

A New Interpretive Approach to the Japanese Pirates in Medieval East Asia: The Dispatch of Goryeo Envoys to Japan in 1366

Young Yi
Japanese Studies,
Korea National Open University

The Journal of Northeast Asian History
Volume 18 Number 1 (Winter 2021), 7-26

Copyright © 2021 by the Northeast Asian History Foundation. All Rights Reserved.
No portion of the contents may be reproduced in any form without
written permission of the Northeast Asian History Foundation.

A New Interpretive Approach to the Japanese Pirates in Medieval East Asia: The Dispatch of Goryeo Envoys to Japan in 1366¹

Young Yi

Japanese Studies,
Korea National Open University

Introduction

Japanese pirates, known as *waegu* in Korea, had a great impact on the international relations of East Asia between the 13th and 16th centuries. Most studies on Japan's negotiations with its neighbors over the issue of the Japanese pirates have tended to stress the relationship between Ming China (1368-1646) and Muromachi *bakufu* (1336-1573), such as the investiture of the shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu (1358-1408) as the emperor of Japan by the Ming. Still, few research has been done with reference to the relationship between Goryeo (918-1392) and the Muromachi bakufu, specifically the two delegations to Japan, dispatched by King Gongmin (r. 1351-1374) of Goryeo in 1366, in fathoming more delicate explanations concerning the issue of the Japanese pirates during the Northern and Southern Courts Period (1185-1392).² For instance, Nakamura Hidetaka touched on the importance of the diplomatic activity between Goryeo and

¹ This translated article is a revised version of Yi Young, "14세기 동아시아 국제 정세와 왜구-공민왕 15년(1366)의 禁倭使節의 파견을 중심으로," *한일관계사연구* 26 (April 2007): 95-146.

² Murai Shosuke, *Ajia no naka no chūsei nihon* [Medieval Japan in Asia] (Tōkyō: Azekura Shobō, 1988). The Nanbokuchō Period was a time of civil war between the Northern Court (Hokuchō 北朝) based in Kyoto and the Southern Court (Nancho 南朝) based in Nara.

the Muromachi bakufu in establishing the amicable trade relations.³ While acknowledging the visit of the Goryeo envoys as one major factor in Japan's international relations surrounding the issue of Japanese pirates, Murai Shosuke devoted the rest of his discussion to the relationship between the Ming and the Muromachi bakufu.⁴ Kawazoe Shoji associated the visit of the Goryeo envoys in 1366 with the political agenda of the Muromachi bakufu that exerted itself using diplomacy as a weapon in gaining control over its Northern Court (北朝, Hokuchō) and actively promoted the conquest of Kyushu, or the center of the Japanese piracy in the grip of the Southern Court (南朝, Nancho).⁵ However, he did not delve into how the visits of 1366 were more closely connected not only with the issue of the Japanese pirates but also the competition between the Northern Court and the Southern Court over Kyushu. With the focus on the complex circumstances of East Asia in the late 14th century, this paper charts the way King Gongmin sent two delegations to Japan in 1366 and sought for some practical measures against the Japanese pirates. In so doing, I will reread Goryeo diplomacy against the Japanese piracy after 1350 as a vivid lens through which to view domestic problems of Korea, China and Japan, as well as contemporary international relations among the three countries, more clearly in the context of medieval East Asia. This re-interpretation, I believe, will help rediscover a vigorous confluence of internal politics and external relations as the major impetus for historical change in East Asia.

Historical Backgrounds

Japanese pirate activities intensified from 1350 but the Goryeo court sent

³ Nakamura Hidetaka, *Nissen kankeishi no kenkyu* 1 [Studies on the History of Japanese–Korean Relations 1] (Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1965), 203.

⁴ Murai Shosuke, “Kenmu·Muromachi seiken to higashi Ajia” [Kenmu·Muromachi Regimes and East Asia], *Koza Nihon rekishi* [Japanese History] 4 (Tōkyō: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1985).

⁵ Kawazoe Shoji, *Taigai kankei no shiteki tenkai* [Historical Development of External Relations] (Tōkyō: Bunken Shuppan, 1996).

envoys to the Japanese court in 1366.⁶ This delay stands in stark contrast to how Goryeo responded in the 13th century when any Japanese pirate raid was immediately followed by its dispatch of envoys to Japan. The question is that it took more than a decade for Goryeo to dispatch envoys to Japan to handle the piracy. The first recorded pirate raid in the 13th century took place in May 1223. According to Japanese records, it took four years for Goryeo to send a Cho, the governor (*anchalsa* 按察使) of Jeolla Province, and deliver a letter to Japan in May 1227.⁷ When the other raid occurred in the same month, Goryeo sent Bak In (?-?) to Japan in December of the same year.⁸ Although another small raid was attempted, Goryeo was sensitive enough to dispatch envoys to Japan in July 1259.⁹ In addition, two months after an attack, it seems, Hong Jeo and Gwak Wang-bu went to Japan in April 1263 to protest against the intrusion.¹⁰

The major difference between the Japanese piracy in the 13th and 14th centuries lies in size; the former usually moved in dozens against whom Goryeo troops could counter on their own. The Goryeo court did not perceive them as a major threat to national security even if sending the delegations to Japan. These small raids in the 13th century contrasts markedly with the scale and frequency of the Japanese piracy in March 1350 when the pirates resumed their activities after an 85-year hiatus.¹¹

It is clear that there were significant differences between the raids in 1350 and those in the 13th century. For example, as compared with the cases in the previous century, the pirates used up to 100 ships in 1350 when the largest suppression saw 300 pirates beheaded. This change shows that

⁶ In February 1350, the Japanese pirates came back out of an eighty-year hiatus and resumed their attacks on Goryeo. From then on, pirate raids continued to occur almost every year until the early years of Joseon (1392-1910). Many Korean records commonly use expressions like “the Japanese pirates of 1350” or “post-1350 Japanese pirates” to mark the resumption of these attacks.

⁷ *Azuma Kagami* [The Mirror of the East], entry for Jōji 1/05/14.

⁸ *Goryeosa jeoryo* [The Abridged Chronicle of Goryeo] 15, entry for December, 1227 (丁亥).

⁹ *Goryeosa jeoryo* 15, entry for July, 1259 (己未).

¹⁰ *Goryeosa jeoryo* 15, entry for April, 1263 (癸亥).

¹¹ Yi Young, *Wako to Nichi-Rei kankeishi* [A History of the Japanese Pirates and the Japan-Goryeo Relations] (Tōkyō: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1999), 140.

Table 1. Japanese Pirate Raids in 1350

Month	Area Raided	No. of Pirate Ships	Note
February	Goseong, Jungnim, Geoje	unknown	300 Japanese pirates beheaded.
April	Suncheon-bu	100	Namwon, Gurye, Yeonggwang, and Jangheung raided.
May	Suncheon-bu	66	Goryeo troops seized one pirate ship and killed thirteen pirates.
June	Happo, Goseong, Hoewon, Jangheung-bu	20	
November	Dongnaehyang	unknown	

the nature of the piracy in and after 1350 had dramatically changed. What is more remarkable is that in August 1351 a fleet of 130 pirate ships attacked the islands of Jayeon Island and Sammok Island near Ganghwa Island, located at the mouth of the Han River, where cargo vessels from all over the country gathered.¹²

Even, on March 15, 1352, the Japanese pirates attacked the capital Gaeseong and caused widespread panic among the populace. In 1365, the pirates desecrated the tomb of Changneung, where Wang Ryung (?-897), or the father of the founder Wang Geon (r. 918-943) of Goryeo was buried, and stole his portrait, an irrevocably blasphemous act that struck at the very heart of the Goryeo royal family and court. A more damaging incident occurred in July 1358 when the pirates tried to obstruct Goryeo's coastlines. Goryeo relied greatly on marine transportation in order to collect taxes, transport supplies from central and southern regions, and respond efficiently to some crucial security issues along the northern border. The greater the political, military, and diplomatic threats from the north were, the more important the stability of supply chain supported from the south. Hence, the disruption in marine transportation as above could result in a serious security crisis to Goryeo.

However, the Goryeo court did not immediately dispatch envoys to

¹² *Goryeosa* [The History of Goryeo Dynasty] 37, entry for 08/10/1351 (辛卯).

the Japanese court. To unearth the reason why Goryeo did not protest to the Japanese court in and after 1350, we need to look at the historical context of the Sino-Korean relationship at that time. As for the Goryeo court, then, the issue of the Japanese pirates was inseparable not only from its complex relationship with Yuan China (1271-1368)—the epitome of *Pax Mongolica* in East Asia—relationship but also the entangled tension between Goryeo and Japan after the Mongol Invasions which constituted the two attacks under the allied forces of Goryeo and the Yuan in 1274 and 1281. Sensing the decline of the Yuan since the mid-14th century, still, the reign of King Gongmin saw national security unstable by dint of the Red Turban Invasions (1359-1362), the armed conflicts with the Mongolian warlords in Manchuria, and the border tensions with the Jurchens in the northeastern border, all of which were tied to the decline of the Yuan hegemony at that time.

Under these distressed circumstances, however, the Goryeo court hid the fact that it was suffering from frequent Japanese pirate attacks. When the pirates raided Gyodong Island and Ganghwa Island, both of them were fairly close to the capital, Goryeo did not inform the Yuan of the attacks. Rather, it falsely reported to the Censorate (御史臺) of the Yuan court that it had defeated each and every attack by Japanese pirates.¹³ What made Goryeo cautious about its foreign policy towards Japan was a possibility that the Yuan, even if gradually collapsing, might use this security issue as an excuse to increase political and military pressure on Goryeo and to re-strengthen its regional power.

In the meantime, Goryeo would also be reluctant to expose its political or military weaknesses to Japan simultaneously by sending its envoys to Japan and receiving Japanese envoys. If the Japanese envoys had been allowed to visit the capital Gaeseong, it would have been impossible for Goryeo to conceal its precarious security. In fact, the Japan court and Tsushima Island did send their envoys to Goryeo four times in 1368 after the visit of Goryeo envoys in 1366 and 1368. It is uncertain whether the Japa-

¹³ *Goryeosa* 40, entry for 04/15/1363 (癸巳). Apart from this *baekgwangjino*, there seems to be no other record of Goryeo mentioning post-1350 Japanese pirate attacks to the Yuan.

nese envoys traveled all the way to Gaeseong or only to a designated place in Gimhae, South Gyeongsang Province. But, they would probably have been able to collect substantial information about Goryeo via diverse routes during their sojourn. Goryeo's greatest fear at the time was a gloomy scenario where it might not be sustainable in the two-tiered attack by the Red Turbans, the Mongolian warlords in Manchuria, the Jurchens, or even the Yuan armies from the north on one hand and the Japanese pirates from the south on the other hand. That is why waiting for more than a decade to assure the relative pacification of the northern border, King Gongmin dispatched envoys to Japan and requested the suppression of Japanese pirates.

Goryeo's Delegation to Japan in 1366

In August 1366, the 15th year of King Gongmin's reign or the 5th year of the Northern Court's Joji Era (1362-1368), Kim Yong (?-1363) was appointed as an envoy and arrived in Japan with his aides in the following month.¹⁴ Goryeo sent the other delegation in November.¹⁵ This delegation arrived in Japan on February 27, 1367¹⁶ and reached Kyoto in early April.¹⁷ However, the most official record of *Goryeosa* (the History of Goryeo Dynasty) accounts for only the second mission led by Kim Il (?-?) without

¹⁴ “これによって高麗国の王より、元朝皇帝の勅宣を受けて、牒使十七人わが国に来朝す。この使ひ異国の至正二十三年八月十三日に高麗を立て、日本国貞治五年九月二十三日出雲に着岸す。” *Taiheiki* [The Chronicle of Great Peace] 39: Korajin rai chokoto [Goryeo Envoys Granted an Imperial Audience]. The 26 year of the Zhizheng era (1366) appears to have been miswritten as the 23 year of the Zhizheng era (1363). In other words, Kim Yong and his aides departed Goryeo in August 13, 1366, and arrived at Izumo in September 23.

¹⁵ *Goryeosa* 41, entry for 11/14/1366 (丙午). Considering diplomatic customs and transportation between Goryeo and Japan at the time, it would have been difficult for a diplomatic delegation to return within three to four months. When the Japanese court received official letter or document from Goryeo, it would first examine precedents and then through multiple discussions determine whether to reply, who would reply, and what the reply would convey.

¹⁶ Zuikei Shūhō, *Zenrin kokuhōki: Shintei zoku Zenrin kokuhōki* [Documents Concerning the Friendly Relations with Neighboring Countries] (Tokyo: Shūeisha, 1995), 97.

¹⁷ *Moromoriki* [Record of Moromori], entry for Jōji 6/4/06.

quoting the first mission of Kim Yong. A description of *Goryeosa* regarding the mission to Japan in 1377 does mention that a diplomatic letter, which An Gil-sang (?-1380) brought to Japan, included a remark about Kim Yong's mission in 1366.¹⁸

Kim Yong, according to Nakamura Hidetaka, was charged with delivering a letter that conveyed the Yuan emperor's wishes to the Japanese court. Along this line, Nakamura surmises that the purpose of the first delegation was to deliver a letter and gifts from the Branch Secretariat for the Eastern Campaigns (征東行省)—a military organization established in Goryeo by Kublai Khan (r. 1260-1294)—whereas the purpose of the second delegation was to deliver a letter from the Goryeo court itself. And, considering Goryeo's relations with the Yuan at the time, Nakamura argues, it was difficult for Goryeo to use a letter from the Yuan to request Japan to suppress the Japanese pirates. For this argument, he points to the fact that in 1365 Goryeo received a letter from the Yuan regarding the need to suppress Japanese pirates. Still, the twelve cases of diplomatic activities between Goryeo and the Yuan in 1365 do not contain any description that the Yuan sent a letter to Goryeo on the subject of the Japanese pirates.¹⁹ Similarly, envoys were already exchanged five times in the first half of 1366 before Kim Yong left for Japan in August but there is no record that explains the purpose of the delegation in combination with the Japanese pirates during the period.²⁰

A case of Yuan involvement in the Goryeo-Japan relationship, to say nothing of the suppression of Japanese pirates, would have been a major issue for Goryeo that fought together with the Yuan against Japan in 1274 and 1281. Approximately a century earlier, the Goryeo court had struggled over how to handle an imperial letter from Kublai Khan who asked Goryeo to escort a Yuan envoy to Japan regarding its subjugation.²¹ A Yuan request

¹⁸ *Goryeosa* 133: Biography 46, entry for June 1377 (丁巳).

¹⁹ *Goryeosa* 41, entry for 1/9/1365; 2/24/1365; 2/27/1365; 3/4/1365; 3/30/1365; 4/3/1365; 4/13/1365; 9/10/1365; 10/9/1365; (intercalary month) 10/9/1365; 11/10/1365 (乙巳).

²⁰ *Goryeosa* 41, entry for 3/18/1366; 4/9/1366; 4/20/1366; 8/18/1366; 8/23/1366 (丙午).

²¹ Yi, *Wako to Nichi-Rei kankeishi*, 92-98.

on the eve of its own collapse in the late 14th century was far less a menace than that of the majestic Kublia era. But, the presence of a Yuan letter itself could carry freight on the Goryeo court. It is therefore difficult to imagine that contemporary sources would omit mention of such a letter. And, as previously stated, Goryeo's predicament with the Japanese pirates could have served as a rationale for the Yuan to take an aggressive action against the Goryeo court. In fact, the new Ming court after the fall of the Yuan also applied pressure on Goryeo several times for its inability to deal with the Japanese pirates.²² Such diplomatic strain made Goryeo fear that the Ming, as in the case of the previous Yuan, might use the issue of the Japanese pirates as a pretext to wield strong influence on its security matters.²³

All the same, it is questionable whether as of 1365 the Yuan actually had the capacity to force Goryeo to send an envoy to Japan. The History of the Yuan (*Yuanshi* 元史) makes no mention of whether the Yuan court was aware of Japanese pirate raids around 1365 or the extent of the damage they had caused. In a relative sense, the matter of the Japanese pirates was to be set aside due to the domestic turmoil from which the Yuan had helplessly and hopelessly suffered. It seems that the unredeemable fate of the Yuan required little initiative in which to send its own envoy to Japan or order Goryeo to send an envoy regarding a solution to the (Japanese) piracy.

If then, we can think about the dispatch of envoys in 1366 as a measure the Goryeo court took without an actual involvement of the Yuan court. The following excerpt is from the letter Kim Yong delivered to the Japanese court.

As per the emperor's orders, the Branch Secretariat for the Eastern Campaigns surveyed and confirmed that the border of Goryeo maintained by our branch secretariat and Japan meets with the waterway.... Since 1350, the 10th year of the Zhizheng era (1341-1368), many pirate ships have attacked. Such ships came from your territory to areas like

²² Three such instances can be confirmed through records for 1443, 1444, and 1445 during the reign of King Sejong (r. 1418-1450) of Joseon.

²³ *Goryeosa* 113: Bibliography 26, entry for Jeong Ji.

Happo, where our branch secretariat is located, and set government offices on fire, tormented people, and in extreme cases, didn't hesitate to take lives. For ten years, [our] ships have been unable to set to sea and [our] people have been unable to live in peace, all because the people of your islands do not fear the law of their land and head to sea to threaten and pillage [our land] out of sheer greed. Yet, upon careful consideration, we believe that given the vastness of its territory, Japan may not be aware of the detailed circumstances of its neighbors. If we were to mobilize our troops to arrest the pirates, it would ruin the friendly relations between neighbors. We have therefore decided to send a written inquiry to Japan. As such, we hope that Japan will be able to better control the islands in its territory and strictly forbid them from pillaging so that their people can no longer violate borders and exert violence. Our Branch Secretariat will now send its officials to travel through various points to finally have an audience with the sovereign of Japan, inform him of the aforementioned facts, and secure an answer before returning to our homeland. We hope that his majesty will be able to arrive at a decision and make sure to respond. Please consider the aforementioned cause behind this situation and offer a reply. The mission is carried out by Border Commander of Ten Thousand (萬戶 *manho*) Kim Eul-gwi and Border Commander of Thousand (千戶 *cheonho*) Kim Yong.²⁴

Interestingly, while officially pronouncing that it was drafted by the Branch Secretariat of the Eastern Campaigns under the Yuan emperor's orders, the letter gave little prominence to any severe damage that the Yuan had received. Actually, what the letter brought out as an example of the massive Japanese pillages was only one incident at the seaport of South Gyeong-sang Province, or Happo (today's Masan) in Goryeo.

Important is that the Branch Secretariat for the Eastern Campaigns was closed by King Gongmin in April 1356 according to his anti-Yuan pol-

²⁴ *Taiheiki* 39: Koraijin rai chokoto.

icies.²⁵ In this regard, Murai argued that the letter, written a decade after the abolishment of the Branch Secretariat for the Eastern Campaigns, must have been sent by Goryeo whose king used to be the actual head of the Branch Secretariat and the very person responsible for its discontinuation.²⁶ Then, it can be said that Goryeo took symbolic advantage of the authority of the Yuan, invading two times before, and authored the letter on their terms against the Japanese piracy.

This Goryeo initiative, I think, provides more space for us to answer the two questions. First, it facilitates the interpretation of the omission of Kim Yong's mission in 1366 from *Goryeosa* whose official history was not supposed to offer any clue or evidence that Goryeo borrowed the name of the Yuan without any recognition of or collaboration with the Yuan itself. The second point is that the dispatch of Kim Il in less than four months after Kim Yong's delegation departed can be construed as a careful plan of the Goryeo court with the aim of convincing the Japanese court that the first letter, delivered earlier by Kim Yong, was genuinely from the Yuan. In other words, Goryeo wanted Japan to believe that Kim Yong was acting as an envoy from the Yuan while Kim Il was delivering a separate letter from Goryeo.

Taken altogether, Goryeo began responding actively to the problem of the Japanese pirates through the diplomatic channel after witnessing the Yuan fall into a state of irretractable decadence in the late 1360s. Remarkably, the Goryeo court added weight to the anti-piracy message of its diplomacy by taking advantage of the Yuan's authority as a key mediator to solve the interstate tensions between Goryeo and Japan regarding the Japanese pirates. It means that Goryeo sought to avail itself of the unstable Yuan security during the Yuan-Ming transition period when the Yuan was preoccupied with its own borders. This approach will help explore further the way Goryeo, Japan, and the Yuan turned diplomatic and military interaction among themselves into the interest of their own national security,

²⁵ *Goryeosa* 39, entry for 5/18/1356 (丙申).

²⁶ Murai Shosuke, *Ajia no naka no chūsei nihon*, 315.

i.e., an intense dialogue between internal politics and external relations during the period.

Japan's Response to the Goryeo Envoys in 1366

How did Japan, specifically the Northern Court supported by the Muromachi bakufu, respond to the two official letters from Goryeo? Konoe Michitsugu (1332-1387) noted in March 20, 1367 that “an envoy from a foreign country, some say Goryeo, visited” (異國或人云高麗云：使者來朝).²⁷ Four days later, Sanjō Kintada (1324-1383) found that the envoys from the Mongols (Yuan) and Goryeo brought letters (蒙古并高麗使持牒狀).²⁸ The second statement hints at the Japanese high-ranking officials' reception of Kim Yong as an envoy of the Mongols and Kim Il as an envoy of Goryeo. *The Chronicle of Great Peace (Taiheiki 太平記)*, a detailed military chronicle of the Northern and Southern Courts Period, also states that “the King of Goryeo received an imperial order from the Yuan dynasty that sent seventeen envoys to Japan.”

Even ten years later, the Japanese still believed that envoys came both from the Yuan and Goryeo. Konoe Michitsugu recorded in May 1376 that the letter, delivered by the Goryeo envoy Na Heung-yu (?-?) in 1375, asks for the pirates to be stopped, generally similar to the content of the letter sent during the Joji Era (1362-1368), but this latest letter is from Goryeo alone.²⁹ His description, if unwittingly, informed the fact that the Goryeo court was successful in making the Japanese believe that the letter Kim Yong delivered in 1366 was from the Yuan.

To have a better understanding of the effectiveness of the Yuan authority in Goryeo diplomacy, we cannot but recall the Mongol invasions of Japan in 1274 and 1281. According to Kaizu Ichiro, the Mongol invasions

²⁷ Konoe Michitsugu, *Gukanki* [The Journal of Konoe Michitsugu] 2 (Kyōto: Rinsen Shoten, 1967), 137.

²⁸ Sanjō Kintada, *Gogumaiki* [The Journal of Sanjo Kintada] 1 (Tōkyō: Iwanami Shoten, 1980), 109.

²⁹ Konoe Michitsugu, *Gukanki* 4 (Kyōto: Rinsen Shoten, 1967), 33.

thoroughly terrorized Japanese society and the vigorous anti-Mongolian resistance triggered full-scale reform across Japan in all aspects of the society, including politics, economy and culture, from the late Kamakura period (1192-1333).³⁰ The shock the allied Mongol-Goryeo forces provoked can be glimpsed in *Taiheiki*. “Taigen yori Nihongo komuru koto” (太元より日本を攻むる事), or the chapter that follows “Koraijin rai chokoto” in Volume 39 not only depicts how the Japanese fled *en masse* in the face of the allied Mongol-Goryeo forces and their new weapon, called as *tetsuhau* (bomb), but also illustrates the fear that the Japanese society of the day had over the foreign attack. Well aware of the meaning of ‘the Eastern Campaigns’ in the title of the Branch Secretariat for the Eastern Campaigns as a conquest of Japan in the east, the ruling class of Japan might have considered the letter Kim Yong delivered in 1366 to be a signal in which the Yuan looks for another chance to gather its troops and arrest the Japanese pirates even in Japan, namely, an implicit threat against the Japanese court. In this manner, Goryeo rekindled the Japanese memories of the Mongolian Invasions by bringing up the Yuan military organization’s name.

What was the reaction of the Muromachi bakufu to the Goryeo envoys? Kawazoe Shoji intimated that the 1366 envoys prompted the bakufu to think about vanquishing Kyushu.³¹ The dispatch of envoys in 1366, according to Kawazoe, was directly related to the replacement of Shibukawa Yoshiyuki (1348-1375) with Imagawa Ryoshun (1326-?) as Kyushu Commissioner (Kyushu *tandai*). In response to the two invasions by the allied Mongol-Goryeo forces in the 13th century, the previous Kamakura bakufu devised a plan to suppress anti-bakufu forces, including the pirates, within their own territory.³² The Moromachi bakufu also realized that the issue of the Japanese pirates would give foreign powers, such as the Yuan, a fine excuse to attack its own country.

³⁰ Kaizu Ichirō, “Genko, wako, nihonkokuo” [Yuan Invaders, Japanese Pirates, and Japanese King], *Nihonshi kōza* [Japanese History Lecture] 4 (Tōkyō: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 2004): 6.

³¹ Kawazoe Shoji, *Taigai kankei no shiteki tenkai* [Historical Development of External Relations] (Tōkyō: Bunken Shuppan, 1996).

³² Yi, *Wako to Nichi-Rei kankeishi*, 134-40.

The appointment of Imagawa Ryoshun as Kyushu Commissioner in 1370 appears to be one of the practical steps that the bakufu took. As a key member of the bakufu, Imagawa Ryoshun, whose family was also related to the distinguished Ashikaga clan in the Muromachi shogunate, served as the Secretary (*chokan* 長官) of the *Samuraidokoro* (侍所).³³ Around the time Imagawa became Kyushu Commissioner, the Southern Court maintained strong control over Kyushu. When the former Kyushu Commissioner Isshiki Noriuji (?-1369) left for Kyoto in October 1355, his son Isshiki Naouji (?-?) took over the position but also ended up heading to the capital three years later. In March 1360, the bakufu appointed Shiba Ujitsune (?-?) as the new Kyushu Commissioner; his troops attempted to conquer Dazaifu, Fukuoka in September 1362 but they were repelled by the Southern Court's force (*Seiseifu* 征西府) in Chojahara. After careful consideration, the bakufu appointed Shibukawa Yoshiyuki as the Kyushu Commissioner in August 1365. Spending his entire appointment in the Chugoku region, however, Shibukawa never set foot in Kyushu.

Throughout the nine years between the Southern Court's forces' occupation of Dazaifu in 1362 and the appointment of Imagawa Ryoshun as the Kyushu Commissioner in June 1370, the Muromachi bakufu did not devote much energy to recovering Kyushu. Although Isshiki Noriuji, Isshiki Naouji, Shiba Ujitsune, and Shibukawa Yoshiyuki were all related to the Ashikaga clan, they received little support from the bakufu. For instance, Isshiki Noriuji, the Muromachi bakufu's first Kyushu Commissioner from 1336 to 1355, complained about the difficulties of governing Kyushu. He wrote several letters claiming that he would remain in Kyushu only if certain conditions, necessary to carry out his duties, were met. In fact, the commissioner had no office of his own and was forced to stay at the Shokufuji Temple (聖福寺) in Hakata, 12-13 kilometers north of Dazaifu. Similarly, he had only twenty subordinates under his control while lacking military and financial resources required to gain control over Kyushu.³⁴

³³ *Samuraidokoro* was an office that performed military affairs and police duties under the Muromachi bakufu.

³⁴ Kawazoe Shoji, *Imagawa Ryoshun* [Critical Biography of Imagawa Ryoshun] (Tōkyō: Yoshikawa

Imagawa Ryoshun, on the other hand, departed for Kyushu with many warriors under his direct control while embarking on the journey to his new position with his family upon receiving orders to subdue the western regions.³⁵ Before arriving at his new post, he already formed close ties with a number of powerful families in the Chugoku region so as to support the rear area security while governing Kyushu. He even arranged his brother's marriage to a member of the Ouchi clan (大内氏), one of the most eminent warrior families in Western Japan of the day, in the region.³⁶ He also propelled many warriors in Kyushu into joining him in achieving governance tasks.³⁷ In other words, the bakufu let him mobilize powerful local leaders in Chugoku, create a system to support the Kyushu Commissioner, and conquer Kyushu. Kawazoe points out these moves as the major reason why Imagawa was able to avoid repeating the failures of his predecessors and successfully govern Kyushu.³⁸

As it stands, in February 1369, according to Murai Shosuke, a Ming delegation visited Prince Kaneyoshi (1329-1383) of the Southern Court to request the suppression of the Japanese pirates in Kyushu. The prince accepted the Ming proposal without holding fast to his hardline stance against the foreign powers, specifically the Ming.³⁹ In other words, Imagawa's advance into Kyushu under the bakufu's full support since the late 1360s had been such a threat to the Southern Court that Prince Kaneyoshi had to agree on the Ming's request as opposed to the Japanese pirates and acknowledge Ming's suzerainty over his domain of Kyushu. As the bakufu chose Imagawa Ryoshun as the Kyushu Commissioner and actively inter-

Kobunkan, 1964).

³⁵ Imagawa Ryoshun, *Nan Taiheiki* [Critique on the Chronicle of Great Peace] 19.

³⁶ Kawazoe, *Imagawa Ryoshun*.

³⁷ From Imagawa Ryoshun's voyage to Moji to his attack on Dazaifu, several powerful families in Chugoku supported his army as it took part in several battles. Among these were Ouchi Hiroyo (1325-1380) and his son Ouchi Yoshihiro (1356-1400), Sufu Shishin (?-?), Yamauchi Michitada (?-?), Mori Motoharu (1323-?), Kikkawa Tsunemi (?-1435), and Nagai Sadahiro (1271-1323). See Kawazoe, *Imagawa Ryoshun*, 96.

³⁸ Kawazoe, *Imagawa Ryoshun*.

³⁹ Murai Shosuke, *Ajia no naka no chusei nihon*.

vened in the political affairs of Kyushu, the Southern Court came to reshape its external relations in a more flexible and open-ended way.

Then, the Goryeo delegations, dispatched three years before the visit of the Ming envoy to Japan, played a crucial role in expediting the changes in the Muromachi bakufu's policy for Kyushu. As for the bakufu, neglecting the Southern Court in Kyushu, the major base of the Japanese pirates, would not only hinder the unification of Japan under its hegemony, but also potentially lead to foreign invasion far from favorable to their power. It is at this juncture that Goryeo's delegation to Japan in 1366 proved a vital incentive to catalyze a series of changes that simultaneously affected the issue of the Japanese pirates in East Asia and reinvigorated the intraregional confrontation between the Northern Court, dominated by the bakufu, and the Southern Court, led by Prince Kaneyoshi, in Medieval Japan.

Concluding Remarks

Through a 17-year long passage of patient diplomacy, Goryeo, in endeavor to conceal from the Yuan court the extent of the damage the Japanese pirate attacks generated and to prevent Japan from discovering its internal and external crises, withstood harsh Japanese piracy. Kim Yong was the first envoy who left for Kyoto in August 1366 and delivered a letter from the Branch Secretariat for the Eastern Campaigns regarding the suppression of the Japanese pirate and Kim Il was the second one who departed for Kyoto in November 1366 and delivered a letter from Goryeo regarding the same agenda. To send these envoys in less than four months was designed to persuade the Muromachi bakufu in the Northern Court to take immediate action against the pirates based mostly in Kyushu. Particularly, the first delegation with the letter from the Branch Secretariat for the Eastern Campaigns made a symbolic and psychological impact on the bakufu recalling some grave memories of the Mongol Invasion in 1274 and 1281, launched by the allied forces of the Yuan and Goryeo, and realizing that the issue of the Japanese pirates could arouse Japan to foreign, Goryeo and the Yuan in specific, intervention under the veil of an anti-piracy operation. This situation might not guarantee their hegemony over the whole of Japan including

the western part, or Kyushu under the grip of the Southern Court. In this fashion, the Goryeo court took advantage of the Yuan to maximize its diplomatic goal of suppressing the Japanese pirates for national security. The arrival of the Goryeo envoys motivated the bakufu to pursue more actively the conquest of Kyushu by way of removing the Japanese pirates and overthrowing the Southern Court, in search of a constructive relationship with the new Ming after the contact of the Goryeo envoys with the Northern Court under the Muromachi bakufu at Kyoto in 1366, and to forestall any pretext for foreign intervention in Japan after the Mongol invasions in late 13th century. Hence, the diplomatic activities of Goryeo in 1366 against the Japanese pirates captures how interstate power relations among Goryeo, Japan and the Yuan marched in step with intrastate power relations of each country, viz. a dynamic confluence between internal politics and external relations in medieval East Asia.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

- Azuma Kagami 吾妻鏡 [Mirror of the East].
- Gogumaiki 後愚昧記 [The Journal of Sanjo Kintada].
- Goryeosa 高麗史 [History of Goryeo].
- Goryeosa jeoryo 高麗史節要 [Essentials of Goryeo History].
- Moromoriki 師守記 [Record of Moromori].
- Taiheiki 太平記 [The Chronicle of Great Peace].
- Zenrin kokuhoki 善隣國寶記 [Records of the Treasures of Neighboring Countries].

Secondary Sources

- Arii Tomonori. *Korai richoshi no kenkyu* 高麗李朝史の研究 [A Study of Goryeo and Joseon]. Tokyo: Kokusho kankōkai 国書刊行会, 1985.
- Kaizu Ichirō, ed. “Genko, wako, nihonkokuo” [Yuan Invaders, Japanese Pirates, and Japanese King]. *Nihonshi kōza* [Japanese History Lecture] 4. Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 2004.
- Kawazoe Shoji. *Imagawa Ryoshun*. Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kobunkan 吉川弘文館, 1964.
- _____. *Taigai kankei no shiteki tenkai* 対外関係の史的展開 [The Historical Development of External Relations]. Tōkyō: Bunken Shuppan 文献出版, 1996.
- Konoe Michitsugu. *Gukanki* 愚管記, vol. 2. Kyōto: Rinsen Shoten 臨川書店, 1967.
- _____. *Gukanki* 愚管記, vol. 4. Kyōto: Rinsen Shoten 臨川書店, 1967.
- Murai Shosuke. *Ajia no naka no chūsei Nihon* アジアのなかの中世日本 [Medieval Japan within Asia]. Tōkyō: Azekura Shobō 校倉書房, 1988.
- Nakamura Kidetaka, *Nissen kankeishi no kenkyu* 1 [Studies on the History of Japanese–Korean Relations 1]. Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1965.
- Sanjō Kintada. *Gogumaiki* 後愚昧記, vol. 1. Tōkyō: Iwanami Shoten 岩波書店, 1980.
- Tanaka Takeo, ed. *Zenrin kokuhōki: Shintei zoku Zenrin kokuhōki* 善隣國寶記: 新訂續

善隣國寶記 [Documents concerning the Friendly Relations with Neighboring Countries]. Tōkyō: Shūeisha 集英社, 1995.

Yi Young. *Wako to Nichi-Rei kankeishi* 倭寇と日麗関係史 [A History of the Japanese Pirates and Japan-Goryeo Relations]. Tōkyō: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai 東京大学出版会, 1999.