972-
国史編纂委員會. 韓国史.
Pak Ch’anghŭi. "Koryŏ sidae kwallyoje e taehan koch’al,”

431


Pak Chonghong. "Yugyo," Han'guksaron (Kuksa p’yŏnch’an wi), 3 (1975), pp. 223-239.


Yi Kyōngsŏn. "Kŏn'guk sŏlhwŏ wa ch'onmyŏng sasang,"
李慶善. 建國說敘卦 天命思想. 東洋學.
Yi Núnhwa. Chosŏn pulgyo t'ongsa. 2 Vols. Seoul: Sin-
mun'gwan, 1918.
李能和. 朝鮮佛教通史.
——. Han'guk togyosa. Seoul: Tongguk taehakkyo, 1959.
李能和. 韓國佛教史.
Yi Pyŏngdo. Han'guk-sa. Kodae & Chungse. Seoul: Uryu,
李丙熹. 韓國史. 古代、中世.
李丙熹. 高麗時代史研究.
——. "Kwanghae-jo ŭi ch'ŏndo-ron kwa kyŏngnae yang-
kwŏl ch'anggŏn e taehayŏ," Chindan hakpo, 33 (1972),
25-37.
李丙熹. 光海朝議 逆都論卦 京內兩宮創建之初概. 震震學報.
Yi Sangbaek. Chosŏn munhwasa won'gu non'go. Seoul: Uryu,
1947.
李相佰. 朝鮮文化史研究論敘.
李相佰. 韓國史. 近世前期.
——. "Sambong inmul ko," Chindan hakpo, 2 (1935),
pp. 1-45; 3 (1935), pp. 41-75.
李相佰. 三峯人物考. 震震學報.
李相佰. 李朝建國史研究,
Yi Sŏngmu. "Chosŏn ch'ŏgi ŭi kisulgwan kwa kū chiwi,"
in Yu Hongnyŏl paksā hwagap kinyŏm nonch'ong. Seoul,
李成茂. 朝鮮初期外交官地位. 柳洪烈博士華甲紀念論叢.

434


Secondary Sources in Japanese and Chinese:


Miroyama Chijun. Chōsen no semboku to yōgen. Seoul: Government-General of Korea, 1933.


438
Yu Hongyŏl. "Chōsen ni okeru shoin no seiritsu,
Seikyū gakuso, 29 (1937), pp. 24-90; 30 (1939),
pp. 63-116.
柳洪烈. 朝鮮に於ける書院の成立. 青丘学稲.

Secondary Sources in Western Languages:


443


