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This paper examines how Empress Jingū, a mythical figure, was used for modern Japan's colonial rule of Korea. The fictional story, which was created while Japan was on hostile terms with Silla, was adopted as an ideology of the Japanese ruling class to overcome crisis amid rising tension with foreign countries. In the eighth century, Japan was in rivalry with Silla and used the legend of Empress Jingū to emphasize its diplomatic superiority. During the chaotic period of late Silla, when Silla pirates disturbed the Japanese archipelago, Japanese prayed at Empress Jingū's tomb and shrine for her divine power to be manifested to repel the pirates. When the Mongols invaded, Empress Jingū was deified and religious rituals were performed to rid the country of the foreign invaders. In the Japanese invasion of Korea from 1592 to 1598, the tradition of Empress Jingū was considered among samurai as historical justification and an ideology to pray for their success in the invasion. Modern Japan also actively utilized the tradition in colonial policy by incorporating it into education. The tradition of Empress Jingū has been inherited throughout Japanese history, and it has been an ideology that has provided Japanese with a base for their sense of superiority over the Koreans.

Keywords: Empress Jingū, Silla, Japanese invasions of Joseon from 1592 to 1598 (Imjin Waeran, 壬辰倭亂, Japanese invasion of Joseon), Japanese dislike of Joseon, Colonial rule of Korea

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I. Introduction

The legend of Empress Jingū's conquest of Korea is an example of ancient Japan's mythical history shaping Japan's sense of superiority toward a foreign country, informing foreign relations, and being reproduced in later historical periods. The ideology of the Empress Jingū tradition that early Japan ruled states in the Korean Peninsula has continued across periods of history, and starkly reveals Japanese perceptions of Korea in history. This tradition was particularly visible in times of international crisis rather than in times of peace and harmony, and it was constantly repeated and emphasized as an important ideology in achieving their goals.

It is historically rare that a mythical story becomes an ideology that affects foreign relations and is inherited from period to period, and, in this context, has dominated the minds of Japanese people. This paper aims to investigate what memories of the tradition of Empress Jingū were inherited and manifested in modern Japan's colonial rule of Korea. To achieve this aim, the paper explores the creation of the myth of

Empress Jingū in ancient Japan and its historical inheritance transmitted to the medieval, the early modern, and the modern periods in Japan, and it examines the legend's historical significance in the history of Japan.

II. The Creation of the Myth of Empress Jingū

The "Jingūki" (神功紀, Account of Empress Jingū) in *Nihon shoki* (日本書紀, *Chronicles of Japan*) raised Jingū to a status similar to *tennō* (天皇, lit. divine emperor), a term literally translated as divine emperor. This is the only example of a non-*tennō* so elevated in this chronicle of Japan, which emphasizes her divinity and greatness. Most of the entries in the "Jingūki" are concerned with the states on the Korean Peninsula, and it is a unique pattern that can be found nowhere else in *Nihon shoki*. Those articles are, moreover, mostly devoted to the description of the empress's divine or military power that subjugated the Korean states or relate the formation of diplomatic relations. This quality of the "Jingūki" reveals its character throughout *Nihon shoki*: the "Jingūki" is the first record that heralds Japan's diplomatic relations, which started with military subjugation of other countries. If the "Jingūki" article is based, to a certain extent, on facts and evidence, the text cannot avoid the suspicion that it was composed and edited according to the international relations perceptions of the compilers of *Nihon shoki* (Yeon, 1998).

First, the evidence that *Nihon shoki* provides for Empress Jingū's conquest of Silla is "divine command."[1] A divine revelation reportedly made Empress Jingū change her plan to conquer the Kumaso (熊襲) and instead lead a military expedition to Silla. According to the record, the King of Silla referred to Japan as a divine country, and this seems to be the source of the historical basis of the Japanese idea that Japan is a divine nation. The record also emphasized that the Silla king surrendered

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[1] *Nihon shoki*, Empress Jingū's regency of Emperor Chūai, fifth year, winter, twelfth month.

without any military engagements, which further suggests a causal connection between the conquest of Silla and the divine command. Second, the legend of the conquest of three Korean states (i.e., *Sankan* (三韓)) claims that following Silla, Koguryo and Baekje also submitted and became *miyake* (内官家, imperial domain) of Japan.

The tradition of Japan's conquest of Korea originated from the legend of Empress Jingū and is based upon experiences after the seventh century when early Japan was actively interacting with the three Korean states of Koguryo, Baekje, and Silla. The seventh century saw chronic territorial warfare between the Korean states, and in the midst of this competition, each Korean state was actively engaged in military diplomacy with Wa. The monarchy of Wa also entered the warfare in the Korean Peninsula, ultimately allying themselves with Baekje and suffering a devastating defeat in 663. Behind the tradition of Japan's conquest of the three Korean states lied Wa's complicated experiences and perceptions concerning the three Korean kingdoms. On the one hand, Japan sent troops to aid Baekje's restoration, felt strong hatred toward Silla for destroying Baekje and Koguryo, and was surprised at Koguryo, which was considered a local superpower, dispatching envoys to Wa. On the other hand, there lied internal realities such as the migration of Baekje and Koguryo royal family members and their integration into Wa's ruling class. The third is the belief of Silla being a "land of riches and treasures." This belief is at least a product of knowledge gained from official interaction with Silla and a result of the inherited memory of direct experiences with cultural products of Silla. Looking at resplendent gold and silver artifacts excavated from Silla tombs, it is not surprising that early Japanese should have thought that Silla was a "land of gold and silver" or a "land of riches and treasures." Fourth, it is the worship of Emperor Ōjin (応神), the son of Empress Jingū who was born after her military expedition to Silla. Later he was worshipped and revered by samurai as the god Hachiman (八幡神, the god of archery and war) for his being in the womb of Empress Jingū during her expedition to Silla.

Thus the worship of Empress Jingū overlaps with the worship of Emperor Ōjin.

The notion that Japan is a divine country in the legend of Empress Jingū's conquest of Korea is expressed through the words of the surrendered Silla king. That is, what underlies this legend is the national supremacism that Japan is the only divine country and is different from other countries, such as Silla (Tamura, 1959, p. 310). This is the origin of Japan's later ideology of the divine country, and since the ideology is based on a view of international relations, it was manifested more intensely when international tension was heightened.

The legend of Empress Jingū's conquest of the three Han has been established as the origin of the tradition that early Japan ruled the Korean Peninsula. According to the "Keitaiki" (繼体紀, Account of Emperor Keitai) in *Nihon shoki*, Japan transferred four of Imna's districts to Baekje. Mononobe no Ōmuraji (物部大連) was appointed envoy of this mission of transfer, and when he was about to accomplish the mission, his wife tried to stop him, saying, "Sumiyoshi Ōkami (住吉大神) originally bestowed the overseas countries of Koguryo, Baekje, Silla, and Gaya to Emperor Ōjin, who was still in the womb. Thus Empress Jingū and Senior Minister Takeshiuchi no Sukune (武內宿禰) first established a *miyake* in each of the countries, and for a long time they have been our overseas vassals. If you break off the land and give it to another country, it will violate our original borders. In future generations, people will reproach you for this."[2]

Sumiyoshi Myōjin (住吉明神) was originally the god of the sea and of safe voyage, but later the myth developed into the faith of Sumiyoshi Ōkami as the idea of divine command was added to the tradition of Empress Jingū's conquest of Korea and she was enshrined with him. The above story of Mononobe no Ōmuraji is a record of the early sixth

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[2] *Nihon shoki*, Emperor Keitai, sixth year, winter, twelfth month.

century about the transfer of Imna land supposedly ruled by early Japan. The reference to Koguryo, Baekje, and Silla is obviously to remind one of the legend of Empress Jingū's conquest of these three Korean kingdoms. Later records in *Nihon shoki* often mention tribute envoys from the three Korean states, content which alludes to the legend's claim that the Japanese rule of the Korean Peninsula and tribute-taking had all started from the time of Empress Jingū. According to an entry from 689 in *Nihon shoki*, Silla sent Kim Do-na (金道那), an official at the ninth rank in Silla's seventeen-rank government hierarchy, as envoy to Emperor Tenmu's funeral. There he said that Silla had continuously served and paid tribute since "the times of ancient emperors of Japan," a statement which, in fact, refers to the time of Empress Jingū.

The reigns of Tenmu and Jitō, or the incipient period of the *ritsuryō* state, appears to have been the right time and setting for the creation of the tradition of Empress Jingū's conquest of Silla. During this period, the title "*tennō* (天皇, divine emperor)" and the state name "*Nihon*" started to be used. And with the implementation of the Kiyomihara Code (浄御原令) in 689, the compilation of household registers, and the construction of Fujiwara Palace, Japan spurred the organization of its systems and institutions and built the foundation for the *ritsuryō*-based ancient state. During the reign of Tenmu, *Nihon shoki*, which describes the creation of Japan and the legitimacy and ancient lineage of the emperors, was completed. In addition, it should be noted that Ise Shrine (伊勢大神宮), where the ancestral deity of the Japanese imperial family Amaterasu Ōmikami (天照大神) is worshipped, is first mentioned in a record of 699, or during the reign of Emperor Monmu (文武), who followed Jitō.[3] What served as an important pretext for the establishment of Ise Shrine was, in terms of international relations, defining a new order between Japan and Silla as the relationship of suzerain (Japan) and vassal (Silla) and of

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[3] *Nihon shoki*, Emperor Monmu, third year, eighth month, records on the Year of the Cow.

superior and subordinate (Tamura, 1999, pp. 244-245).

After Koguryo collapsed in 668 following the demise of Baekje in 663, the immediate task facing the Japanese royal court was stabilizing the country by straightening internal affairs. Japan then created the emperor-centered *ritsuryō* state as a new ruling ideology. At the root of this transformation lied a strong Sinocentrism, and Silla was regarded as the target to realize this ideology. Perceiving Silla as an enemy, Japan deemed Silla an object to overcome and subjugate, and this desire of the present and the future was mirrored in the creation of the myth of the subjugation of Silla. Realizing the idea in the real world of Silla being an inferior tributary state—as defined in the Taihō Code (大寶令) of 701—was the ideology and aim of the emperor-centered *ritsuryō* state. The codal basis for claiming Silla to be an inferior tributary state was the so-called story of Empress Jingū's conquest of the three Korean states. In the records of dialogues between Japanese and Silla delegations in diplomatic contexts, it was often mentioned that Silla tribute had started with Empress Jingū's conquest of the three Han, and this myth became the basis to constrain the actual relationship between the two countries.

III. Establishment of the Emperor-centered *Ritsuryō* State and Historicization of the Myth of Empress Jingū

With the introduction of the Taihō Code and the completion of *Nihon shoki*, the idea that Korean states are inferior tributaries to Japan was legally and historically established. This idea was more obviously applied toward Silla in the diplomatic scenes of the Nara period in the eighth century. An official letter sent to the King of Silla in 703 alluded to the legend of Empress Jingū with a statement that Silla had served Japan earnestly for a long time sending lines of tribute vessels.[4] According to a record from 709, Fujiwara no Fuhito (藤原不比等) said to the Silla envoy, "Envoys of Silla have been visiting our royal court since

ancient times."[5] Without doubt, the phrase "ancient times" means the era of Empress Jingū. The fact that these were the words of a Japanese nobleman rather than a document from the emperor indicates that this must have been a widespread view of Silla among the Japanese aristocracy (Yeon, 2003).

According to a record in 752, the Silla envoy Kim Tae-ryeom (金泰廉) said, "Silla has been offering Japan tribute carried by an endless line of ships every year since the distant times of your kingdom."[6] The Japanese emperor's statement contains the same message. In this way, the Japanese mythical ideal of Empress Jingū's conquest of Silla turned into written records. The emperor's message read at the reception banquet for Kim Tae-ryeom and his entourage asserts, "Silla has been paying tribute to Japan from Empress Jingū's conquest of the country until now, and now it is our tributary state."[7] In this way, the beginning of Silla's tribute and the circumstances of Silla becoming a tributary were all attributed to Empress Jingū's conquest of Silla. In addition, in 780, the Silla envoy Kim Nan-son (金蘭孫) supposedly stated, citing the King of Silla, that Silla had revered and relied upon the divine emperors since the beginning of the kingdom and for generations, under the blessings of the emperors, it had been presenting tribute, never letting the oars go dry.[8] However, it is difficult to believe that this statement was indeed made by the King of Silla. The story of Empress Jingū's conquest of Silla must have been projected into this record. The text makes it appear that the legend actually happened in reality by borrowing the words of Silla elites and putting them into written form. Here, the time phrases such as "since the distant times of your kingdom" (遠皇朝), "from ancient times"

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[4] *Shoku Nihongi* (續日本紀), Keiun (慶雲) third year, eleventh month, third day.

[5] *Shoku Nihongi*,Wadō (和銅) second year, fifth month, twenty-seventh day.

[6] *Shoku Nihongi*, Tenpyō Shōhō (天平勝寶) fourth year, sixth month, fourteenth day.

[7] *Shoku Nihongi*, Tenpyō Shōhō fourth year, sixth month, seventeenth day.

[8] *Shoku Nihongi*, Hōki (寶龜) eleventh year, first month, fifth day.

(自古), and "since the beginning of the country" (開國以降) all refer to the time of the mythical Empress Jingū.

In 869, the Dazaifu (大宰府, Kyushu Government-General) reported an attack by Silla pirates to the Council of State (J. *Daijōkan* (太政官)), and the royal court closed Ise Shrine in the twelfth month of that year to pray for peace.[9] In the second month of the 870, prayers and documents for the repulsion of the Silla pirates and for the peace of the empire were submitted to the shrines of deities, including the Shrine of Great Bodhisattva Hachiman (八幡大菩薩宮).[10] These deities are all closely related to the tradition of ancient Japan's expedition to Silla and reminders of the story of Empress Jingū's conquest of Silla. To prepare for an attack by Silla pirates, not only the shrines but also the tombs of Jingū (神功), Kanmu (桓武), Ninmyō (仁明), and Montoku (文德) were closed. The latter three emperors in the list are direct ancestors of Emperor Seiwa (清和), and their genealogical relationship with Seiwa was the cause of this closure. But Empress Jingū, the first in the list, was a legendary figure worshipped as the guardian goddess that, still in the eighth and ninth centuries, ruled the spiritual world of ancient Japanese and was admired as the heroic figure who had conquered the Korean Peninsula in the time of legend. The shrine and tomb of Empress Jingū were real to the Japanese as objects of a faith to which they could instinctively turn for protection and worship at times of national crisis. This Japanese perception of Koreans formulated through the legend of Empress Jingū was inherited by the shogunal governments (武家政權).

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[9] *Sandai jitsuroku* (三代實錄), Jōgan (貞觀) eleventh year, twelfth month, fourteenth day.

[10] *Sandai jitsuroku*, Jōgan twelfth year, second month, fifteenth day.

IV. Medieval and Early-Modern-Era Japanese View of Koreans and the Legend of Empress Jingū

During the Kamakura (鎌倉) period, the tradition of Empress Jingū resurfaced when the Mongols, led by the combined forces of Goryeo and Yuan, invaded Japan. In this period, Japanese formed a concrete national identity that Japan is a divine country, replacing their apocalyptic world view. In 1268, the Mongol emperor of Yuan China sent a letter to Japan demanding surrender.[11] This was a great shock to Japan, and in an effort to overcome this, the study and evocation of Japanese classics and history became popular. In particular, Empress Jingū was the prime figure to be remembered and her conquest of the three Han was evoked as a proud victory and glory of the past.

There were numerous occasions where Empress Jingū was remembered. In the sixth month of 1268, upon receiving the Mongol emperor's message, royal tomb managers were sent to seven royal tombs in Japan, these being those of Empress Jingū as well as emperors Tenji (天智), Uda (宇多), Go-Sanjo (後三條), Go-Shirakawa (後白河), Go-Toba (後鳥羽), and Tsuchimikado (土御門). The fact that Empress Jingū was mentioned first shows that she was particularly revered as the guardian goddess of the country's independence. According to *Zoku Shigushō* (續史愚抄), in 1174, upon receiving the report that the coalition of Koguryo and Yuan had attacked Tsushima (對馬) and Iki (壹岐) islands, the Japanese royal court dedicated a letter of appeals to eight royal tombs including the tomb of Empress Jingū. And during the second Mongol invasion in 1281, Japan prayed for the peace and safety of its country by closing the eight royal tombs beginning with that of Empress Jingū (Kubota, 1962, pp. 61-62).

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[11] *Zoku Honchō tsūgan* (續本朝通鑑), Book 103, Bunei (文永) fifth year, spring, first month, *mizunoto-hitsuji* (癸未) (in *Honchō tsūgan*, Book 10).

Sugawara no Naganari (菅原長成) composed the draft reply to the Mongol emperor's letter in 1270. According to *Honchō bunshū* (本朝文集, *Collection of the Japanese Literary Works*), he stated that Japan was a divine country and would remain so eternally.[12] In 1271, Tōgan Ean (東嚴慧安), a monk from Shōdenji temple, in Kyoto, wrote a prayer for the safety of Japan evoking the memory of Empress Jingū:

> "A long time ago there was an empress named Jingū. She was pregnant and about to give birth, but to defend the country against hateful enemies, she raised bravery, and knowing her will, all the deities of the country followed her. Throwing the ball of ebb, the big ocean dried up; throwing the ball of rising tide, the sea water filled up. Countless enemies were drowned. These are the values of the two balls, and they are now in the royal palace of the emperor."[13]

Praising the historical achievements of Empress Jingū, the prayer expresses the fervent wish for victory over the enemy.

Hachiman gudokun (八幡愚童訓, *Teachings of Hachiman for Children*), a text compiled in the early fourteenth century, or shortly after the Mongol invasions, also includes the story of Empress Jingū. Relating the origin and relationships of Hachiman, the book preaches his divine virtues. The book narrates Empress Jingū's conquest of Korea, her son Emperor Ōjin being Hachiman, and his protection and mercy for Japan during the first Mongol invasion.

Hachiman gudokun's narrative of Empress Jingū has several different, modified elements from the story in *Nihon shoki*. First, narratives about the three ancient Korean kingdoms and Silla, which

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[12] "Letter to the Mongol Imperial Secretariat" (贈蒙古國中書省牒) in *Honchō bunshū*, vol. 67, in *Shintei zōho Kokushi taikei* (新訂增補國史大系), Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan (吉川弘文館), 1933.

[13] *Kamakura ibun* (鎌倉遺文), Book 13, No. 10557, No. 10558, and No. 10880.

were called Japan's "foreign countries," are mixed anachronically with those about Goryeo and the legend of Empress Jingū is associated with Goryeo. In particular, the empress's attack is interpreted as revenge for the attack of the "foreign country," reflecting their perception of the present reality of the Mongol invasions.

The view of Korea in medieval Japan is well expressed in the derogatory and beast-based depiction of the Silla king on a rock, which was said to have been carved as a memento after his surrender. In this rock art, the monarch was shown as a dog. The national crisis of the Mongol threat, the experience of intense fear, and the feeling of inferiority after defeats in actual battles may have induced Japanese to write a work that evokes the "memory" of Empress Jingū. The fact that foreign countries are depicted as demon ghosts in the story again reveals the mindset of Japanese people at that time, which was filled with hatred and fear toward the foreign invaders in the Mongol invasions.[14]

The latter half of *Hachiman gudokun* narrates the victory over the Mongol troops in detail as emphasizing Empress Jingū's divine power: "Empress Jingū raised the sea water, and during the battle in 1274 emitted raging flames. And during the battle in 1281, she unleashed enormous gusts." The ancient legend of Empress Jingū was reproduced in the medieval real world and the story of her divine power vanquishing foreign enemies developed into the faith of Empress Jingū, and was disseminated. Meanwhile, the shrines of Hachiman, where Emperor Ōjin, the son the empress carried in her womb during the incursion into Korea, was worshipped, were built throughout Japan as the Hachiman faith spread. Most of the "Origin" (J. *engi*, 緣起) stories of Hachiman shrines include the legend of Empress Jingū. Although new elements are added here and there, the general makeup of the stories follows the *Hachiman*

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[14] For more on Japanese views of Korea during this period, see Tanaka (1982), Murai (1988, 1998), Nam Ki-hak (1996), Na Jong-u (1998), and Kim Gwang-cheol (1999).

gudokun.

The tradition of Empress Jingū was recalled again during Toyotomi Hideyoshi's (豊臣秀吉) invasion of Joseon. *Taikō gunki monogatari* (太閤軍記物語), which is a biography of Hideyoshi, mentions the legend of Empress Jingū's conquest of Silla while describing Hideyoshi's alignment of troops (Kitajima, 1986). The following legend is from "The Origin of Empress Jingū's Campaign against Foreign Countries" (神功皇后異國退治緣起), a story handed down in Kichijōji temple (吉祥寺), in Shikanoshima (志賀島), Chikuzen Province (筑前國). In the third month of 1592, while heading to Nagoya, the last base camp before Joseon, Hideyoshi paid respect to the shrines of Emperor Chūai and Empress Jingū. This act of paying respect at the shrine of Empress Jingū before the attack of Joseon seems to imply that he wished to strengthen the will to conquer Joseon and seek historical justification for the invasion to the continent. The account in this source repeats the same description in *Hachiman gudokun* of the ebbs and flows created by the power of balls, but Empress Jingū's incursion to Silla becomes an incursion into Goryeo, and "the King of Silla" in the expression "The King of Silla is Japan's dog" is replaced by "the King of Goryeo." This indicates that the experiences of the Mongol-Goryeo coalition's invasions in the medieval period were passed down to this period in the form of vivid memory.

The worship of Empress Jingū permeated the Japanese troops in Joseon. From the *Seikanroku* (征韓錄, *Records of the Conquest of Korea*) compiled by the Shimazu *daimyō* (島津家) in southern Kyushu, we can learn that the Japanese generals staying in Nagoya performed a ritual for the divine country to seek justification in Empress Jingū's conquest of Korea. The ritual for the divine country that deemed Joseon as a target of conquest grew even more pronounced when the attack on Joseon was about to begin. According to *Kōrai nikki* (高麗日記, *Joseon Diary*) written by Tajiri Akitane (田尻鑑種), a retainer of Nabeshima Naoshige (鍋島直茂), thirty small Japanese ships defeated Joseon troops with hundreds of ships at the battle at the Imjin River in Joseon. In this diary

we find a passage that retells the legend of Empress Jingū: "To vanquish the Silla people, the goddess Empress Jingū summoned all the gods to Iki (壹岐) ... and the divine powers of Japan drove the Silla people to surrender." One of the records of this invasion of Joseon, "Kiyomasa Kōrai-jin oboegaki" (清正高麗陣覺書, Katō Kiyomasa's Record of the Invasion of Joseon), also includes a reference to the legend of Empress Jingū: "Since Empress Jingū and Emperor Ōjin, the three Korean states paid tribute to Japan from ancient times, but now they do so no longer … By capturing the King of Joseon, we will make them pay tribute to Japan." According to Kitajima Manji (1986), the tradition of Empress Jingū penetrated among *bushi* groups (武士團) not through Hideyoshi's inculcation of the doctrine, but it developed based on the indigenous faith of the samurai in various parts of Kyushu and on the worship of Hachiman, the god of war, which is associated with the worship of Empress Jingū (Tsukamoto, 1996). In this way, when Hideyoshi invaded Joseon, the tradition of Empress Jingū had already permeated among the warriors and monks who went to Joseon. During the invasions of Joseon, the legend of Empress Jingū, with its tale of the divine country conquering foreign countries, seems to have played the role of an ideology for the Japanese samurai that justified their invasion.

Hideyoshi's invasion of Joseon and Empress Jingū's conquest of Silla were integrated to form the Japanese view of Joseon, and this view played an important part in the formation of the *bakuhan* system's (幕藩制) understanding of foreign relations in the Edo period (Kitajima, 1979, p. 112). The view that a Japanese deity or emperor had ruled Korea and that the Korean king and aristocrats had obeyed that ruler was widespread (Hatada, 1969; Yazawa, 1969). National Learning (J. *Kokugaku*) scholars in the Edo period who held Japanese classics in absolute esteem and reverence often argued that a Japanese deity or an emperor had ruled Korea from time immemorial and Korean kings and aristocrats obeyed Japan. The best-known statement is "*inuoumono*" (犬追物), or dog shooting, a sport described in *Hachiman gudokun*. In this game, warriors

riding on horses shoot arrows at dogs set as substitutes for foreign enemies. This sport, popular in medieval Japan, lost its popularity by the early modern era, but the concept and the thought of regarding Silla people as dogs was still a prevalent perception among the Japanese ruling class about international relations. The *Inouomono hikki* (犬追物秘記, *Secret Chronicle of Dog Shooting*) printed in 1719, has the following sentences: "In ancient times when Empress Jingū conquered Silla, the kings of the three kingdoms, Silla, Baekje, and Koguryo, were all defeated and surrendered, and henceforth became slaves of Japan and protected it"; and "The King of Silla is Japan's dog" (as cited in Kim Gwang-cheol, 1999, pp. 303-316). Although the tradition met some changes after the medieval era, it remained strongly based upon the story of Empress Jingū's conquest of Korea in *Nihon shoki*, and it still contains the Japanese reactionary disdain and superiority sentiment toward Joseon.

V. The Modern Emperor State's Colonial Rule of Korea and the Legend of Empress Jingū

The tradition of Empress Jingū was expressed with more fervor, accompanied by *Seikanron* (征韓論) or advocacy of a punitive expedition to Joseon, in the first years of the Meiji (明治) period when the power of the emperor came to the political forefront. The historical ground that attracted major figures in the Meiji Restoration to advocate attacking Joseon was the tradition of Empress Jingū, and Yoshida Shōin (吉田松陰), an imperial loyalist from Chōshū domain (長州藩), provided important ideological influence. Yoshida lived in the time of turbulence when the Edo shogunate's feudal regime was about to collapse. He proposed that Japan compensate their losses from unfair treaties with Western powers by expanding Japanese control to Asian countries such as Joseon and China. In *Yūshūroku* (幽囚錄, Records of Imprisonment), he wrote: "Empress Jingū conquered the three Korean states, Hōjō

Tokimune (北條時宗) routed the Mongols, and Hideyoshi invaded Joseon; and they all should be called heroes"; and "As in the golden era of the past when Japan ruled Joseon, Japan should carve out the land of Manchuria in the north and overpower Taiwan and the Luzon islands in the south, and gradually show its pioneering spirit" (as cited in Nakatsuka, 2002, pp. 63-64). These quotes show that Yoshida took the Empress Jingū legend in *Nihon shoki* as fact and extended the empress's ambition to an expansionist aspiration that encompassed Manchuria, Taiwan, and the Philippines, which the chosen people of the divine country of Japan should pursue. Yoshida's views on expansion not only influenced his students, but also by National Learning scholars, Confucian scholars, and pro-emperor anti-foreigner loyalists.

In his 1860 text *Sonjō eidanroku* (尊皇英斷録, Revere the Emperor and Expel the Foreigners), Hirano Kuniomi (平野國臣), a National Learning scholar from Fukuoka domain (福岡藩), went further, proposing the conquest of the world, not merely Korea: "First (Japan) crushed the three Korean states and founded Mimana … (and) to punish Balhae's insolence (Japan) occupied it … (to) conquer the world" (Han Gye-ok, 1996, pp. 40-41). Kido Takayoshi (木戸孝允), who was a student of Yoshida Shōin and later one of the leading members of the Meiji government, wrote a letter in the twelfth month of 1868 to Iwakura Tomomi (岩倉具視), the highest ranking official of the new government. He stated, "(The government) should make its policy clear and send an envoy to Joseon to reprimand their insolence. If they disobey, we should attack their land to punish their indiscretion and greatly extend the authority of the divine nation of Japan" (as cited in Nakatsuka, 2002, p. 64).

Kido Takayoshi was a leading exponent of *Seikanron* in the early years of the Meiji government, but it was Sada Hakubō (佐田白茅) who disseminated this thought across Japan. The Meiji government, via Tsushima domain (對馬藩), informed Joseon of the establishment of the new government and requested diplomatic relations, but Joseon refused,

stating that Japan's diplomatic documents differed from those of the Edo government. Thus, in February 1870, the new Japanese government sent Sada, then a foreign ministry official, to the Choryang Japan House (草梁倭館) in Busan to conduct preliminary negotiations for diplomatic relations with Joseon that had stopped over the issue of the document allowing Japanese to enter Joseon. During this process, Sada became enraged at Joseon's attitude and wrote: "Joseon has been our vassal since Emperor Ōjin conquered Korea. Therefore, in light of our ancient history, we must punish Joseon's insolence and reverse this situation, using the force of reformation and restoration" (as cited in Nakatsuka, 1993, p. 182). Japanese politicians chose to use the term "Kan" (韓) rather than "Joseon" (朝鮮), the name of Korea at that time. This was doubtless to remember Empress Jingū's legend of the conquest of the *Sankan*, or three Korean states. And the reference to Ōjin alluded to his entry into Korea while in the womb of the empress.

In the midst of discussing the enlightenment of modern Japanese civilization, the government used the portrait of Empress Jingū on a Japanese banknote issued in 1878. Following the regulation set in 1871 to wear Western clothes in the imperial house, it was claimed that Empress Jingū had worn a two-piece suit during her expedition to Korea. In 1883, Empress Jingū was again featured on a banknote (Tsukamoto, 1996, p. 849). In general, a country uses on a banknote a portrait of a figure that represents the face and image of the nation, and Empress Jingū on a banknote is a typical example of her being used as a symbol of national expansion. In a nation state, it is necessary to promote the figure sufficiently to the public to present him/her as a symbol of the nation. As the Meiji government was carrying out the cultural enlightenment that included plans for increasing national power, it placed Empress Jingū at the forefront as a symbolic figure of national unity under the ideology of "Everyone is equal under the one ruler" (一君萬民). Declaring that it would return Japan to the golden era as described in *Nihon shoki*, the Meiji government chose Empress Jingū for its first

banknote. This action blatantly displayed the state's intention to invade Korea (Kang Deok-sang, 2007, p. 14). Moreover, Japan used the portrait of Takeshiuchi no Sukune on the first banknotes of the 1, 5, 10, and 100 won of Joseon immediately after annexing the country, and continued the practice until its defeat in 1945. This is another sign of nationalism based on the historical premise that ancient Japan ruled Korea (Kang Deok-sang, 2007, p. 14). Takeshiuchi no Sukune is a figure described as having participated in Empress Jingū's expedition to Korea, and he was likely chosen intentionally for the first banknotes of colonial Joseon to pair with the Japanese banknotes that featured Empress Jingū. All these clearly show how important the tradition of Empress Jingū was to the Japanese government at that time.

Empress Jingū was also an important subject in Japanese art. The art works that were the most approachable while giving strong visual impressions to the public in this period were *ukiyoe* (浮世繪, lit. pictures of the floating world), a genre of Japanese woodblock prints and paintings. The first picture that featured Empress Jingū is the painting *Empress Jingū's Conquest of Korea* (c. 1815-1830) by Utagawa Kuniyasu (歌川國安), who was a student of Utagawa Toyokuni (歌川豊國), who excelled in portraits of performers and beauties (Kang Deok-sang, 2007, p. 13). In the painting, the warships of Empress Jingū and Takeshiuchi no Sukune are placed side by side, and the Japanese soldiers who have landed on the peninsula are engaging in battle in front of the castle inscribed with "The King of Goryeo." The crux of the story of Empress Jingū's conquest of Korea was the Silla king's surrender, followed by the surrenders of the Koguryo and Baekje kings, who had heard the news of Silla. But Kuniyasu's picture identified the castle as "The King of Goryeo." This might reflect the intention to emphasize the power of Empress Jingū by casting Goryeo, which has a similar name to Koguryo, considered the most powerful among the three ancient Korean states. *Ukiyoe* works in this period often featured Japan's overseas military adventures such as the repulsion of the Mongol invaders and Hideyoshi's

invasion of Joseon, all of which were apparent attempts to illustrate the glorious history of Japan.

The reference to Empress Jingū can also be found in the speech by the Japanese Navy Fleet Admiral Tōgō Heihachirō (東郷平八郎) during the Russo-Japanese War, which was given at the disbandment ceremony of Japan's Combined Fleet. The Combined Fleet was formed on December 28, 1903, to prepare for the Russo-Japanese War, and after the great victory over the Russian Baltic Fleet, on December 21, 1905, it was disbanded. In the disbandment speech, the admiral said:

> The war that lasted more than 20 months has already become a thing of the past, and our Combined Fleet has completed the mission and is about to be disbanded. … In ancient times, after Empress Jingū conquered the three Korean states, Korea was under our rule for more than 400 years. However, once the navy was weakened, our military prowess was lost as well. During the Tokugawa shogunate, with long years of peace, we came to neglect our military posture; in consequence, a small number of American battleships could make the whole nation suffer and we could not respond properly when the Russian fleet attacked Chishima (千島) and Karafuto (樺太).

(Tōgō Jinja Shiryōshitsu (東郷神社資料室, Tōgō Shrine Reference Room)). The Russo-Japanese War hero Tōgō also believed the legend of Empress Jingū wide spread at that time as other *Seikanron* exponents did, and it reveals his perception of foreign affairs and history.

Japan during this period was carrying out meticulous research on Korean history and Korean-Japanese relations history to justify its invasion of Korea in reality (Nakatsuka, 1993, p. 188). The theory of the common ancestry of Japanese and Koreans (日鮮同祖論) and the study of Manchurian and Korean history (滿鮮史研究) are examples of research work produced at that time. The main source of evidence for the common ancestry theory comes from *Kojiki* (古事記) and *Nihon shoki*, which have

stories and records that claim that Japan ruled Korea as part of its territory from the age of the gods. Thus, according to the common ancestry theory, the modern annexation of Korea was merely a repeat of the early Japanese rule of Korea and a return to the original state of history (Kita, 1910; Kume, 1911). The study of Manchurian and Korean history is a historical perspective that denies the independent development of Korean history and treats Korean history as a tributary history branched from the continent, in particular, from the Manchus (Hatada, 1966, 1969). Both theories were used to deny the Korean identity and uniqueness and to justify and rationalize the Japanese rule of Korea when Japan's annexation of Korea was underway.

The historical view and research approach of this kind were immediately adopted in history textbooks and played a key role in inculcating the Japanese with distorted views of Korea. With the Imperial Rescript on Education (教育勅語) issued in 1890, the ideas of "serving one's country with complete loyalty" (盡忠報國) and "revering the emperor and loving one's country" (尊皇愛國) had to be included in Japanese history education. One year before the promulgation of the Imperial Rescript on Education, the Constitution of Japan (大日本憲法) was enacted and became the spiritual core of the Meiji emperor system. Article 1 of the Meiji Constitution reads, "The Empire of Japan shall be reigned over and governed by a line of Emperors unbroken for ages eternal," and Article 3 reads "The Emperor is sacred and inviolable." The Japanese emperor's sovereignty and inviolable prestige came from the myths in *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*. As shown by the teachings in *Jinnō shōtōki* (神皇正統記, *A Chronicle of Gods and Sovereigns*), an early fourteenth-century ethics text used at that time, "Serving with utmost loyalty and sacrificing one's life is the right way as a subject of the country," the education of the period attempted to inculcate emperor worship, patriotism, and expansionism. In the early twentieth century, national textbooks were introduced, and the tendency of perpetuating myths in *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* as facts was extended to the educational

field. Thus the Japanese history textbooks published during this era included mythical figures, in particular mythical emperors, in the depiction of history as real people of power. For instance, the national history textbook of this period starts with the four chapters that describe the blessings of the sun goddess Amaterasu Ōmikami in Chapter 1, the reign of Emperor Jinmu in Chapter 2, Yamato Takeru (日本武尊) in Chapter 3, and Empress Jingū in Chapter 4.[15]

Here we will examine the descriptions of Empress Jingū's conquest of Korea, which concern the Japanese understanding of early Korean history. The first national textbook (1903) says, "There was a small country called Imna, which was a vassal to our country from the early days. The empress … in concert with Takeshiuchi no Sukune, crossed the sea and reached Silla, which made the King of Silla scared and surrender. Following this, both Baekje and Koguryo became vassals of our country." To furnish historical justification for the invasion and colonization of Korea, the "historical fact" that Japan ruled Korea at least for a time in ancient times was necessary, and this necessity led them to create a fabricated history of the "conquest of three Korean states" (Shōsei no kai, 1982, pp. 98-99).

The second edition national textbook (1909) directly quotes a passage from *Nihon shoki* that describes Empress Jingū's expedition: "The empress … crossed the sea and conquered Silla. The King of Silla was so awed at her imperial prestige that he surrendered. He pledged that his country would never disobey if the sun rises in the west and the river reverses its flow. Later the kingdoms of Baekje and Koguryo also surrendered to our country." Regarding this passage, the teacher's manual for the textbook instructs teachers to "compare it with the current state of Korea, which is under our protection for the peace of Asia, and

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[15] See *Nihon kyōkasho taikei: Kindai-hen* (日本教科書大系 – 近代編, *The Compendium of Japanese Textbooks – The Modern Period*), vols. 18-20 (History 1-3), (Tokyo: Kōdansha (講談社), 1963).

make (students) realize that the present situation is not an accident." With the 1905 Treaty, Korea lost its diplomatic independence to Japan, and during this period, Japan infused its ancient perception of Korea into the real-world education of the present time. That is, under the immediate reality of Japan's annexation of Korea, Japan was instructing teachers to teach the validity of its annexation of Korea (Chung Jae-jeong, 1988, pp. 143-145).

To the third (1920) and fourth (1934) editions of the textbook were added narrative rhetoric such as, quoting from the fourth edition, "The King of Silla was very frightened and said, 'I have heard that there is a divine country named Japan in the east and they have a great ruler called the emperor. Those approaching must be divine soldiers of Japan. How can we fight against them?' … Then he raised a white flag and surrendered."

The fifth (1940) and sixth (1943) editions were published during the period when Japan pursued a more active policy of assimilating Koreans. These editions contain more obvious narratives based on the emperor-centered view of history (J. *kōkokushikan* (皇国史観)), a view of history in which Japan is regarded as a divine country ruled by divine emperors. Two sentences are added in the description of Empress Jingū's legend: "Some of the excited soldiers tried to kill the king (of Silla), but the empress halted them and accepted the surrender." and "Learning the greatness of Japan, more people came to Japan from the peninsula. Through the protection of the gods and the blessings of the royal house, the country was stabilized and the imperial prestige reached the peninsula." The teacher's manual gives even more aggressive instruction:

> The story of Empress Jingū's expedition has become further elaborated in a narrative style. … It emphasizes the modern significance of this heroic endeavor. Hereby children will learn the subjugation of the three states of the peninsula, consequent migrations of Koreans, and their pledges of loyalty to Japan. Dreaming of the future to build Great Asia,

children will be deeply moved.

For the present rule of Korea and assimilation policy of Koreans, Japan utilized fabricated ancient history and theories wrapped in views of Japan and Korea as one entity (J. *naisen ittai* (內鮮一體)) and the theory of Japanese and Koreans having a common ancestry (J. *Nissen dōsoron* (日鮮同祖論)) to strengthen its colonial policy.

Another book published during this period, *Kokushi gaisetsu* (国史概説, *Introductory Japanese History*) (1940), states in the preface, "The Great Empire of Japan is forever governed by emperors, who have an unbroken lineage, with the divine decree (神勅) descended from the imperial ancestor Amaterasu Ōmikami. This is the eternal, immutable sovereignty of the emperor (國體, *kokutai*)." *Kokushi gaisetsu* was a reference book for the government official examination published by the Ministry of Education as "National History" had been added as an exam subject in 1942. The book was praised in the *Asahi* newspaper as "the first ever authoritative Japanese history book based on the emperor-centered view of history." ("*Kokushi gaisetsu jōkan o kankō*" (國史概說上卷を刊行), February 4, 1943). The chapter "Empress Jingū's Conquest of Korea" in the reference book adopts the story in *Nihon shoki* almost verbatim:

> Following our people's arrival in the peninsula and rescue of Imna, the whole peninsula fell under the imperial prestige. That is, after Emperor Chūai passed away in Kashiwara Palace (橿原宮), Empress Jingū raised troops for the expedition to Silla. Then the Empress … herself led the warships from Tsushima and sailed to Silla with a tailwind. The warships filling the sea and colors flying high, the King of Silla finally succumbed to the power of the imperial troops. He pledged that as a *miyake*, it would never be negligent in paying tribute and surrendered maps, registers, and treasures. After learning of this, the other two countries, Koguryo and Baekje, too surrendered to us. During this period, the Imna Nihonfu was established in Imna. Later our presence in

> the peninsula grew even stronger and with the headquarters in Imna, we suppressed Silla and our power reached Baekje and Koguryo (*Kokushi gaisetsu – Book 1*, 1943, pp. 45-46).

In addition, regarding the annexation of Korea, the reference book asserts that it restored the situation to "its original state." In the book is, "During the reign of Emperor Kinmei (欽明天皇), our country withdrew from the Imna Nihonfu, and during the reign of Emperor Tenji, our vassal Baekje collapsed. Since then, a long time has passed and now the peninsula, restored to its original state, has become part of the imperial land" (*Kokushi gaisetsu – Book 2*, 1943, p. 429). Considering that this textbook for the government official examination was produced by the Ministry of Education, it was clearly a means to inculcate the emperor-centered view of history and the rationale of the current colonial rule of Korea.

VI. Conclusion

This paper has examined how Empress Jingū, a mythical figure, was used in modern Japan's colonial rule of Korea. The tradition of Empress Jingū did not surface randomly at a certain time. It was continually recalled throughout the history of Japan from early times to the modern period, showing the tendency of being inherited from period to period.

There are few instances in which a mythical story formed in ancient times has been historically inherited without interruption and established among Japanese as a view and a concept of foreign relations. Among these, the most notable is the story of Empress Jingū's conquest of Korea. This story was fabricated in the period when Japan was having a confrontational and hostile relationship with Silla, and thus when Japan felt increased tension toward foreign countries, and the Japanese ruling class used it to overcome the crisis. In the eighth century when Japan was in rivalry with Silla, it referred to the legend of Empress Jingū at scenes of diplomatic interaction to emphasize its superiority over Silla. Also,

when pirates from Silla, which was near the end of its rule and experiencing turmoil, disturbed the Japanese islands, Japanese sought the shrine and tomb of Empress Jingū to pray for divine power to defeat the pirates. During the Mongol invasions, under country-wide crisis and great fear, the tradition of Empress Jingū turned into a faith. Japanese prayed at shrines founded for her and performed rituals for the repulsion of foreign enemies, and they attributed the Mongols' retreat to the divine power of Empress Jingū. During the Japanese invasion of Joseon from 1592 to 1598, the legend of Empress Jingū's conquest of the three Korean states was retold by samurai invading Joseon as well as by Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and was used as historical justification and an ideology to rationalize the aggression against Korea. In the early modern period, the tradition of Empress Jingū helped scholars of Japanese classics and culture to form a disdainful view toward Joseon and provided the idea of *Seikanron* with a historical and ideological foundation. In the later modern period, during the Japanese colonial rule of Korea, the legend of Empress Jingū was inculcated through education and aggressively used for Japan's colonial policy. The tradition of Empress Jingū was passed down throughout the entire history of Japan and furnished an ideology to help Japanese form a sense of superiority toward Koreans.

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