

# Contacts between Korean and Japanese Frontline Commanders during the Imjin War: Focusing on the Letters between the Two Camps in 1594\*

Kyong-tae KIM  
Chonnam National University

## Introduction

On the eighth day of the first lunar month of 1593, the Ming armies, led by the Ming commander in chief Li Rusong 李如松, dealt a devastating blow to the Japanese armies at the Battle of Pyeongyang. The Japanese commanders withdrew their troops to Hanseong 漢城 (today's Seoul), yet gained a victory against the Ming armies at Byeokjegwan, a suburb of Hanseong. Thereafter, the war reached a stalemate and the commanders on both sides preferred peace talks to costly battles as a means to end the impasse of the Imjin War (1592-1598).

The Joseon court, witnessing its territory turn into a horrible battlefield, had little inclination for peace talks with their sworn enemy, Japan. Nevertheless, the court also felt obliged to speak with their adversaries for some practical purposes. In this precarious situation, realistic considerations could not be avoided. And, given that Joseon's military power was far from superior to that of Japan, it may well have been difficult for the

-----  
\* This article is translated from the Korean manuscript “임진전쟁기 (1594년) 조선군과 일본군의 이면교섭 연구 - 『泰長院文書』 수록 兩軍 書狀을 중심으로,” originally published in *The Korea-Japan Historical Review* (한일관계사연구) 61 (August 2018): 125-72.

Joseon leaders to rule out peace talks as one measure. Especially, some field commanders, if abiding by the official attitude of their government to the Japanese armies as ‘no negotiation,’ found themselves in need of contact with their adversaries in order to obtain relevant information and to take care of immediate problems caused by the hostilities.

The primary Ming and Japanese negotiators were Shen Weijing 沈惟敬 and Konishi Yukinaga 小西行長, respectively. The Joseon officials were not informed of the negotiations between them. As the peace talks between the Ming and Japanese armies had become the *fait accompli*, Joseon began to move to open its own channel of communication with the Japanese. The Joseon court sent the Buddhist monk Yujeong 惟政 (penname Samyeongdang, 1544-1610) to meet with Katō Kiyomasa 加藤清正 (1562-1611) in order to gather information regarding what was occurring at the peace talks, and at the same time to incite Kiyomasa who wanted to see the peace negotiations between the Ming and his rival Yukinaga failing.<sup>1</sup> This case of Korean contact with Kiyomasa had been carried out with the approval of the Ming commander Liu Ting 劉綎 who then encamped in Korea.<sup>2</sup>

Yet, there was another type of Korean contact different in nature from the case of Yujeong, as carried out by Joseon’s frontline commanders such as Kim Eungseo 金應瑞 (1564-1624), Baek Sarim 白士霖, and Yi Bin 李賓. An account regarding Kim Eungseo’s contacts with the Japanese commanders are found in the *Seonjo Sillok* 宣祖實錄 (The Veritable Records of King Seonjo) and the *Nanjung japnok* 亂中雜錄 (The Miscellaneous Records during the War). Still, these records focus only on reactions by the Joseon army, thus making it difficult to know more fully the interactions between the Joseon and the Japanese armies. In this context, this article examines the communication letters between the two parties, represented by

-----  
<sup>1</sup> The contacts between Yujeong and Katō Kiyomasa occurred four times—three times from the fourth lunar month to the twelfth month of 1594, and the last time in the third month of 1597 just before the second invasion. For the activities of Yujeong during and in the wake of the Imjin War, see Samyeongdang ginyeom saeophoe pyeon [Committee for commemorating Yujeong, ed.], *Samyeongdang Yujeong* [A biography of Yujeong] (Seoul: Jisik saneopsa, 2000).

<sup>2</sup> Kim Kyong-tae, “Imjin jeonjaengi Ganghwa gyoseop yeon’gu” [Study on the peace talks during the Imjin War], Ph. D. dissertation, Korea University (2014), 156-60.

Kim Eungseo and his Japanese counterpart Nabeshima Naoshige 鍋島直茂 (1538-1618), in the *Taichōin monjo*.<sup>3</sup> Crosschecking these documents and the Joseon's historical sources will cast more light on what actually occurred during the talk between the Joseon and the Japanese commanders in the front lines and equip us with a better understanding of the Imjin War.

## I. Skirmishes between Korean and Japanese Armies and the Clues for Their Contacts

To begin with, the short biographies of the two protagonists of the talks between the Korean and Japanese armies—Kim Eungseo and Nabeshima Naoshige—are necessary. Kim passed the military examination and became an inspector in 1588. Though dismissed subsequently, he was reinstated with the posts of auxiliary defense officer (K. Jobangjang 助防將) and defense commander (K. Bang'eosa 防禦使) of Pyeong'an Province in 1592 when the war broke out. After the start of the peace negotiations between the Ming and Japan, Kim served as the defense commander and the provincial commander (K. Byongma Jeoltosa 兵馬節度使) for Right Gyeongsang Province. During the second Japanese invasions in 1597, he was known as one of the eminent field commanders who fought against the Japanese armies and as one of the main negotiators with Japan. Further, he organized

-----  
<sup>3</sup> *Taichōin Monjo* 泰長院文書 documents tell of little known contacts between Korean and Japanese field commanders during the Imjin War. The documents are not preserved at the Taichōin Buddhist Temple, Saga City, Saga Prefecture. The documents covering the period of 1562 through 1622 consist of those regarding management of the Taichōin Temple and the diplomatic letters composed by the monks affiliated with the temple. Notably, more than one-half of the 105 documents pertain to Nabeshima Naoshige's communications with the Joseon Korean troops. This article draws on the printed version of the entire documents, which are available in *Saga-ken shiryō shūsei komonjo hen* 佐賀縣史料集成古文書編, vol. 5.

Using these documents, several recent studies throw light on rarely known episodes of the communications between the Korean and Japanese field generals during the Imjin War period. See Kim, "Imjin Jeonjaeng gi ganghwa gyoseop yeon'gu," Sin Yunho, "Imjin Waeran ganghwa gyoseop sigi Joseon eui daeil jeongchaek" [Joseon Korea's policy toward Japan during the negotiation period of the Imjin War], *Yi Sunsin yeon'gu nonchong* 23 (2015); Min Duk-gi, "Jeong'yu jaeran gi Hwangseoksanseong jeontu wa Gimhae busa Baek Sarim" [Hwangseoksanseong Fortress Battle and Gimhae Prefecture Governor Baek Sa-rim during the Second Japanese Invasion of Korea in 1597], *Hanil gwan'gyesa yeon'gu* 57 (2017).

the surrendered Japanese soldiers (K. *hangwae* 降倭). After the Imjin War, he was appointed to strategic posts in the north against the Jurchens. It was at that time that he changed his name to Kim Gyeongseo 金景瑞. When the Ming demanded Joseon to join its campaign against the Later Jin during the reign of King Gwanghae (r. 1608-23), Kim, then the provincial commander of Pyeong'an Province, was appointed to vice commander of the Joseon army under the commander in chief Gang Hongnip 姜弘立 (1560-1627). However, the Ming and Joseon armies suffered a crushing defeat at the Battle of Sarhū near Fushun in 1619, and the Korean commanders, including Kim, and the rest of their soldiers surrendered to the Later Jin. Since then, the context of his death had remained unclear.<sup>4</sup>

Nabeshima Naoshige was a *daimyō* 大名 (Japanese feudal lord) from the Saga area of Hizen in Kyushu. His ancestors had served the Ryūzōji for generations. Nabeshima took an unrivaled position among the retainers, grew in power through the Imjin War and the Battle of Sekigahara in 1600, and eventually took over the regional power of the Ryūzōji descent group. At the outbreak of the Imjin War, he belonged to the second division of the invasion armies under Kiyomasa, which advanced as far as Hamgyeong Province. During the second Japanese invasions, he joined the fourth division.<sup>5</sup> During the negotiation interval, his soldiers built a fortress and stationed themselves on Juk Island in Gimhae along the southern coast of Joseon.

The peace talks between the Ming and Japan commenced from the fourth lunar month of 1593, but Joseon was not included there. The peace talks were conducted principally between Shen Weijing and Konishi Yukinaga, which thus motivated Joseon to create its own channels of information. Then, several frontier commanders, besides the far-famed Buddhist

-----  
<sup>4</sup> Yi Jangheui, "Kim Gyeongseo," in *Hanguk minjok munhwa dae baekwa sajeon* [Great Encyclopedia of the Korean Nation's Culture] (1996).

<sup>5</sup> For Nabeshima Naoshige's activities during the Imjin War, see Tsuno Tomoaki, "Chōsen shuppei ni okeru Nabeshima Naoshige no ichiji kikoku ni tsuite" [On Nabeshima Naoshige's temporary return at the time of the expedition to Joseon Korea], *Jinbun kagaku kenkyū* (Kōchi Daigaku jinbun gakubu) 13 (2006); Tsuno Tomoaki, "Keichō no eki ni okeru Nabeshima shi no dōkō" [Nabeshima's activities during the second Japanese invasion], *Shokuhoki kenkyū* 8 (2006).

monk Yujeong, attempted to make contact with the Japanese army.<sup>6</sup> For example, the provincial commander for Left Gyeongsang Province Go Eonbaek sent his messengers to establish a link between Kiyomasa and the Ming commander Liu Ting as well as between Kiyomasa and Yujeong. In the case of Kim, he endeavored to talk with Yukinaga to the extent that Kim persuaded Gweon Yul 權慄 (1537-99), one of the greatest senior commanders during the war, by boastfully promising to obtain surrender from the Tsushima lord Sō Yoshitoshi 宗義智 (1568-1615) and his retainer Yanagawa Shigenobu 柳川調信.<sup>7</sup>

And, making the other point of contact with Kiyomasa involved initially the magistrate Baek Sarim in Gimhae, the border defense commissioner Yi Bin, and the commander in chief Gweon Yul on the Korean side, and Nabeshima Naoshige and his colleagues, staying in Juk Island off the Gimhae coastal town, on the Japanese side. Later, after joining the Korean party, Kim added more issues to the talks and eventually met with Yukinaga in person. Likewise, the fact that some commanders of the Joseon armies took great labor to open new channels of negotiation with Kiyomasa, while striving to block the talks between Shen Weijing and Yukinaga, questions what benefits they expected from the communication with their enemy.

By the second half of 1594, most of the Japanese armies had returned to Japan and those left behind held their ground in newly constructed fortresses scattered along the southern coast from Ulsan through Busan to Geoje Island. Yukinaga was in charge of the peace negotiations but Kiyomasa was deeply opposed to the way in which Yukinaga carried out the ne-

<sup>6</sup> Such contacts made by the Joseon field commanders culminated in a meeting in person between Kim Eungseo and Konishi Yukinaga at Hamam, in the southern coastal area, on the twenty-second lunar day of the eleventh month, 1594. For that meeting there are several previous studies: Yi Hyeongseok, *Imjin jeollansa* [History of the Imjin War] (1967): 892-99; Kim Munja, “Bunroku-Keichōki ni okeru Nichi-Ming kōwa kōshō to Chōsen” [Joseon Korea and the Japan-Ming Peace Negotiations, 1592-98], Ph. D. dissertation, Ochanomizu joshi daigaku (1995): 72-75; Sajima Akiko, “Bunroku eki kōwa no uragawa” [Behind the scenes of the peace negotiations during the first Japanese invasion], in Itsuwari no Hideyoshi zō o uchikowasu, eds. by Yamamoto Hirofumi et al. (Kashiwa shobō, 2013).

<sup>7</sup> Gweon Yul’s report in *Seongjo sillok* 宣祖實錄 [The Veritable Records of King Seonjo], *gweon* 卷 (fascicle) 65 (fourteenth day of the seventh month, 1595).

gotiations. Kiyomasa's meeting with the Korean monk Yujeong was among his attempts to take the lead from Yukinaga. Still, his opposition was directed to the terms of peace as negotiated between Shen Weijing and Yukinaga rather than to the peace talks *per se*. Nabeshima under Kiyomasa was also in no position to oppose the peace negotiations. Still, even though joining the Kiyomasa camp in the battles, Naoshige interacted with Yukinaga and Yoshitoshi encamped near him. Probably, Naoshige wanted his service to be recognized by his superior, or Kiyomasa in producing a successful negotiation by aiding Yukinaga.<sup>8</sup> As for Yukinaga, it appears that he tried to induce Joseon into the peace talks with the Ming, which had been dragged on, with a view of locating a breakthrough beyond the deadlock.

The Joseon court officially refused to participate in the peace talks. Nevertheless, the court was anxious to know what was occurring at the peace talks, not least because they could offer reasons for rejecting the peace talks. That is why the monk Yujeong was sent to the Kiyomasa camp with the chief aim of collecting information on the peace negotiations currently underway. The court, for its part, had no objection to collecting information insofar as it was done unofficially outside the court. As for some Joseon frontline commanders in their efforts to make contact with the Japanese, they saw the practical benefits of preventing possible misunderstandings and unnecessary conflicts between Joseon and Japanese armies. Moreover, some other commanders such as Kim Eungseo wanted to distinguish themselves by eliciting concessions or even submissions from their enemies.

The initial issues between Joseon and Japanese armies were to prevent border incidents and looting. The first letter, sent by the Korean general Yi Bin to Shigenobu, raised these issues. The main contents of the text are shown below in order to explore what rationale was used by the Joseon side to create a contact point with Yukinaga.

-----

<sup>8</sup> A man dispatched to the Joseon camp by Nabeshima was quoted as having said that the Japanese who participated in the peace talks would be listed in the records and be awarded accordingly. See *Seonjo sillok, gweon 57* (eighteenth day of the eleventh month, 1594); On Nabeshima's attempt to participate in the peace negotiations, Sajima Akiko suggests that every Japanese commander was eager to achieve something during his station in order to show it to Hideyoshi. See Sajima, "Bunroku eki kōwa no uragawa," 164.

- **Serial number**      Number 1
- **Date**                      twenty-fifth day, ninth lunar month, 1594
- **Source:**                  *Seonjo sillok* (fifth day of the tenth lunar month of the twenty-seventh year of the reign of Seonjo)
- **Sender:**                 Yi Bin 李賓
- **Receiver:**              Yanagawa Shigenobu

• **Main contents**

- (1) Your country Japan raised troops without justification and invaded our innocent country, bringing to naught all the diplomatic efforts of friendship over the past 200 years, inflicting countless casualties, setting fire to our royal shrine and altar for the Gods of Earth and Grain and digging up our royal tombs, and then advanced as far as Pyeongyang.
- (2) Enraged, the celestial emperor of the Great Ming sent Song Yingchang 宋應昌 and Li Rusong 李如松 to subjugate the invaders. Upon recapture of Pyeongyang by the Ming, the vanguard Konishi Yukinaga and his hordes fled only to preserve their lives. The Ming armies pitied them and allowed them for peace talks, and the Japanese armies withdrew to the south.
- (3) If the Japanese commanders want peace, they should prevent their soldiers from raiding villages. But, since the last autumn, killing and plundering had been rife. Last time, Yukinaga told the commander Liu Ting that the bandits were from Tsushima and not from his camp, and hence could be subject to decapitation. Recently, in areas such as Hamam and Goseong bandits are roaming in hordes of tens and hundreds, killing and looting such that victims have reached hundreds in number. People in coastal areas do not trust the Japanese request for peace.
- (4) Since the bandits are said to leave and return to Geoje Island, they must be subordinates of Yukinaga who has failed to keep his men under control. Henceforth, in the event of further banditry, Joseon armies will chase them and raze their strongholds so that both the people's woes and Yukinaga's charges will be resolved.
- (5) We are under the impression that Katō Kiyomasa has taken good control of his men since the start of the peace negotiations. He displayed the heads of bandits and returned Korean captives. Who could have imagined that Yukinaga is inferior to Kiyomasa in handling his men? The prolonged stay of the troops in a neighboring country and the failure to discipline them are reasons for the lack of progress in the peace talks. Please convey these messages clearly to Yukinaga.
- (6) The letter which you and Sō Yoshitoshi sent to the provincial governor has already been delivered to the court. We are expecting a reply soon.

• **Remarks**

The title of the letter reads “Yu Gaseondaebu Taira Shigenobu cheop”  
 諭嘉善大夫平調信貼 (Letter addressed to Gaseon Daebu (嘉善大夫)  
 Yanagawa Shigenobu 柳川調信)

The contents of the letter can be summarized into: (1) Blame for the Japanese barbarous invasion; (2) Arrival of the Ming armies to rescue Joseon and the Japanese request for peace; (3) Killing and looting by the Japanese soldiers in Joseon; (4) Possibility of looting by Yukinaga’s men and a counterattack plan by Joseon; (5) Contrasts between Kiyomasa and Yukinaga; and (6) Reply for a request from Yanagawa Shigenobu and Sō Yoshitoshi.

It comes as no surprise that the letter, addressed to a Japanese general by a Korean general, started with a verbal attack on the unprovoked war and the atrocities committed by the Japanese armies. The author Yi Bin charged that the continued atrocities such as killing people and pillaging villages were all the more outrageous because the Japanese were supposed to seek for peace. In the second half of the letter, however, the blame for the killing and the pillaging by the Japanese soldiers was strategically directed to Yukinaga in a stark contrast to Kiyomasa who was recognized as an able general who tried his best to keep his men under control. By deliberately provoking Yukinaga with an unfavorable and humiliating contrast with his rival Kiyomasa, Yi Bin sought to elicit a direct response from Yukinaga.

The next letter is indicative of certain communications between the generals of Joseon and the Japanese camps even prior to Yi Bin’s letter above.<sup>9</sup>

- |                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| • <b>Serial number</b> | Number 2                                       |
| • <b>Date</b>          | the second half of the ninth lunar month, 1594 |

-----  
<sup>9</sup> The *Taichōin monjo* included in *Saga-ken shiryō shūsei komonjo hen* 佐賀縣史料集成古文書編 has been typeset from the original manuscript. The process of typesetting cannot rule out the possibility of typographical errors. The Korean translation of the individual letter has not been done in a verbatim manner, but as a summary of main points.

- **Source** *Taichōin monjo* 87
- **Sender** Baek Sarim
- **Receiver** Naritomi Shigeyasu<sup>10</sup> (presumed)

• **Main contents**

- (1) I thank you for the repatriation of thirty Korean captives of men and women. It has been confirmed that the Japanese bandits who committed recent robberies were not under your own command. I have heard that Kato Kiyomasa executed those Japanese who committed robbery and displayed their bodies, and sent back Korean captives. Now, you have followed his precedents, so we may take this good event as a chance to start peace talks.
- (2) However, the Japanese soldiers from Geoje Island roamed along the seacoast and sacked coastal towns, such as Goseong and Sacheon, killing and plundering people. Previously, Konishi Yukinaga was informed of such depredation but he said he would not feel sorry even if all would be killed because they were from Tsushima [not from his camp]. Accordingly, our naval generals will soon lead their soldiers to drive out all of them.
- (3) Now that we have already set out talking about peace, General Yi Bin felt obliged to inform you of our plan [to punish the Japanese bandits]. Thus, he had me deliver the letter to Yanagawa Shigenobu on his behalf.

The repatriation of thirty Korean captives is indicative of the main agenda for Baek Sarim's previous contacts with his Japanese counterpart, most probably Shigeyasu who replied to Baek in the following letter (marked Number 3). Baek took the repatriation of Joseon captives as a credible evidence of Japanese good will. However, the Japanese soldiers coming from Geoje Island continued to engage in killing and looting, thus they were to be punished by the Korean armies. Despite the communications of good will until that time, still, the plan to launch an attack was notified to the Japanese side.

-----  
<sup>10</sup> Naritomi Shigeyasu (1559-1634), a retainer of the Nabeshima clan, landed on Joseon soil with 882 men on the fifth day of the third lunar month, 1593. See *Nabeshima-ke monjo* 鍋島家文書 [The Documents of the Nabeshima clan] 52.

<sup>11</sup> The letter seems to refer to that (marked number 1) dated the twenty-fifth day of the ninth lunar

- **Serial number**    Number 3
- **Date**                twenty-seventh day, ninth lunar month, 1594
- **Source**              *Taichōin monjo* 70
- **Sender**              Naritomi Shigeyasu
- **Receiver**            Baek Sarim

• **Main contents**

- (1) The thirty Korean captives have been sent back because the peace talks between the Great Ming and Japan are well underway. There is no other intent on the part of the Japanese armies.
- (2) Have the Joseon warships already launched an attack on the Japanese bandits from Geoje who attacked the towns such as Haman and Goseong to kill and loot people of the coastal towns such as Sacheon? Your letter has been delivered to Nabeshima Naoshige, my superior at Juk Island, who honored Joseon's decision. However, he was of the opinion that Konishi Yukinaga would be consulted before the planned operation would be executed and that if the Joseon forces would stop attack he was willing to be instrumental in assuring Yukinaga to keep the Japanese bandits from committing robberies. Deliver this letter to Yi Bin and let us know his decision via letter.

As stated above, Naritomi wanted Baek to consider the return of Korean captives as a sign of good faith in the context of the peace talks between the Ming and Japan. Upon receiving the last letter from the Joseon side that gave a written warning for retaliation against the Japanese bandits, he reported this matter to his master, Naoshige who, in turn, raised no objection to the Joseon army's plan but offered to consult with Yukinaga to work out a non-military solution.

It appears that the contacts between Baek and Naritomi had been made quite a while earlier regarding such immediate issues as setting boundaries, policing areas, and returning the Korean captives, which had eventually led them to form a mutually beneficial relationship. Yet, since Geoje Island was located farther south from his lord's (Naoshige) camp at

-----  
month, 1594, addressed to Yanagawa Shigenobu.

Gimhae, Naritomi expressed difficulty in monitoring the Japanese bandits entrenched there. Yi Bin and other Korean field commanders also seemed to seek to communicate with Yukinaga in order to deal with such immediate concerns as prohibiting the Japanese bandits from sailing near Geoje Island. Yi Bin had written the letter (marked Number 1) addressed to Yanagawa Shigenobu, and used the existing contact point between the junior officers Baek and Naritomi for the letter to be forwarded to Yanagawa and ultimately to Yukinaga.

The Geoje attack plan mentioned in the letter was an offensive action discussed previously at the Joseon court. The aims of the attack were not only to punish the Japanese bandits but also to demonstrate the prowess of the Joseon forces to their enemies. The attack plan had been first put forth by the Border Defense Council (*Bibyeonsa* 備邊司), and enthusiastically pursued by Yun Dusu (1533-1601), then the second state councilor and the commander of three provinces. Yun planned to mobilize large combined land and sea forces while the Border Defense Council expressed reservations regarding Yun's ambitious plan.<sup>12</sup> At any rate, this letter confirmed the fact that the Joseon navy had skirmished with Japanese raiders and repeated the previous demand to execute the Japanese bandits and to display their bodies. And Yi Bin was anxious to know if his previous letter (marked Number 1) had been delivered to Yukinaga to whom Yi wished his intent be known.

Later, as shown below, the contact points remained Baek Sarim on the Joseon side, while Toyo Shigemori 豊茂守—a subordinate of Naoshige—appeared on the Japanese side. The letters were not delivered separately one by one but in collections. Thus, Baek gathered the letters from Yi Bin and Kim Eungseo before sending them to the Japanese while Toyo Shigemori collected the letters from Naoshige, Yanagawa, and Yukinaga altogether.

-----

<sup>12</sup> The attack plan was actually enacted, but failed because of the lack of coordination among the units of the Joseon troops. The naval forces returned without results worth mentioning. Taking the responsibility, Yun Dusu resigned from office. See *Seonjo sillok*, *gweon* 55 (twenty-seventh day of the ninth lunar month, 1594); *Ibid.*, *gweon* 56 (thirteenth day of the tenth lunar month, 1594); *Ibid.*, *gweon* 56 (twenty-third day of the tenth lunar month, 1594).

- **Serial number**    Number 4
- **Date**                third day, tenth lunar month, 1594
- **Source**              *Taichōin monjo* 61
- **Sender**              Baek Sarim
- **Receiver**            Toyo Shigemori

• **Main contents**

The bandits entrenched in Geoje Island should not go unpunished. The general Yi Bin ordered our seamen to charge against the bandits' strongholds. Yet, if they are executed and sent to us, there will be no need to expose the peace atmosphere to a risk. If we receive a guarantee from Yukinaga, then the attack can be spared. Convey this intent to Yukinaga.

- **Serial number**    Number 5
- **Date**                fifth day, tenth lunar month, 1594
- **Source**              *Taichōin monjo* 86
- **Sender**              Yi Bin
- **Receiver**            Gaseon Daebu (嘉善大夫) Yanagawa Shigenobu

• **Main contents**

Have you received the previous letter and delivered it to Yukinaga? Three enemy ships from Geoje about to raid Jinhae were detected and immediately chased by our naval officers. The enemy fled leaving behind their empty ships. Yukinaga should be informed immediately of this incident, and asked to hand over the bandits to our navy for their executed bodies to be displayed. Then, suspicions between the two forces will be resolved and peace will follow.

• **Remarks**

The honorary title “Gaseondaebu (嘉善大夫)” had been awarded to Yanagawa by the Joseon court before the outbreak of the war.

- **Serial number**     Number 6
- **Date**                 seventh day, tenth lunar month, 1594
- **Source**                *Taichōin monjo* 86
- **Sender**                Toyo Shigemori
- **Receiver**              Unknown (presumed to be Baek Sarim)

• **Main contents**

Your letter addressed to Yanagawa Shigenobu had been delivered to him, and he wrote a reply (marked Number 7). Also, the matters you addressed had been reported to Yukinaga whose intents can be found in that reply. In my view, it is only Yukinaga who is waiting for a reply from the celestial dynasty, following the order from the taikō 太閤 (that is, Toyotomi Hideyoshi). In the future, Yukinaga should be the sole partner in your talks with our armies. The peace talks between you and our general (that is, Konishi Yukinaga) will lead to the best methods for maintaining the state and saving the people.

- **Serial number**     Number 7
- **Date**                 seventh day, tenth lunar month, 1594
- **Source**                *Seonjo sillok* (eighth day, eleventh lunar month, twenty-seventh year of the reign of Seonjo)
- **Sender**                Yanagawa Shigenobu
- **Receiver**              Yi Bin

• **Main contents**

- (1) The letter (marked Number 1) you had sent on the twenty-fifth [day] of last month was received on the sixth [day] of this month. I have delivered the contents to Konishi Yukinaga. Then he said:
- (2) “It is universally true that the small serve the great. The streams all join in the sea, and the polestar occupies its place while the host of other stars pay homage to the polestar.<sup>13</sup> Previously, the taikō had sent the monk Keitetsu Genso 景轍玄蘇<sup>14</sup> and Shigenobu to the Joseon court to seek appointments only to be rejected. The next year, he intended to obtain permission to conduct tribute trade directly from the celestial dynasty by sending troops using Joseon’s route. However, the war broke out because Joseon refused to yield route to Japan. Then, the Japanese troops triumphed, advancing all the way to Pyeongyang.

- (3) At that time, the celestial general Shen Weijing arrived to request peace talks; we did not cross the Amnok River (Ch. Yalu). But, in the following year, due to Joseon's instigation, the hostilities resumed. My [Yukinaga's] armies alone confronted successfully the large celestial armies, yet when provisions ran out and the roads were perilous, they were forced to withdraw to Hanseong to await battle along with other generals. When the celestial armies came close to the royal palace, they were defeated by our armies. Yet, in honoring the principle of serving the great, we sent a letter to Shen Weijing asking for peace negotiations. Thereupon, the general Li Rusong dispatched the two celestial envoys Xie Yongzi 謝用梓 and Xu Yiguan 徐一貫, accompanied by Yukinaga to Nagoya, in Kyushu to hear directly from the taikō. We do not know what has caused a delay in the reply [from the emperor] since the envoys' reporting.
- (4) Why is it that Koreans together with the commander Liu Ting put trust to others [not Yukinaga], and try to block the progress of the peace talks? What is wrong with Yukinaga who has done his utmost to persuade the taikō? Moreover, he has withdrawn half of the troops at the request of the Ming, and awaited the arrival of an imperial envoy [charged with investiture]. Yet, your country together with the commander Liu Ting have been hindering a reply from the Ming court by interfering with the peace process.
- (5) Under these circumstances, launching battleships to patrol the waters is a shallow tactic. Regarding the bandits in question, I have no knowledge. The Joseon commanders, for their part, have failed to check the dens of thieves. It is Konishi Yukinaga, not Katō Kiyomasa, that the taikō has entrusted with the task of awaiting an imperial envoy."
- (6) I am of the same opinion as Yukinaga [placed previously]. You would rather drop the charges against us and engage in policing the areas. At the end of last month, when the left defense commander (Kim Eungseo) sent his man to the Tsushima magistrate (Sō Yoshitoshi), I escorted Kim to Yukinaga's camp. He had the opportunity to hear in person from Yukinaga and Yoshitoshi. I suggest that you may well persuade Kim Eungseo to hold back the battleships already launched. It is regretful that you did not report directly to Yukinaga, the [Japanese] bandits around the Haman and Goseong areas. In the future, if you have anything to discuss, you should notify Yukinaga directly.

Just as the Joseon generals wanted their letters to be delivered to Konishi Yukinaga, so the Japanese generals under him tried to assure their Joseon counterparts that Yukinaga should be the sole representative of Toyotomi Hideyoshi and that all the concerns should be directed to him. The Joseon general Yi Bin could first receive the direct quotations of Yukinaga's words in the letter (Number 7) sent under the name of Yanagawa Shigenobu, dat-

ed the seventh day of the tenth lunar month of 1594. The letter (marked Number 7) was Yukinaga's response to Yi Bin's letter (marked Number 1)<sup>15</sup> blaming the Japanese for the unprovoked invasion and the war atrocities as well as their depredations even during the peace negotiations.

• <b>Serial number</b>	Number 8
• <b>Date</b>	eighth day, tenth lunar month, 1594
• <b>Source</b>	<i>Taichōin monjo</i> 71
• <b>Sender</b>	Nabeshima Naoshige
• <b>Receiver</b>	Yi Bin

• **Main contents**

Your letter, addressed to Yanagawa, dated twenty-fifth day, last month (marked Number 1), has been delivered immediately to his camp. The contents of the letter seem to be all true. Your country has had a difficult time confronting the Japanese armies still stationed in southern Gyeongsang Province, which, however, is not comparable to the hardships that Japan and the Great Ming have undergone. The taikō has already ordered Yukinaga to wait an answer to the peace negotiations from the celestial dynasty. An immediate peace agreement may well be a good policy to bring order and stability to the state and the people.

Yukinaga's words (from the paragraph (2) to the paragraph (5) of the letter (Number 7)) were hardly apologetic regarding Yi Bin's charges. The Koreans were blamed for causing the war in the paragraph (2). Yukinaga attributed the outbreak of the war to the Joseon court's rejection of Japanese requests for the conferment of official title to Genso and Shigenobu<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Original text: 以小事大 乃天地通理也 細流歸海 衆星拱辰者 是也.

<sup>14</sup> Keitetsu Genso was a Buddhist monk from Tsushima who was in charge of diplomatic affairs.

<sup>15</sup> This letter was meant to be a pronouncement (*gyeokseo* 檄書). See *Seonjo sillok*, *gweon* 57 (eighth day of the eleventh lunar month, 1594).

<sup>16</sup> The Joseon court had awarded Yanagawa Shigenobu with the title of *Gaseon daebu* 嘉善大夫 (Gaseon grand master), and raised his rank in the fourth lunar month of 1591. See *Seonjo sujeong sillok* 宣祖修正實錄 (The Corrected Veritable Records of King Seongjo), *gweon* 25 (first day, fourth lunar month, 1591).

and for the opening of a tribute route to the Ming. His explanation of the events leading to the Battle of Pyeongyang was quite contradictory to that of Yi Bin. He asserted that the Japanese armies suspended offensive actions as Shen Weijing offered peace talks, but the Koreans instigated hostilities and the Japanese found themselves in a situation where they had to confront the Ming offensive. (the paragraph (3))

In the paragraph (4), Yukinaga also criticized Joseon and the Ming commander Liu Ting for establishing contact with Katō Kiyomasa. As in the paragraph (5), he presented himself as the sole negotiator entrusted by Hideyoshi. With regard to the Japanese thieves in question, he claimed that he had no knowledge about them and that it was a shallow tactic to launch the battleships to chase them at the time of peace negotiation. And, the paragraph (6) was Yanagawa Shigenobu's statement. As a vassal of Yukinaga, he had guided a messenger from Kim Eungseo to Yukinaga and went on to say that all of the Korean concerns, including the banditry, should be directed to Yukinaga's attention. Thus, Yanagawa did his best to lead the Koreans to believe that it was only with Yukinaga that they should contact for handling their problems and concerns.

The reply from the Joseon generals was composed on the thirteenth day of the tenth lunar month of 1594. The letters (marked Number 9 and 10) tell of the messengers going back and forth between the two camps carrying verbal messages, in addition to written correspondence. The Joseon commanders accepted the Japanese measures to control their soldiers and returned the battleships ready to attack the Japanese bandits.

- **Serial number**      Number 9
- **Date**                      thirteenth day, tenth lunar month, 1594
- **Source**                    *Taichōin monjo* 60
- **Sender**                    Baek Sarim
- **Receiver**                Toyo Shigemori

• **Main contents**

I thank you for sending repeated letters.  
Your proposed security plan between the two countries has been heard in

detail from the messenger. Although the regions are divided into east and west and the languages are different, there are certain rules to be followed. I commend your show of sincerity. Let there be no error, large or small, by way of continued communications between each other.

- **Serial number**    Number 10
- **Date**                thirteenth day, tenth lunar month, 1594
- **Source**              *Taichōin monjo* 63
- **Sender**              Yi Bin
- **Receiver**            Nabeshima Naoshige

• **Main contents**

I expect you to hear from our messenger that the battleships [sent to punish the Japanese bandits] returned. The contents in the letter, carried by the messenger, are all true.

- **Serial number**    Number 11
- **Date**                thirteenth day, tenth lunar month, 1594
- **Source**              *Taichōin monjo* 85<sup>17</sup>
- **Sender**              Yi Bin
- **Receiver**            Gaseon Daebu (嘉善大夫) Yanagawa Shigenobu

• **Main contents**

- (1) I thank you for your willing effort to send the letters. I am all the more impressed to see the grand master not forgetting old grace.
- (2) The expressions in the previous letter (Number 7) that “the small serves the great,” and that “the streams all join to the sea and the polestar occupies its place while the host of other stars pay homage to it” are all universally true and correct. The peace talks [predicated on this principle of tributary relations] will be trustworthy. Yet, since it is the Great Ming that commands the world, it is beyond our power to decide whether to conduct war or peace.
- (3) Your country, on the pretext of seeking appointments or borrowing the route [to the Ming], raised troops without justification and inflicted

calamity upon our country, stopping nowhere in pillaging and violations. Our fathers, sons, and brothers gnash their teeth with rage to take revenge upon the enemies, willing to endure ordeals such as sleeping with their heads laid on thorns and tasting gall bladders of animals.

- (4) However, the great general of the celestial dynasty with merciful feelings could not bear to annihilate the invaders and accepted the request for peace talks, thus suspending hostilities. As for our people, high and low, all could not dare to go against the request until today.
- (5) The fallen bandits have run amok in such areas as Changweon, Chirweon, Jinhae, and Goseong, killing people, thus turning these areas into empty towns. Since their depredations have become all the more severe these days, we had no choice but to order the generals in the sea to charge against them. Such plans of ours were notified immediately to Naoshige.
- (6) The letter, dated the first day of the tenth lunar month and sent by a Japanese officer to the Gimhae magistrate Baek Sarim, stated, “Since our commanders, not knowing who the marauding thieves were, reported to Yukinaga regarding them and had them executed and displayed at the borders. The Joseon battleships should be returned immediately.” Accordingly, our troops have already returned and we have sent a messenger to notify you of this communication.
- (7) The direct communication to Yukinaga as suggested by you is quite correct. The road to Gimhae has been cleared of the bandits, but the road to Ungcheon [where another Japanese unit stationed] is still plagued with bandits who come aboard the ships from Geoje Island. There are few days when the enemies do not kill and loot. How can the messengers be exchanged between the camps? The situation is like “inviting a guest while the door remains closed.”

As in the letter (marked Number 11), Yi Bin sent a reply to Yanagawa in anticipation of its being delivered to Yukinaga. This letter was sent to make progress in communications between the two camps. Yi accepted Yukinaga’s expression of the small serving the great, all the streams coming into the sea, and all the stars paying respect to the polestar on the grounds that all of them adequately symbolized the tributary relations of lesser states

-----

<sup>17</sup> The letter also appeared in *Seonjo sillok*, *gweon* 57 (eighth day, eleventh lunar month, 1594). The letter’s conciliatory remarks, such as *gwiguk* 貴國 (your esteemed country) were severely censured by the comments attached later by a historian. Original text: 胡雖莫倫甚於倭書以如此貿貿不學之將而寄之專閫之任欲望解禁息爭不亦難乎況甘受殘花鼎魚之讖而曾無一言折之反稱警賊為貴國其辱國之罪所勝誅哉。

toward China. (paragraph (2))

However, that purpose did not deter Yi from rejoicing sharply to Yukinaga with regard to the causes of the war and the motivations of the peace talks. He made it clear that Koreans who fell innocent victims of the unprovoked war were bound to harbor feelings of revenge against the Japanese invaders (paragraph (3)) and that the peace talks started entirely due to the Ming's pity toward the Japanese. (paragraph (4)) He charged that the Japanese bandits continued to rampage even after the peace negotiations began. Then, the Joseon navy launched battleships to annihilate them and the warning had been already notified Naoshige. (paragraph (5)) Following the execution of the bandits by the Japanese commanders, the Joseon battleships stepped back without further attacking. (paragraph (6)) Lastly, the request was made to ensure safety so that both sides could communicate with each other more effectively. (paragraph (7))

At this moment, both sides achieved minor results through the contacts and were able to earn a measure of credibility from each other. As a result, they became naturally attracted to the possibility that greater results could come if their commanders were to meet in person beyond the exchange of letters.

- **Serial number**     Number 12
- **Date**                 eighteenth day, tenth lunar month, 1594
- **Source**                *Taichōin monjo* 97<sup>18</sup>
- **Sender**                Nabeshima Naoshige
- **Receiver**              Yi Bin

• **Main contents**

Your letter (Number 11), addressed to Yanagawa Shigenobu, was delivered immediately to him.  
 Yukinaga and Shigenobu suggested to me that in order to discuss the security concerns of Joseon, the Joseon commanders might well send one

-----  
<sup>18</sup> This letter also appeared in *Seonjo sillok, gweon* 57 (eighteenth day, eleventh lunar month, 1594).

worthy man to Gimhae where he would consult with Genso and Shigenobu to determine a way to pass safely between the two camps and further to discuss Joseon's role to mediate between the great Ming and Japan.  
 If you find this suggestion agreeable, your envoy may accompany [our Korean messenger] Choe Eok 崔億 on his return trip.  
 The remaining details may be obtained verbally from Cheo Eok.

- **Serial number**    Number 13
- **Date**                eighteenth day, tenth lunar month, 1594
- **Source**              *Taichōin monjo* 98
- **Sender**              Toyo Shigemori
- **Receiver**            Baek Sarim

• **Main contents**

On reading your letter, Yukinaga and Shigenobu suggested to me that in order to discuss the security concerns of Joseon, the Joseon commanders might well send one worthy man to Gimhae where he would consult with Genso and Shigenobu to determine a way to pass safely between the two camps and further to discuss Joseon's role to mediate between the great Ming and Japan.  
 Please report promptly this suggestion to Yi Bin.  
 If Yi Bin finds this suggestion agreeable, Korean envoy may accompany [our Korean messenger] Choe Eok 崔億 on his return trip.  
 The remaining details may be obtained verbally from Cheo Eok.

- **Serial number**    Number 14
- **Date**                eighteenth day, tenth lunar month, 1594
- **Source**              *Seonjo sillok* (eighteenth day, eleventh lunar month, twenty-seventh year of the reign of Seonjo)
- **Sender**              Yanagawa Shigenobu
- **Receiver**            Yi Bin

• **Main contents**

(1) Your letter (Number 11) was reported to Yukinaga, and he said,

- (2) “As for the wretched bandits, why is it that their harm was not reported promptly to me? If you want to discuss a path to peace with me, you may well send one worthy envoy. With him, I will design the measures to stop the wretched bandits from rampaging, so that the envoys from the two camps may pass safely.
- (3) Yukinaga and Yoshitoshi were in the vanguard [of the Japanese troops]. The monk Genso and Shigenobu were dispatched several times to one reception officer O Eoknyeong 吳億齡 to inform Joseon of the imminent calamity [that is, the war], and again to another reception officer Sim Heuisu 沈喜壽, but he refused to report our message to the king by citing its absurdity. Genso and Shigenobu were given the order from Yukinaga and Yoshitoshi to initiate peace talks with Joseon. Upon arriving at Busan, they, bearing the letter, tried to explain our intention to the commander [Song Sanghyeon], but he rejected it. That eventually led to the collapse of your country, but we did not mean so. Our message of this intent was also sent to the left defense commander Kim Eungseo.”
- (4) In my view, a “clever strategy” (奇策) to bring peace to your country lies in the success of the peace negotiations between the great Ming and Japan. The Ming is vast in its size while Japan is strong in its military, making it difficult to decide the victor even in hundreds or thousands of battles. Joseon, caught between the Ming and Japan, turns into a battlefield with the country laying empty and the people starving. What the previous envoys of ours intended to deliver was not beyond this message. The Joseon court, however, did not give trust to the sincerity of the message. Therefore, Yukinaga and Yoshitoshi had to earn the disrespect of being disloyal and the suspicion [from Koreans against their will].
- (5) As for all of these faults are affairs of bygone days, I wish you to put them aside. From now onward, rectifying the past faults, you are advised to consult with Yukinaga and Yoshitoshi to work out measures to protect the country and to save the people. How can Yoshitoshi possibly forget about the tributary relationship [with Joseon]? Yukinaga and Yoshitoshi are on good terms with each other. I wish you to send one man to Gimhae to meet with Genso, where the Japanese side will listen to your concerns and at the same time give expression to what lies in our mind. The rest of the details may be obtained verbally from Choe Eok.

Naoshige, Shigemori, and Shigenobu asked the Joseon generals to send an envoy to Gimhae with a view to starting peace talks according to Yukinaga’s will. Particularly, the reply letter (marked Number 14) by Shigenobu to Yi Bin’s letter (marked Number 11) contained the direct quotation of Yukinaga’s words. Yukinaga expressed his willingness to collaborate

with the Joseon generals in clearing the regions of bandits so that both parties may pass safely. (paragraph (2)) He again placed the blame for the outbreak of the war on the Korean parties who dismissed his warning against the imminent war. (paragraph (3)) In this context, Shigenobu, reiterating Yukinaga's idea of peace negotiations, emphasized the collaboration as a "cleaver strategy" (*gichaek* 奇策) to bring peace to Joseon, and urged the Joseon generals to start peace talks by sending an envoy to the Japanese camp (paragraphs (4) and (5)).

As in this set of three letters (marked Number 12, 13, and 14), the Japanese commanders, still staying near the Busan and Gimhae areas, went beyond simple talks regarding security measures between the two sides and moved to initiate peace talks with their Joseon counterparts under Yukinaga's leadership. In the previous written communications, both of them agreed to open channels to settle certain immediate issues such as border definition and the curbing of thieves. As will be seen next, having sensed some signs of credibility in the Japanese considerations and cooperation in dealing with their security concerns, the Joseon commanders responded with caution to the Japanese initiative for peace talks tête-à-tête.

## II. Progress during the Peace Talks

With the progress of written communications regarding the issue of preventing Japanese banditry, Kim Eungseo and Yukinaga came to the fore in the contacts between the two camps. Their face-to-face meetings reached a kind of peace talks, going beyond addressing the security problems around the areas where the Japanese armies were stationed. It is not clear what motivations they had in mind when they agreed to meet in person. Still, it can be argued that the sharper the tension between the two adversaries grew, the greater the need for expedient contact was felt and that the expectations for constructive results became greater as the contacts progressed.

And again, as aforementioned, Kim had told his superiors of his purpose of persuading the Japanese commanders such as Yoshitoshi into submission in contacting them. However, it is not clear whether he had a preconceived plan or a stratagem for the talks. He may have estimated that the

positive results to be reaped from the talks would be attributed to his initiatives and even expected that small results might lead both parties to move on to bigger matters such as peace negotiations.

As for Yukinaga, on the other hand, it appears that he wanted to encourage the Joseon court to demand the Ming court to dispatch a Ming envoy who would invest Hideyoshi as a Ming vassal and that he needed an official proof that displays Joseon's request to the Ming court in order to report this to Hideyoshi.<sup>19</sup> Shigenobu, for his part, argued that in case the Ming refused the terms of the peace agreement offered by Japan, Joseon still could work out a peace agreement with Japan and then the Japanese armies would withdraw.<sup>20</sup> In the following, the progress of the contacts between the Joseon and the Japanese generals is reconstructed based upon the letters exchanged between the two camps.

- **Serial number**     Number 15
- **Date**                 twenty-third day, tenth lunar month, 1594
- **Source**                *Taichōin monjo* 51
- **Sender**                Baek Sarim
- **Receiver**              Toyo Shigemori (presumed)

• **Main contents**

It seems to me that our communications prevented the Gimhae people from becoming victims of the bandits and that we are on good terms. General Yi Bin's reply to Yanagawa Shigenobu along with the defense commander Kim Eungseo's letter has been sent.

-----

<sup>19</sup> See the message to Yi Hongbal from Yanagawa Shigenobu and Sō Yoshitoshi in *Seonjo sillok*, *gweon* 57 (first day, eleventh lunar month, 1594); A discussion at the Border Defense Council in *Ibid.*, *gweon* 57 (seventh day, eleventh month, 1594); A report by Gweon Yul in *Ibid.*, *gweon* 57 (eighteenth day, eleventh month, 1594); A report by Gweon Yul in *Ibid.*, *gweon* 58 (seventh day, twelfth month, 1594); A report by Gweon Yul in *Ibid.*, *gweon* 65 (fourteenth day, seventh month, 1595).

<sup>20</sup> *Seonjo sillok*, *gweon* 57 (eighteenth day, eleventh month, 1594).

- **Serial number**     Number 16
- **Date**                 twenty-third day, tenth lunar month, 1594
- **Source**                *Taichōin monjo 52*
- **Sender**                Kim Eungseo
- **Receiver**             Konishi Yukinaga (presumed)

• **Main contents**

It was all good to see the news delivered by the officer Yi Hongbal, which have been sent immediately to the Joseon commander in chief Gweon Yul who in turn reported them to the court in the capital. Song Chung'in fell ill, thus Kim Dalmang was sent to carry my letter to your esteemed camp. Though Yi Hongbal is a man affiliated with my army, how can this be comparable to my meeting your honor in person? I would like to meet you in person at Euryeong so I wonder if you are able to come soonest to a place, say, Haman, by yourself and send a messenger to inform me.

• **Remarks**

First appearance of Kim Eungseo's letter

- **Serial number**     Number 17
- **Date**                 twenty-third day, tenth lunar month, 1594
- **Source**                *Taichōin monjo 53*
- **Sender**                Yi Bin
- **Receiver**             Toyo Shigemori (presumed)

• **Main contents**

Yanagawa Shigenobu's proposal (marked Number 14) seems to be a good strategy. I hope the defense commander Kim Eungseo and two generals from your side will have an opportunity to discuss a long-term strategy for the sake of both countries. I ask that the letters of Kim Eungseo and mine be carried by the messenger from your camp to be delivered promptly to Yanagawa.

• <b>Serial number</b>	Number 18
• <b>Date</b>	twenty-third day, tenth lunar month, 1594
• <b>Source</b>	<i>Taichoin monjo</i> 88
• <b>Sender</b>	Yi Bin
• <b>Receiver</b>	Nabeshima Naoshige

• **Main contents**

Yanagawa Shigenobu's proposal (marked Number 14) seems to be a good strategy. I hope the defense commander Kim Eungseo and the two generals from your side will have a chance to discuss a long-term strategy for the sake of both countries. I ask that the letters of Kim Eungseo and mine be carried by the messenger from your camp and be delivered promptly to Yanagawa.

It is in response to Shigenobu's request for sending one envoy that Kim made a bold proposal for a meeting of high-ranking generals in person, shown in the letter (marked Number 16), in anticipation of its reaching to Yukinaga. The suggested venue for the meeting was Euryeong, a halfway point between the two camps and a minimum number of attendants were requested.

In the meantime, Kim's messenger Yi Hongbal went to Hanseong and reported the Japanese messages to the court; 1) that the Joseon court should prompt the Ming to dispatch an envoy to grant Japan status as a tributary state; 2) that upon receiving the recognition as a vassal state Japan would withdraw its troops immediately, repatriate Korean captives, and supply food and seeds; 3) that if the Japanese requests would not be met, an attack against the Ming under Hideyoshi's personal command would be mounted in the first month of next year; and 4) that Kiyomasa's conditions for peace, such as a marriage tie with the Ming emperor and a cession of Joseon's land, were not genuine.<sup>21</sup>

Yi Bin also agreed to Shigenobu's proposal for direct talks in a personal meeting of generals between the two camps. And he expressed his wish for a long-term strategy of the two countries to be discussed between Kim

-----  
<sup>21</sup> *Seonjo sillok, gweon* 57 (first day, eleventh lunar month, 1594).

and Yukinaga as well as Kim and Naoshige (or Shigenobu).<sup>22</sup> The Japanese armies were ready to accept the offer from the Joseon generals as seen below in their letters dated the twenty-sixth day of the tenth lunar month.

- **Serial number**    Number 19
- **Date**                twenty-sixth day, tenth lunar month, 1594
- **Source**              *Taichōin monjo* 99
- **Sender**              Toyo Shigemori (presumed)
- **Receiver**            Baek Sarim

• **Main contents**

I have received your letter with gratitude.

Upon being informed of the date when the general Yi Bin and the defense commander Kim Eungseo come to Changweon to meet Yukinaga and Shigenobu for discussing peace measures, they will rush by themselves to the site of the conference.

If this will be done, we will return the Gimhae residents who are under captivity. We are looking forward to the day of a happy encounter.

- **Serial number**    Number 20
- **Date**                twenty-sixth day, tenth lunar month, 1594
- **Source**              *Taichōin monjo* 100
- **Sender**              Toyo Shigemori
- **Receiver**            Yi Bin

• **Main contents**

I have received your letter of gratitude and the gift of a falcon with joy.

Yukinaga agreed on the left defense commander Kim Eungseo's offer to meet in person to discuss peace measures. Upon being informed of the date of the meeting selected by Kim, Yukinaga and myself will be certain to appear there.

-----  
<sup>22</sup> Konishi also wished to talk with Kim Eungseo. See *Seonjo sillok, gweon* 57 (first day, eleventh lunar month, 1594); Original text: 平行長通書于金應瑞 欲見更事之人 與之議事.

- **Serial number** Number 21
- **Date** twenty-sixth day, tenth lunar month, 1594
- **Source** *Taichōin monjo* 101
- **Sender** Toyo Shigemori
- **Receiver** Defense Commander Old Master Kim Eungseo

• **Main contents**

In the recent correspondence between General Yi Bin and Yukinaga, Nabeshima has served as a good intermediary. Your honor may well use Naoshige, too, in the communication with Yukinaga. Upon being informed of the date of the meeting between your honor and Yi Bin from Joseon and Yukinaga and Shigenobu from Japan, I will be at the service of assuring a smooth meeting.

• **Remarks**

An honorific address “Old Master” (K. *Noya* 老爺) was presented to Kim Eungseo.

- **Serial number** Number 22
- **Date** twenty-sixth day, tenth lunar month, 1594
- **Source** *Seonjo sillok* (eighth day, eleventh lunar month, twenty-seventh year of the reign of Seonjo)
- **Sender** Konishi Yukinaga
- **Receiver** Kim Eungseo (presumed)

• **Main contents**

Your letter has been received with pleasure. Your offer to meet at Changweon seems agreeable. Upon being informed of the date of the meeting, I will certainly come to Changweon single-handedly along with Yoshitoshi and Shigenobu. I do not write in detail because we will meet and talk to each other soon.

While the Joseon generals suggested the rather vague topic of “long-term strategies” (*manse jigye* 萬世之計) as the agenda for the prospective

meeting between the generals of the two countries, Shigemori mentioned “peace talks” (*ganghwa* 講和) as the agenda by including security concerns as a topic. Since these Japanese letters reflected Yukinaga’s intent, it is highly probable that he expected some type of breakthrough in the stalled peace talks with the Ming to be made through cooperation with Joseon. Yukinaga suggested that he had an important topic to discuss soon at the meeting in person. Meanwhile, King Seonjo demanded a cautious approach and ordered the Border Defense Council to discuss the matter.<sup>23</sup> Along this line, the commander in chief Gweon made Kim meet the Japanese commanders and test their response to the possibility of surrender.

• <b>Serial number</b>	Number 23
• <b>Date</b>	first day, eleventh lunar month, 1594
• <b>Source</b>	<i>Taichōin monjo</i> 54
• <b>Sender</b>	Yi Bin
• <b>Receiver</b>	Toyo Shigemori (presumed)
<b>• Main contents</b>	
I thank you for sending messengers three times each month and also for timely replies.	
I have intended to accompany the defense commander (Kim Eungseo) to discuss peace between the two countries but inopportunistically catching a cold deters me from attending the meeting. I am looking forward to another opportunity.	

• <b>Serial number</b>	Number 24
• <b>Date</b>	first day, eleventh lunar month, 1594
• <b>Source</b>	<i>Taichōin monjo</i> 55
• <b>Sender</b>	Baek Sarim
• <b>Receiver</b>	Toyo Shigemori (presumed)

-----  
<sup>23</sup> *Seonjo sillok*, *gweon* 57 (eighteenth day, eleventh lunar month, 1594).

• **Main contents**

I thank you for the repeated replies. Peace between the two countries is a long-standing strategy that will bring comfort to their peoples. Your honor puts virtues before other considerations. I have intended to accompany Old Master Kim (Kim Eungseo) to exchange frank discussions with your generals but a sudden illness of General Yi Bin deters me from attending the meeting. I will send Kim Pildong on my behalf.

- **Serial number**    Number 25
- **Date**                first day, eleventh lunar month, 1594
- **Source**             *Taichōin monjo 56*
- **Sender**             Yi Bin
- **Receiver**          Nabeshima Naoshige (presumed)

• **Main contents**

I have intended to accompany the defense commander (Kim Eungseo) to exchange frank discussions, but I regret that my illness deters me from attending the meeting.

- **Serial number**    Number 26
- **Date**                first day, eleventh lunar month, 1594
- **Source**             *Taichōin monjo 57*
- **Sender**             Kim Eungseo
- **Receiver**          Toyoshige Mori (presumed)

• **Main contents**

I have received your reply with gratitude. The proposed strategy is truly a good strategy. I have intended to exchange frank discussions with Konishi Yukinaga and So Yoshitoshi in person. Now that the meeting has materialized, I hope that your honor will join.

The three Joseon generals of Baek Sarim, Yi Bin, and Kim Eungseo had been scheduled to come to the meeting site but Yi Bin's inopportune

illness deterred him and Baek from participating. Nonetheless, they assured their Japanese counterparts of the meeting to be held as planned by informing them that Kim and other substitutes should come to the meeting. Given that the following letters from Baek and Yi sought to dispel some doubts, the Japanese seemed to protest the changes in the personnel and the site for the meeting.

- **Serial number**    Number 27
- **Date**                ninth day, eleventh lunar month, 1594
- **Source**              *Taichōin monjo* 58
- **Sender**              Baek Sarim
- **Receiver**            Toyo Shigemori (presumed)

• **Main contents**

I regret that I will be unable to accompany the general Kim Eungseo because I must remain at the side of the general Yi Bin who has fallen ill. How can there be an ulterior intent?

- **Serial number**      Number 28
- **Date**                ninth day, eleventh lunar month, 1594
- **Source**              *Taichōin monjo* 59
- **Sender**              Yi Bin
- **Receiver**            Unknown

• **Main contents**

I cannot understand why some doubts have arisen regarding the agreed meeting between the defense commander Kim Eungseo and his Japanese counterparts. Regrettably, I am simply unable to go to a place of rough winds because of my illness.

What about Yukinaga? Even though agreeing on the date of meeting as the twelfth day of the eleventh lunar month, 1594, he expressed disap-

proval of the site for the meeting as suggested by Kim Eungseo who pointed to a place between Changweon and Haman. Yukinaga was concerned that if he were to move his forces and stay one night at Changweon in order to reach the meeting place, then feelings of suspicion might be stirred among his Japanese colleagues, most probably among rival generals from Kiyomasa's camp, by dint of the unusual move of his army. Hence, he was worried that some of his suspicious colleagues might raise their own armies to catch up with him, which, in turn, would be disturbing to the Joseon generals. Yukinaga and his aides had to be mindful of any suspicion from their rival colleagues, especially from Kiyomasa.

- **Serial number**      Number 29
- **Date**                      eleventh lunar month, 1594
- **Source**                    *Taichōin monjo* 73
- **Sender**                    Konishi Yukinaga
- **Receiver**                 Kim Eungseo

• **Main contents**

I have received your suggestion that we meet at a border point, Geomam, between Changweon and Hamam on the twelfth day. However, it seems impossible for us to meet at that site at dawn on that day after we would spend one night at Changweon and Haman respectively. If I were to spend one night at Changweon, my suspicious colleague generals might pursue me, which would, in turn, raise doubts among your generals. Thus, Changweon seems to be the best choice. At dawn of the twelfth day, I will come to Changweon without leading troops and will be accompanied by Yoshitoshi, Naoshige, and Shigenobu.

- **Serial number**      Number 30
- **Date**                      eleventh lunar month, 1594
- **Source**                    *Taichōin monjo* 74
- **Sender**                    Yanagawa Shigenobu
- **Receiver**                 Kim Eungseo

• **Main contents**

I have nothing to add regarding the meeting site on the twelfth day, apart from what has been said with respect to Yukinaga's letter.

The reason why Yoshitoshi could not reply to your letter is that he did not receive the letter; because at that time he was at Yukinaga's camp busy writing his reply.

I have not yet answered to General Yi Bin's letter because I hope that I will be able to visit your camp and meet him face to face after the meeting on the twelfth day.

As it happened, the meeting scheduled on the twelfth day of the eleventh lunar month, 1594 was postponed two times and held afterwards on the twenty-second day of the same month at a border point (Jigokhyeon) of Changweon and Hamam. The Japanese side spent one night at Changweon before coming to the meeting the next day. Shigenobu, Genso, and Chikukei 竹溪 arrived first and were followed by Yukinaga and Yoshitoshi. Also joining were Yukinaga's brother and two other generals who were, most probably, Naoshige and Shigemori. The number of Japanese troops was reported to reach 3,000 men while Kim Eungseo led only 100 men. Thus, the Japanese generals did not keep their promise of coming by themselves.<sup>24</sup>

The talks between the two camps no longer remained solely with security measures. The Japanese strongly called for cooperation from Joseon for the sake of providing a breakthrough to the stalled negotiations with the Ming. However, the Japanese repeated themselves in glossing over the invasion as an attempt to present tribute to the Ming emperor via Joseon and in placing blame for the war on Joseon which did not accept Japan overtures. In response, Kim censured Japan for forsaking trust and attacking a neighbor by surprise. Kim also mentioned Kiyomasa's objection to the

-----  
<sup>24</sup> See the report by Gweon Yul in *Seonjo sillok*, *gweon* 58 (seventh day, twelfth lunar month, 1594); Jo Gyeongnam, *Nanjung japnok* 3 亂中雜錄 [Miscellaneous records during the [Imjin] war] (twenty-first day, eleventh lunar month, 1594). A Japanese general mentioned that every Japanese general wanted to be part of this meeting in anticipation of future reward. See *Seonjo sillok*, *gweon* 57 (eighteenth day, eleventh lunar month, 1594).

peace talks between Yukinaga and Shen Weijing.

Then, Yukinaga, expressing regrets for the plundering by the Japanese troops and also for the vandalism against the royal tombs, announced that if Joseon would address itself to persuading the Ming to allow Japan's presentation of tribute, then Japan should be immensely grateful to Joseon. Kim responded that asking for permission to present tribute on behalf of Japan would be out of the question. Still, Kim suggested that the Japanese generals, with the exception of Yukinaga, who was in charge of the talks, all withdraw to Japan and compose a "surrender letter." Then, he would present the "surrender letter" to the Joseon and Ming courts to resolve the stalemate. Genso asked for an active participation of Joseon in the peace process by asserting that peace talks between the Ming and Japan would not be sufficient to bring peace to Joseon.<sup>25</sup>

When both sides met in person, there was a clear progress. Although limited to Yukinaga and his aides, the Japanese generals expressed feelings of regret for the war atrocities while the Joseon generals expressed a willingness to do their part to expedite the peace talks, provided the Japanese troops would completely withdraw, except for a delegation of negotiators led by Yukinaga. Such an exchange of peace overtures might not have been possible without a measure of trust built through continuous contacts between the two sides.

At last, the channel of communications was maintained between the two camps. The Japanese commanders sought to show their good faith in maintaining the semblance of border security by executing those Japanese soldiers who had transgressed the boundaries of the two camps for plundering (*Taichōin monjo* 79 and 90), thereby maintaining a trusted relationship with the Joseon commanders. In response, Kim also showed a gesture of gratitude by sending a falcon as a gift to the Japanese (*Taichōin monjo* 64). Additionally, the two camps conducted, if limited, a form of trade. The field commanders of the two camps felt the need to keep the communication channel alive in order to address the security concerns and further to

-----  
<sup>25</sup> Jo, *Nanjung japnok* 3 (twenty-first day, eleventh lunar month, 1594).

discuss a possible peace agreement between the two countries. What follows in the next chapter looks into the reactions and measures of the Joseon court to these developments in the frontline of the war.

### III. The End of the Frontline Contacts and the Joseon Court's Decisions

The planned meeting between the Joseon generals and the Japanese generals had been reported to the Joseon court before its implementation around the seventh day of the eleventh lunar month, making it impossible for the court to reply to its generals on site prior to the planned date of the twelfth. Thus, the report became a kind of *fait accompli*. The government sent a directive hurriedly and cautioned that “since the Ming is deferring the Japanese from presenting tribute because of their arrogant demands, Joseon should not serve as a mediator of their wishes,” and that “since the Ming has officially decided to grant the Japanese presentation of tribute, it is not permissible for Joseon to meet with the Japanese separately to discuss further the matter.”<sup>26</sup> Regardless, the field generals had conducted deliberations regarding what to offer to Japan at the scheduled meeting.<sup>27</sup> On receiving the report, the court again issued the order for the field generals to stop continuing the talks, thus making no further mistakes from then on.<sup>28</sup>

The Joseon court did not want any contact with the Japanese armies to develop into a possible peace initiative on its own, as was the case with Kiyomasa. The court did not have any will to initiate peace talks with Japan. What the court expected of the contacts with the Japanese was primarily nothing more than spying on the Japanese camps or creating schisms among them, and at most delaying their attacks. Hence, the initiatives tak-

-----  
<sup>26</sup> See the discussion at the Border Defense Council in *Seonjo sillok, gweon 57* (seventh day of eleventh lunar month, 1594).

<sup>27</sup> Gweon Yul proposed that a Joseon court letter asking for the Ming approval for the Japanese to present their tribute would deter Japanese attack, thus responding to Konishi's request for a letter of the same nature. See *Seonjo sillok, gweon 57* (thirteenth day, eleventh month, 1594).

<sup>28</sup> *Seonjo sillok, gweon 57* (eighteenth and nineteenth day, eleventh month, 1594).

en by Kim and other field generals were somewhat out of line with the Joseon court's stance. Furthermore, the Joseon court feared the situation in which the Ming suspected that Joseon engaged itself in peace negotiations on their own with Japan. What if the meeting between the Joseon and Japanese field commanders would be reported to the Ming court?<sup>29</sup>

The court sent a directive that dictated the reply to Yukinaga that since the Ming had already allowed Japan to present tribute, the Japanese armies should not press Joseon to ask the Ming to dispatch an investiture envoy, and that since all authorities and responsibilities lay in the hands of the Ming, any presumptuous words from the Joseon generals should be avoided. And, the directive contained some more matters. The Japanese demand to hand over the documents to be used to impeach Kiyomasa should not be met but their responses and actions should be closely and continuously watched. Gweon and Kim were told to use expedient means in handling the Japanese demands.<sup>30</sup> However, they were given basic lines of action, such as the existing channel of communication with Yukinaga, and the Japanese demands, concerned with the peace negotiations, were to be directed to the care of the Ming. And, a neutral position should also be maintained in dealing with the rivalry between the Japanese commanders. Finally, a summary of recent contacts with the Japanese would be reported to the Ming authorities in Liaodong.

In the twelfth lunar month of 1594, the Joseon court was notified that the Ming court had decided to invest Hideyoshi as king of Japan.<sup>31</sup> The Joseon court had to admit that now it was impossible to reverse the decision. Then, there was a need for a scapegoat to bear the anger of the hardliners in the court. In the milieu of heightened opposition against the peace talks,

-----  
<sup>29</sup> *Seonjo sillok*, *gweon* 57 (nineteenth day, eleventh month, 1594). King Seonjo was afraid that the Ming might lay responsibility for the peace negotiations on Joseon, saying that "if your country would argue for the peace talks, you could handle them on your own." Original text: 予恐中朝以講和推之於我國也若以為爾國亦主和爾國自可為之云則奈何. See *Seonjo sillok*, *gweon* 59 (twenty-second day, first lunar month, 1595).

<sup>30</sup> *Seonjo sillok*, *gweon* 58 (seventh day, twelfth month, 1594).

<sup>31</sup> *Seonjo sillok*, *gweon* 58 (fourth day, sixth day, twenty-second day, and twenty-seventh day, twelfth month, 1594); *Ibid.*, *gweon* 59 (fourth day, first month, 1595).

censuring voices were raised against the frontline generals, including Kim, who had made unauthorized contacts with the Japanese.<sup>32</sup> Apparently, unaware of what was occurring at the court, Kim continued to communicate with his Japanese counterparts, such as a request for Japanese tolerance for the Gimhae residents to farm near their camps.<sup>33</sup>

Despite the misgivings of the court,<sup>34</sup> when Kim dispatched a messenger to Yukinaga to continue the talks,<sup>35</sup> the court officials asserted that he be stripped of office and summoned for interrogation.<sup>36</sup> At first, considering the wartime condition of confronting the enemies, he was censured in communicating with the Japanese front commanders by means of exchanging letters.<sup>37</sup> Accusations against him did not cease at court and in the end Kim was subjected to the penalty of flogging together with his aides Go Eonbaek and Gweon Eungsu.<sup>38</sup>

It seems inconceivable that such contacts, initiated by the Joseon field commanders, opened any chance of developing immediate major peace talks to end the war because the Joseon court was inclined to see their negative effects and the written communications as well as one event of a direct meeting in person were essentially local in nature. Nonetheless, the written and personal contacts between the two sides, moving beyond simple war tactics such as spying or creating schisms against unnecessary conflicts, started even eliciting the Joseon court's reaction to Yukinaga's overtures. The Joseon court, for its part, was disinclined to see any peace initiative between the field commanders of the two camps and was concerned with the responsibility it should bear when the Ming would become

-----  
<sup>32</sup> See Jeong Gyeongse's speech in *Seonjo sillok*, *gweon* 59 (sixth day, first month, 1595); Conversation between King Seonjo and Sin Sik and Jeong Gyeongse in *Ibid.*, *gweon* 59 (eighth day, first month, 1595).

<sup>33</sup> *Seonjo sillok*, *gweon* 60 (thirtieth day, second month, 1595).

<sup>34</sup> See remarks by the Border Defense Council and Yu Seongnyong in *Seonjo sillok*, *gwon* 61 (first day and eighteenth day respectively, third month, 1595).

<sup>35</sup> *Seonjo sillok*, *gweon* 62 (twenty-fifth day, fourth month, 1595).

<sup>36</sup> *Seonjo sillok*, *gweon* 63 (first day, third day, and fourth day, fifth month, 1595).

<sup>37</sup> *Seonjo sillok*, *gweon* 63 (third day and tenth day, fifth month, 1595).

<sup>38</sup> *Seonjo sillok*, *gweon* 65 (fourteenth day and twenty-seventh day, seventh month, 1595).

aware of any peace negotiations conducted separately between Joseon and Japan. As the Ming court officially had decided to invest Japan as its vassal, the Joseon court delimited contact with the Japanese only to that of spying purposes. Therefore, when Kim attempted to go beyond the boundary, he was held back by the court.<sup>39</sup>

The punishment for those accused generals did not extend further and Kim was soon reinstated. The Joseon court gave them a token warning, which was done as a gesture to assure the Ming that the court had nothing to do with the contacts with the Japanese, made by the frontline generals on their own, and would never allow the Joseon commanders to communicate with them and seek peace with the Japanese invaders.<sup>40</sup> The adamant objection to the peace negotiations notwithstanding, the Joseon court managed to secure its own information channels first with Kiyomasa and later with Yukinaga. These channels could be activated whenever the court deemed it necessary to collect information about the peace negotiations between the Ming and Japan.

In 1596, when the dispatch of envoys for investiture and communication was imminent, the Joseon court collected information on the Chinese investiture mission as well as the domestic conditions of the Hideyoshi regime via Kim's contacts with Yoshitoshi and Yōjirō 要時羅.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, from the ninth lunar month of 1596 when Hideyoshi declared the collapse of the peace negotiations to the seventh lunar month of 1597 when the second Japanese offensive was mounted, the Joseon court made active efforts to seek for measures to prevent the second invasion by dispatching Yu-

-----  
<sup>39</sup> For the Joseon court's measures to the field commanders' contacts with the Japanese in the southern coastal areas after it was informed of the Ming decision to dispatch an investiture envoy to Japan, see Kim, "Imjin jeonjaeng gi ganghwa gyoseop yeon'gu," 160-65.

<sup>40</sup> For the worries of the Joseon court about these contacts, see *Seonjo sillok*, *gweon* 57 (seventh day, eleventh month, 1594); Original text: 且唐人方在其處而我國主將與賊相會亦恐致疑於釋怨講和事理非便。

<sup>41</sup> *Seonjo sillok*, *gweon* 71 (twenty-third day and twenty-fifth day, first month, 1596); *Ibid.*, *gweon* 73 (second day, third month, 1596); *Ibid.*, *gweon* 74 (seventeenth day, fourth month, 1596); *Ibid.*, *gweon* 76 (eighteenth day and nineteenth day, sixth month, 1596).

jeong to the Kiyomasa camp and allowing Kim to contact Yukinaga.<sup>42</sup> Kim's contacts with Yukinaga and his aides prior to the second invasion did make it possible for the Joseon court to obtain information on the war strategies and the debacle of the peace negotiations from Japanese sources.<sup>43</sup> Such information was invaluable to the Joseon court and commanders in strategizing for how to fight back against the Japanese armies.

## Conclusion

Joseon Korea, whose land turned entirely into battlefield, did not participate in the peace negotiations between the Ming and Japan during the Imjin War—the Japanese Invasions of Korea—of 1592 to 1598. Joseon vehemently refused to join peace talks with the Japanese invaders in any capacity. However, it was out of the question to respond effectively to the war without knowledge of what had transpired during the negotiations. Joseon might be in danger of becoming completely alienated from the course of the war and utterly bereft of the means of how to end it. Under tacit approval from the Joseon court, then, Joseon's frontline field commanders sought a breakthrough by establishing both written communications and personal contacts with the Japanese field commanders.

The contacts, aimed initially to address such pragmatic concerns as avoiding unnecessary conflict between Joseon and Japanese armies in the front lines, began to discuss how to influence the stalled peace negotiations owing largely to the initiatives and will of the field commanders of the two sides. The Joseon court allowed for the contacts, initiated by the field commanders, insofar as they were able to collect information on the peace nego-

-----  
<sup>42</sup> Kim Kyong-tae, "Jeong'yu jaeran jikjeon Joseon eui jongbo sujip gwa jaechim daeungchaek" [Joseon's Collecting of Information and Preparation of Countermeasures before Japan's Second Invasion (1597)], *Hanil gwan'gyesa yeon'gu* 59 (2018). The Joseon court could obtain information about the collapse of the peace negotiations through Kim Eungseo's channel of communication even prior to the return of the Joseon communication envoy from Japan. See *Seonjo sillok, gweon* 82 (third day, eleventh month, 1596).

<sup>43</sup> *Seonjo sillok, gweon* 86 (twenty-fifth day, third month, 1597); *Ibid.*, *gweon* 89 (fourteenth day, sixth month, 1597); *Ibid.*, *gweon* 91 (seventh day, eighth month, 1597).

tiations between the Ming and Japan, led by Shen Weijing and Konishi Yukinaga, in 1594 and to pose obstacles to the success of the negotiations. The Joseon court ordered to a halt any communication with the Japanese army when the Ming court decided to dispatch an investiture envoy to Japan. The Joseon court, however, never abandoned the existing channels of communication with the Japanese armies in virtue of certain benefits gained through the contacts with the Japanese enemy in a firsthand manner.

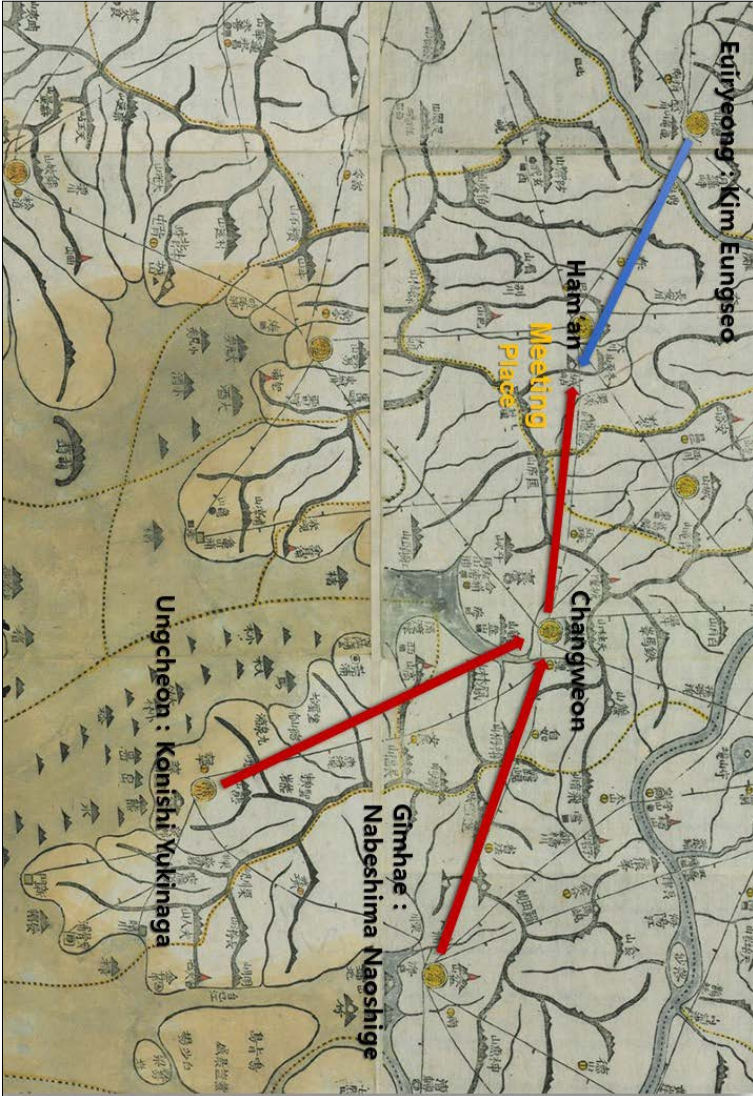
Communication between enemies occurs even in fierce battlefields. During the Imjin War, as well, many involved in the war felt the need for communication and negotiation with their adversaries. However, among Joseon people who suffered tremendously as grievous victims of the unprovoked war, few came forth to initiate contact with the Japanese invaders. In consideration of their highly unpopular and risky attempts to make contact with their enemy, what the Joseon generals achieved in securing communication channels and collecting information can be viewed in a constructive light. The Joseon court demonstrated a degree of flexibility in terms of giving to the field commanders some initiatives and moving between a conciliatory policy and a hard-line policy. In this manner, I contend, opening up the communication channels of the Joseon court with the Japanese armies in 1594 illuminates a Joseon perspective in endeavors to voice its own demands and wishes in the peace talk staged by the Ming and Japan.

**Appendix 1.** List of letters exchanged between the Korean and the Japanese camps, included in the *Taichōin monjo* 泰長院文書 (The Documents Preserved at the Taichōin Buddhist Temple) and in the *Seonjo sillok* 宣祖實錄 (The Veritable Records of King Seonjo), in 1594 and 1595

Serial number	Date	Sender	Recipient	Source
1	twenty-fifth day, ninth lunar month	Yi Bin	Yanagawa Shigenobu	<i>Seonjo sillok</i> 宣祖實錄 fifth day, tenth lunar month
2	ninth lunar month	Baek Sarim	Naritomi Shigeyasu (presumed)	<i>Taichōin monjo</i> 87
3	twenty-seventh day, ninth lunar month	Naritomi Shigeyasu	Baek Sarim	<i>Taichōin monjo</i> 70
4	third day, tenth lunar month	Baek Sarim	Toyo Shigemori	<i>Taichōin monjo</i> 61
5	fifth day, tenth lunar month	Yi Bin	Yanagawa Shigenobu	<i>Taichōin monjo</i> 86
6	seventh day, tenth lunar month	Toyo Shigemori	Baek Sarim (presumed)	<i>Taichōin monjo</i> 81
7	seventh day, tenth lunar month	Yanagawa Shigenobu	Yi Bin	<i>Seonjo sillok</i> (eighth day, eleventh lunar month, twenty-seventh year)
8	eighth day, tenth lunar month	Nabeshima Naoshige	Yi Bin	<i>Taichōin monjo</i> 71
9	thirteenth day, tenth lunar month	Baek Sarim	Toyo Shigemori	<i>Taichōin monjo</i> 60
10	thirteenth day, tenth lunar month	Yi Bin	Nabeshima Naoshige	<i>Taichōin monjo</i> 63
11	thirteenth day, tenth lunar month	Yi Bin	Yanagawa Shigenobu	<i>Taichōin monjo</i> 85
12	eighteenth day, tenth lunar month	Nabeshima Naoshige	Yi Bin	<i>Taichōin monjo</i> 97
13	eighteenth day, tenth lunar month	Toyo Shigemori	Baek Sarim	<i>Taichōin monjo</i> 98
14	eighteenth day, tenth lunar month	Yanagawa Shigenobu	Yi Bin	<i>Seonjo sillok</i> (eighteenth day, eleventh lunar month, twenty-seventh year)
15	twenty-third day, tenth lunar month	Baek Sarim	Toyo Shigemori (presumed)	<i>Taichōin monjo</i> 51
16	twenty-third day, tenth lunar month	Kim Eungseo	Konishi Yukinaga (presumed)	<i>Taichōin monjo</i> 52
17	twenty-third day, tenth lunar month	Yi Bin	Toyo Shigemori (presumed)	<i>Taichōin monjo</i> 53

18	twenty-third day, tenth lunar month	Yi Bin	Nabeshima Naoshige	<i>Taichōin monjo</i> 88
19	twenty-sixth day, tenth lunar month	Toyo Shigemori (presumed)	Baek Sarim	<i>Taichōin monjo</i> 99
20	twenty-sixth day, tenth lunar month	Toyo Shigemori	Yi Bin	<i>Taichōin monjo</i> 100
21	twenty-sixth day, tenth lunar month	Toyo Shigemori	Kim Eungseo	<i>Taichōin monjo</i> 101
22	twenty-sixth day, tenth lunar month	Konishi Yukinaga	Kim Eungseo (presumed)	<i>Seonjo sillok</i> (eighth day, eleventh lunar month, twenty-seventh year)
23	first day, eleventh lunar month	Yi Bin	Toyo Shigemori (presumed)	<i>Taichōin monjo</i> 54
24	first day, eleventh lunar month	Baek Sarim	Toyo Shigemori (presumed)	<i>Taichōin monjo</i> 55
25	first day, eleventh lunar month	Yi Bin	Nabeshima Naoshige (presumed)	<i>Taichōin monjo</i> 56
26	first day, eleventh lunar month	Kim Eungseo	Toyo Shigemori (presumed)	<i>Taichōin monjo</i> 57
27	ninth day, eleventh lunar month	Baek Sarim	Toyo Shigemori (presumed)	<i>Taichōin monjo</i> 58
28	ninth day, eleventh lunar month	Yi Bin	Unknown	<i>Taichōin monjo</i> 59
29	eleventh lunar month	Konishi Yukinaga	Kim Eungseo	<i>Taichōin monjo</i> 73
30	eleventh lunar month	Yanagawa Shigenobu	Kim Eungseo	<i>Taichōin monjo</i> 74
31	twenty-first day, twelfth lunar month	Kim Eungseo	Nabeshima Naoshige (presumed)	<i>Taichōin monjo</i> 90
32	twenty-fourth day, twelfth lunar month	Yi Bin	Unknown	<i>Taichōin monjo</i> 62
33	twenty-fifth day, twelfth lunar month	Nabeshima Naoshige	Kim Eungseo	<i>Taichōin monjo</i> 79
34	first day, second lunar month, 1595	Kim Eungseo	Unknown	<i>Taichōin monjo</i> 64
35	third month	Toyo Shigemori	Kim Eungseo	<i>Taichōin monjo</i> 72
36	twenty-fifth day, fourth lunar month	Baek Sarim	Toyo Shigemori (presumed)	<i>Taichōin monjo</i> 65

**Appendix 2.** The Meeting Place (Haman 함안) between Kim Eungseo and Konishi Yukinaga on the twenty-second day of the eleventh lunar month, 1594, marked on the Daedong yeojido (Map of the Great East [Korea])



\* Courtesy of the Jangseongak Library of the Academy of Korean Studies, K2-4957

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Primary Sources

*Seongjo sillok* 宣祖實錄 [The Veritable Records of King Seonjo].

*Seonjo sujeong sillok* 宣祖修正實錄 [The Corrected Veritable Records of King Seonjo].

Jo Gyeongnam 趙慶男. *Nanjung japnok* 亂中雜錄 [The Miscellaneous Records during the War]. Included in the *Database of Korean Classics* of the Hanguk gojeon beonyeokweon 한국고전번역원 [Institute for the Translation of Korean Classics].

*Taichōin monjo* 泰長院文書 [The Documents Preserved at the Taichōin Buddhist Temple]. 1960. Included in *Saga-ken shiryō shūsei komonjo hen* 佐賀縣史料集成古文書編, vol. 5.

*Nabeshima-ke monjo* 鍋島家文書 [The Documents of the Nabeshima family]. 1958. Included in *Saga-ken shiryō shūsei komonjo hen* 佐賀縣史料集成古文書編, vol. 3.

### Monographs and Dissertations

Samyeongdang ginyeom saeophoe pyeon [Committee for commemorating Yujeong, ed.] 四溟堂記念事業會編. 2000. *Samyeongdang Yujeong* 사명당유정 [A biography of Yujeong]. Seoul: Jisik saneopsa.

Kim Kyong-tae 김경태. 2014. “Imjin jeonjaenggi ganghwa gyoseop yeon’gu” 임진전쟁기강화교섭연구 [Study on the peace talks during the Imjin War]. Ph. D. dissertation, Korea University.

Kim Munja 金文子. 1995. “Bunroku-Keichōki ni okeru Nichi-Ming kōwa kōshō to Chōsen” [Joseon Korea and the Japan-Ming Peace Negotiations, 1592-98], Ph. D. dissertation, Ochanomizu joshi daigaku (1995).

### Articles

Sin Yunho 신윤희. 2015. “Imjin waeran ganghwa gyoseop sigi Joseon eui daeil jeongchaek” 임진왜란 강화교섭시기 조선의 對日 정책 [Joseon Korea’s policy toward Japan during the negotiation period of the Imjin War]. *Yi Sunsin yeon’gu nonchong* 이순신연구논총, no. 23.

- Min Duk-gi 민덕기. 2017. “Jeong’yu jaeran gi Hwangseoksanseong jeontu wa Gimhae busa Baek Sarim” 정유재란기 황석산성 전투와 김해부사 백사림 [Hwangseoksanseong Fortress Battle and Gimhae Prefecture Governor Baek Sa-rim during the Second Japanese Invasion of Korea in 1597]. *Hanil gwan’gyesa yeon’gu* 한일관계사연구, no. 57.
- Kim Kyong-tae 김경태. 2018. “Jeong’yu jaeran jikjeon Joseon eui jongbo sujip gwa jaechim daeeungchaek” 정유재란 직전 조선의 정보수집과 재침대응책 [Joseon’s Collecting of Information and Preparation of Countermeasures before Japan’s Second Invasion (1597)]. *Hanil gwan’gyesa yeon’gu* 한일관계사연구, no. 59.
- Tsuno Tomoaki 津野倫明. 2006. “Chōsen shuppei ni okeru Nabeshima Naoshige no ichiji kikoku ni tsuite” 朝鮮出兵における鍋島直茂の一時歸國について [On Nabeshima Naoshige’s temporary return at the time of the expedition to Joseon Korea]. *Jinbun kagaku kenkyū* 人文科學研究 [Kōchi Daigaku jinbun gakubu 高知大學人文學部], no. 13.
- Tsuno Tomoaki 津野倫明. 2006. “Keichō no eki ni okeru Nabeshima-shi no dōkō” 慶長の役における鍋島氏の動向 [Nabeshima’s activities during the second Japanese invasion]. *Shokuhōki kenkyū* 織豊期研究, no. 8.
- Sajima Akiko 佐島颯子. 2013. “Bunroku eki kōwa no uragawa” 文祿役講和の裏側 [Behind the scenes of the peace negotiations during the first Japanese invasion]. In *Itsuwari no Hideyoshi zō o uchikowasu* 偽りの秀吉像を打ち壊す, eds. by Yamamoto Hirofumi 山本博文 et al. Kashiwa shobō 柏書房.