

# Zongfan and Zhonghua as Interpretative Concepts for Seeing the Qing: Possibilities and Limitations of Yuanchong Wang's 'Joseon Model'

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# Zongfan and Zhonghua as Interpretative Concepts for Seeing the Qing: Possibilities and Limitations of Yuanchong Wang's 'Joseon Model' \*

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## I. Introduction

In the field of Qing (清 1644-1912) history, there have been several topics of controversy between Chinese scholars and their non-Chinese counterparts, for which they have found little consensus. The prominent examples have been the issues surrounding the two theses of 'New Qing History' and 'Qing Imperialism.' The thesis of 'Qing Imperialism' made its appearance from the mid-twentieth century, focusing on the nature of the Qing's policy towards Joseon in the late nineteenth century and interpreting the Qing's Joseon (朝鮮 1392-1910) policy as fundamentally imperialistic.<sup>1</sup> On the oth-

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<sup>\*</sup> This translated article is a revised and supplemented version of Sungwook Son, “종번(宗藩)과 중화(中華)로 청제국을 볼 수 있는가-왕위안총 ‘조선 모델’의 가능성과 한계,” *동북아역사논총* 66 (2019): pp.115-160.

<sup>1</sup> Kim Key-Hiuk, *The Last Phase of the East Asian World Order: Korea, Japan, and the Chinese Empire, 1860-1882* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980); Song Byeonggi 宋炳基, *Geundae Han Jung gwangyesa yeon'gu: 19 segi eui yeon Mi ron gwa Jo Cheong gyoseop* 近代韓中關係史研究: 19世紀의 聯美論과 朝清交涉 [Study on the history of modern Korean-Chinese relations: Discourse of allying with America and talks between Joseon and the Qing] (Seoul: Danguk taehakgyo chulpanbu, 1985); Gweon Seokbong 權錫奉, *Cheong mal dae Joseon jeongchaeksa yeon'gu* 清末對朝鮮政策史研究 [Study on the history of the late Qing's policy toward Joseon] (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1986); Kim Jeonggi 金正起, “1876-1894 nyeon Cheong

er hand, without denying the interventionist nature of the Qing policy, some Chinese scholars tend to see it as the strengthening of the Qing's traditional suzerain rights.<sup>2</sup> It may well be hard for contemporary Chinese scholars who have viewed recent Chinese history as a semi-colonial experience to accept the thesis that China exercised imperialist control and influence over its neighboring countries in its recent past. Hence, they have tried to refute the imperialist interpretation of the late Qing's relations with its neighboring states, especially with Joseon, and was in favor of the suzerain-vassal relationship which had been historically recognized as the legitimate norm of foreign relations within the Qing-centric world order.

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eui Joseon jeongchaek yeon'gu" 1876-1894年 清의 朝鮮政策研究 [The Qing's policy toward Joseon, 1876-1894], Ph. D. dissertation, Seoul National University (1994); Motegi Tosio 茂木敏夫, "Chūka sekai no kindai teki saihen" 中華世界の近代'的 再編 [Modern reconstruction of the Chinese world], Ph. D. dissertation, University of Tokyo (1994); Gu Seonheui 具仙姬, *Hanguk geundae dae Cheong jeongchaeksa yeon'gu* 韓國 近代 對清政策史 研究 [Study on Korea's policy toward the Qing in modern era] (Seoul: Hyeon 1999); Kirk W. Larsen, *Tradition, Treaties, and Trade: Qing Imperialism and Chosŏn Korea, 1850-1910* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008).

<sup>2</sup> Lin Mingde 林明德, *Yuan Shikai yu Chaoxian* 袁世凱與朝鮮 [Yuan Shikai and Joseon] (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo, or Academia Sinica, 1970); Zhang Cunwu 張存武, "Qing ji Zhong Han guanxi zhi bian tong" 清季中韓關係之變通 [Adaptations of the Sino-Korean relations in the late Qing], *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo jikan* 中央研究院近代史研究所集刊 14 (1985); Song Huijuan 宋慧娟, *Qingdai Zhong Chao Zongfan guanxi shanbian yanjiu* 清代中朝宗藩關係變遷研究 [Study on the evolution of the Sino-Korean Zongfan relations in the Qing era], Changchun: Jilin daxue chubanshe (2007), pp.151-260; Cao Wen 曹雯, "Wan Qing zhengfu duiwai zhengce de tiaozheng yu Chaoxian" 晚清政府對外政策的調整與朝鮮 [Late Qing government's adjustment of foreign policy and Joseon], *Qingshi yanjiu* 清史研究 2008-2 (2008); Zhang Weiming 張衛明, "Zai Zongfan tizhi yu guoji gongfa zhi jian: wan Qing Zhong Chao zhixu de chongxin jiangou" 在宗藩體制與國際公法之間: 晚清中朝秩序的重新建構 [In between Zongfan system and international law: Reconstruction of the Sino-Korean order in the late Qing], *Xueshu yanjiu* 學術研究 2011-3 (2011); Sun Yanshu 孫豔妹, "Wan Qing Zhong Chao chaogong guanxi xiangkao" 晚清中朝朝貢關係詳考 [Detailed study on the Sino-Korean tributary relations in late Qing], *Shixue yuekan* 史學月刊 2011-1 (2011). Recently, some of the Chinese works have been critical of the Qing's policy toward Joseon, but they do not view the Qing's strengthening of its suzerain rights as being unjustifiable; For example, Ma Yong 馬勇, "Jiawu qian Qing zhengfu "Chaoxian fanglue" zai jiantao" 甲午前清政府"朝鮮方略"再檢討 [Rethinking of the Qing government's strategy for Joseon before 1894], *Shehui kexue jikan* 社會科學輯刊 2014-6 (2014); Hou Zhongjun 侯中軍, "Jiawu zhanqian Zhong Chao Zongfan guanxi de xuelixing fansi" 甲午戰前中朝宗藩關係的學理性反思 [Theoretical rethinking of the Sino-Korean Zongfan relations prior to the Sino-Japanese War], *Jinyang xuekan* 晉陽學刊 2017-6 (2017).

In a similar vein, contemporary Chinese academic circles have put forth strong arguments against the findings of ‘New Qing History’ scholars in the United States.<sup>3</sup> Critical of the discourse of ‘Sinicization’ of the non-

<sup>3</sup> The representative Chinese works critical of the ‘new Qing history’ are as follows; Zhong Han 鐘煒, “Bei Mei ‘xin Qingshi’ yanjiu de jishi hezai?—shi duoyuzhong shiliao kaobian huzheng de shizheng xueshu, huanshi yishi xingtai de yingshi zhi xue? (shang)” 北美“新清史”研究的基石何在?—是多語種史料考辨互證的實證學術, 還是意識形態化的應時之學? (上) [What is the research criterion of the ‘New Qing History’ of North America?—Is it an empirical study based on multiple-language sources, or a study ideologically-adapted to the time? (part 1)], *Zhongguo bianjiang minzu yanjiu* 中國邊疆民族研究 7 (2014); Li Zhaoyong 李昭勇, “Qiangdiao ‘Manchu zhi dao’ de ‘xin Qingshi’ chuyi” 強調“滿洲之道”的“新清史”芻議 [A humble opinion on the ‘New Qing History’ that emphasizes the ‘Manchurian way’], *Manzu yanjiu* 滿族研究 2014-2 (2014); Li Zhiting 李治亭, “‘Xin Qingshi’: ‘xin diguo zhuyi’ shixue biaoben” “新清史”: “新帝國主義”史學標本 [‘New Qing history’: An example of ‘new imperialism’], *Zhongguo shehui kexue bao* 中國社會科學報 728 (April 20, 2015); Cheng Xijin 程秀金, “‘Xin Qingshi’ Qingchao tongzhi moshi zhi shuping—yi Qingchao pingding he guanxia Xinjiang wei zhongxin” “新清史”清朝統治模式之述評—以清朝平定和管轄新疆為中心 [Critique on the Qing governance model of the ‘New Qing History’—Focusing on the Qing pacification and jurisdiction of Xinjiang] *Xueshu yuekan* 學術月刊 2015-6 (2015); Yang Nianqun 楊念群, “Quanshi ‘zhengtongxing’ caishi lijie Qingchao lishi de guanjian” 詮釋“正統性”才是理解清朝歷史的關鍵 [Clarification of ‘orthodox legitimacy’ must be the key to understanding Qing history], *Dushu* 讀書 2015-12 (2015); Liu Wenpeng 劉文鵬, “Neilu Yazhou shiye xia de ‘xin Qingshi’ yanjiu” 內陸亞洲視野下的“新清史”研究 [Study on the ‘New Qing History’ with Inner Asian perspectives], *Lishi yanjiu* 歷史研究 2016-4 (2016); Zhang Zhiqiang 張志強, “Chaoyue minzu zhuyi: ‘duoyuan yiti’ de Qingdai Zhongguo—dui ‘xin Qingshi’ de huiying” 超越民族主義: “多元一體”的清代中國—對“新清史”的回應 [Transcending nationalism: ‘Unity of multiple elements’ by Qing China versus the ‘New Qing History’ school’s response], *Wenhua zongheng* 文化縱橫 2016-2 (2016); Li Jing 李靜, “‘Zhongguo yueqi’ de lishi xushi yu dangdai xiangxiang—yi ‘xin Qingshi’ de ‘diguo zhuanxiang’ wei zhongxin” “中國崛起”的歷史敘事與當代想象—以“新清史”的“帝國轉向”為中心 [Historical narrative based on ‘rising China’ and contemporary imagination—Focusing on the imperialist orientation of the ‘New Qing History’], *Wenyi lilun yu piping* 文藝理論與批評 2017-5 (2017); Wang Rongzu 汪榮祖, “‘Zhongguo’ gainian heyi chengwei wenti—jiu ‘xin Qingshi’ ji xiangguan wenti yu Ou Lide jiaoshou shangque” “中國”概念何以成為問題—就“新清史”及相關問題與歐立德教授商榷 [How does the concept of ‘Zhongguo’ become a problem—Discussion on the ‘New Qing History,’ its related problems, and Professor Mark C. Elliot], *Tansuo yu zhengming* 探索與爭鳴 2018-6 (2018); Fang Weigui 方維規, “‘Zhongguo’ yishi heyi shengcheng—kance ‘xin Qingshi’ de xueshu diceng ji qi zhoubian gouzao” “中國”意識何以生成—勘測“新清史”的學術地層及其周邊構造 [How has the idea of “Zhongguo” been generated—Exploration of the academic topography of the “New Qing History” and its surrounding structure], *Tansuo yu zhengming* 探索與爭鳴 2018-6 (2018); Zhong Han 鐘煒, *Qingchaoshi de jiben tezhen zai tanjiu: yi dui Bei Mei ‘xin Qingshi’ guandian de fansi wei zhongxin* 清朝史的基本特征再探究: 以對北美“新清史”觀點的反思為中心 [Reconsideration of the basic characteristics of Qing history: Focusing on rethinking the perspectives of the “New Qing History”], (Beijing: Zhongyang minzu daxue chubanshe, 2018).

Chinese dynasties, the ‘New Qing History’ school brings to light the Inner Asian origins of the Qing dynasty, non-Chinese source materials, and global historical frameworks.<sup>4</sup> The paradigm of ‘New Qing History’ opens a new approach to a multiethnic and multicultural Qing, departing from the conventional Sino-centric narratives of Qing history. Yet, not a few Chinese scholars remain suspicious of the school’s ‘political’ intention to identify the Qing as an Inner Asian empire and to separate the Qing from Chinese history,<sup>5</sup> hampering further academic debates. Since the different perspectives on the ‘New Qing History’ and ‘Qing Imperialism’ in the late nineteenth century are inseparably connected to the understanding of contemporary China,<sup>6</sup> the prospect for consensus between the two schools

<sup>4</sup> For the major perspectives of ‘New Qing History,’ see Ruth W. Dunnell and James A. Millward’s “Introduction,” in *New Qing Imperial History: The Making of Inner Asian Empire at Qing Chengde*, edited by James A. Millward et al. (New York: Routledge, 2004), pp.1-14; Joanna Waley-Cohen, “The New Qing History” *Radical History Review* 88 (2004), pp.193-206; Pamela K. Crossley 파멜라 크로스리, “‘Sin’ Cheongsa e daehan josim seureoun jeopgeun” ‘신’청사에 대한 조심스러운 접근 [A reserved approach to ‘new’ Qing history], in *Oeguk hakgye eui jeongbok wangjo yeon’gu sigak gwa choegeun donghyang* 외국학계의 정복왕조 연구 시각과 최근 동향 [Foreign scholarly circles’ research perspectives on the conquering dynasties and recent trends], (Seoul: Northeast Asian History Foundation, 2010); Kim Seonmin 김선민, “Manju jeguk inga Cheong jeguk inga—cheogeun Miguk eui Cheongdaesa yeon’gu donghyang eul jungsim euro” 만주제국인가 청 제국인가-최근 미국의 청대사 연구동향을 중심으로 [The Manchu empire, or the Qing?—A critical review on the ‘New Qing History’ in the U. S.], *Sachong 사총* 74 (2011); Dang Wei 黨為, *Bei Mei xin Qingsa sanshi nian: jujue Han zhongxin de Zhongguo shiguan de xingqi yu fanzhan* 美國新清史三十年: 拒絕漢中心的中國史觀的興起與發展 [30 years of the ‘New Qing History’ in the U. S.: Rise and development of non-Han-centric perspective of Chinese history], Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2012); Yun Wuk 윤옥, “Sin Cheongsa wa apeuro eui gwaje” 新清史와 앞으로의 과제 [‘New Qing History and its future tasks], *Yeoksa wa segye* 역사와 세계 47 (2015).

<sup>5</sup> Chen Weirong, *Da Yuanshi yu xin Qingshi* 大元史與新清史 [Great Yuan history and New Qing History] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2019), 203-211; Zhong Han, *Qingchaoshi de jiben tezheng zai tanjiu: yi dui Bei Mei ‘xin Qingshi’ guandian de fansi wei zhongxin*, pp.196-215.

<sup>6</sup> The Qing dynasty left important legacies of historical continuity to present China in such areas as territory, Chinese identity as modern nation-state, issue of Chinese ethnicity, and unification ideology. See Lu Yong 陸勇, *Qingdai ‘Zhongguo’ guannian yanjiu* 清代“中國”觀念研究 [Study on the notion of *Zhongguo* in the Qing period] (Xi’an: Xiayi renmin jiaoyu chubanshe, 2015); Huang Xingtao 黃興濤, *Chongsu Zhonghua: jindai Zhongguo ‘Zhonghua minzu’ guannian yanjiu* 重塑中華: 近代中國“中華民族”觀念研究 [Remolding Chineseness: Study on the concept of the “Chinese people” in modern China], (Beijing: Beijing shifan daxue chubanshe, 2017), pp.9-50.

through constructive academic debates seems unpromising for now.

Under this intellectual milieu, Wang Yuanchong 王元崇 of the History Department of the University of Delaware published a monograph about Sino-Korean relations during the Qing period, *Remaking the Chinese Empire: Manchu-Korean Relations, 1616-1911*.<sup>7</sup> As the title and the subtitle suggest, the author traced Qing efforts to establish itself as a ‘Chinese empire’ through its relations with Joseon. Even though the Qing subdued Joseon, which had remained the most important tributary state to Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), it did not incorporate Joseon into its territory but continued the Ming-style tributary or *Zhongfan* 宗藩 (feudalistic relationship) system with Joseon. As for Joseon, it entered into a dual relationship with the Chinese world and a non-Chinese polity at the same time. Wang highlights the Qing’s use of its unique relations with Joseon to remake itself into *Zhonghua* 中華 (civilized center) of the known world and tackles the controversy based on the Chinese versus non-Chinese dichotomy.<sup>8</sup> This paper aims to examine Yuanchong Wang’s important arguments in his book and to review the concept of ‘civilized center’ as a reference point in narrating the empire building of the Qing and the diplomatic relations of the Qing with Joseon.

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<sup>7</sup> Wang Yuanchong, *Remaking the Chinese Empire: Manchu-Korean Relations, 1616-1911* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2018).

<sup>8</sup> This approach, in a sense, resonates with a recent trend of Chinese academic circles moving away from the unproductive controversy based on the discourse of ‘Sinicization’ towards interpreting the Qing history as formation of Middle Kingdom through the interaction of ‘Sinicization’ (*Hanhua* 漢化) and ‘Manchuism’ (*Huhua* 胡化). Yang Nianqun 楊念群, “Chaoyue ‘Hanhua lun’ yu ‘Manchu texing lun’: Qingshi yanjiu nengfou zouchu disan tiao daolu?” 超越“漢化論”與“滿洲特性論”：清史研究能否走出第三條道路？ [Transcending the theories of “Sinicization” and “Manchuism”: Is a third way possible for the study of Qing history?], *Zhongguo renmin daxue xuebao* 中國人民大學學報 2011-2 (2011); Xu Kai 徐凱, *Manchu renting ‘fadian’ yu buzhu shuangzhong goujian: 16 shiji yilai Manchu minzu de lishi shanbian* 滿洲認同“法典”與部族雙重構建：16世紀以來滿洲民族的歷史嬗變 [Manchu identity double represented in the ‘law code’ and tribal ethnicity: Historical evolution of the Manchu ethnicity since the sixteenth century], Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2015), pp.296-345; Chen Baoliang 陳寶良, “Tiaochu ‘Hanhua’ yu ‘Huhua’ zhi zheng” 跳出“漢化”與“胡化”之爭 [Transcending the debate between ‘Sinicization’ and ‘Manchuism’], *Beijing ribao* 北京日報 (June 3, 2019).

## New Approach to the Qing through Its Relations with Joseon

In the “Introduction,” Yuanchong Wang outlines the four major projects of the book under the title phrases of “Revitalizing the Concept of *Zongfan* in the Narrative of Late Imperial China,” “Reinterpreting the Rise of the Modern Chinese State through the Lens of Qing-Joseon Relations,” “Revisiting the Chinese Empire under the Qing,” and “Renegotiating Qing Imperialism,” as a kind of manifesto to shine an innovative perspective to the interpretation of the Qing and its relations with Joseon. In depicting the foreign relations under the Chinese world order, Wang chooses to recycle the term *Zhongfan* instead of the more common terms like *chaogong* 朝貢 (tributary relations) or *hushi* 互市 (reciprocal trade relations). The *Zongfan* system is said to have started with the Western Zhou Dynasty (1046-771 BCE), in which *Zong* referred to the Chinese monarch who claimed to be the Son of Heaven (*tianzi* 天子) while *fan* referred to the royal clan members who received fiefs (*fanfeng* 藩封) from the Son of Heaven. The two sides together constituted the world of “all-under-Heaven” (*tianxia* 天下). This feudalistic model of ancient China evolved later into the monarch-subject relationship between the imperial court and the outlying subordinate countries, which continued to run with the reciprocal practices of paying tribute (*chaogong* 朝貢) and bestowing investiture (*cefeng* 冊封), as well as with the double policies of “serving the great” (*shida* 事大) and “cherishing the small” (*zixiao* 字小).

It is the legendary account of箕子 Jizi (K., Gija), a loyal member of the Shang Dynasty (ca. 1600-1046 BCE) who was believed to have been enfeoffed to ancient Joseon, that symbolized the beginning of Sino-Korean kinship and cultural affinity. The Sino-Korean relationship was further strengthened at the event of the Ming’s military cooperation with Joseon against Japan during the East Asian War, 1592-1598. Then, the *Zongfan* arrangement had represented the historicity of the Sino-Korean relations throughout the pre-modern period including the Qing dynasty. According to the Wang, based largely on its relations with Joseon, the Qing court categorized outer *fan* (*wai fan* 外藩) as those states on the periphery of the Qing

that sent emissaries offering tribute (*jingong* 進貢) to the imperial court, and received investiture of kingship from the emperor. The Qing category of outer fan, however, could incorporate an array of political polities, such as *fanbu* 藩部 (vassal tribe) in Mongolia and Xinjiang, *shuguo* 屬國 (subordinate state) like Joseon, and *chaogongguo* 朝貢國 (tributary state) like An-nam and Ryukyu, depending on varying historical contexts.<sup>9</sup> Still, it should be noted that in the Qing's definition and adoption of the outer fan, its relations with Joseon served prominently as the key reference.

Wang observes that the Qing actively made use of the Sino-Korean relations, established during the Ming period, to achieve its own agenda instead of simply renewing such relations. He regards Qing-Joseon relations as a key component in constructing the Qing-centric *Zongfan* system, which started from the Qing invasion of Joseon in 1637 and after the crossing of Shanhai Pass 山海關 in 1644 was consolidated by applying the 'Joseon model' to the outer *fan* under the jurisdiction of the Board of Rites (Libu 禮部). Even though the *fan* 藩 (subordinate polities) during the Qing period had various meanings according to specific context, the Qing court understood Joseon and other subordinate polities basically as members of the Qing-centric family.<sup>10</sup> He traces the long-term historical process of how the Qing established and consolidated itself as a Chinese empire, and eventually transformed itself into a modern Chinese state. Wang's account that the Qing defined itself as a Chinese empire even before the crossing of the Shanhai Pass does not mean that the non-Chinese ethnic Manchus began the assimilation process of 'Sinicization' (*Hanhua* 漢化). In this book, the term 'Sinicization' does not refer to that of cultural assimilation of non-Chinese dynasties as commonly defined by previous studies. Instead, it refers to the politico-cultural action of the Manchu regime to embrace Chinese civilization in such a way that helped them to achieve their political goal.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Zhang Shuangzhi, 張雙智, "Qingchao waifan tizhi nei de zhaojin nianban yu chaogong zhidu" 清朝外藩體制內的朝覲年班與朝貢制度 [Institutions of emissaries and tributes under the outer fan system of the Qing], *Qingshi yanjiu* 清史研究 2010-3 (2010).

<sup>10</sup> Wang Yuanchong, *Remaking the Chinese Empire: Manchu-Korean Relations, 1616-1911*, p.6.

<sup>11</sup> For a similar approach, see Evelyn S. Rawski, *Early Modern China and Northeast Asia: Cross-*

The Chinese civilization (*Zhonghua* 中華), then, is understood as a civilization that could be shared universally rather than as one exclusively possessed by the ethnic Han Chinese. *Zhongguo* 中國 (Middle Kingdom) is understood as the civilized center of the world and the term ‘Sinicization’ does not mean assimilation to the Han Chinese civilization but assimilation to the civilization presented by *Zhongguo*.<sup>12</sup> When Hongtaiji defined the Qing as the Chinese empire at the time of his ascension to the imperial throne in 1637, he proclaimed the important political project of promoting the Qing’s identity as a Chinese empire rather than as a Eurasian empire of the ethnic Manchus. Thus, Wang shifts away from an important thesis of the ‘New Qing History’ that puts stress on the Inner Asian nature of the Qing.

How can it be possible to encompass the non-Chinese regions and peoples under the management of Lifanyuan 理藩院 (rendered as “Mongolian Superintendency” in the book)? The theory of ‘Sinicization’ can tell only the degree to which these non-Chinese regions and peoples became assimilated to the Han-Chinese civilization. However, Wang defines the Qing as a Chinese empire. Many Chinese scholars are opposed to designating the Qing as an empire.<sup>13</sup> The term ‘empire’ as a European concept did

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*Border Perspectives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Song Nianshen, *Making Borders in Modern East Asia: The Tumen River Demarcation, 1881-1919* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

<sup>12</sup> The identification with Chineseness does not mean that the Qing identified themselves with that of Han Chinese, and also can be distinguishable from Ho Pingti’s 何炳棣 notion of non-Chinese assimilation into Chinese culture or from Pei Huang’s idea of non-Chinese adaptation of and participation in Chinese culture. Ho Pingti, “In Defense of Sinicization: A Rebuttal of Evelyn Rawski’s Reenvisioning the Qing,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 57: 1 (1998), pp.123-155; Pei Huang, *Reorienting the Manchus: A Study of Sinicization, 1583-1795* (Ithaca: Cornell University East Asia Program, 2011), 4-5. Wang Yuanchong stresses that the Manchus put themselves on the path towards integrating with the civilized dynasty of *Zhongguo*. See Wang Yuanchong, *Remaking the Chinese Empire: Manchu-Korean Relations, 1616-1911*, p.30.

<sup>13</sup> Ding Yizhuang, 定宜莊, “‘Guojia’ yu ‘digu’: ‘Huanan yanjiu’ yu ‘xin Qingshi’ duihua de jichu hezhai” 「國家」與「帝國」: 「華南研究」與「新清史」對話的基礎何在 [‘Nation’ and ‘empire’: Where lies common ground for conversation between the ‘study of South China’ and the ‘new Qing history’], *Lishi renleixue xuekan* 歷史人類學學刊 15-2 (2017), p.229; Liu Wenming 劉文明, “‘Digu’ gainian zai xifang he Zhongguo: lishi yuanyuan he dangdai zhengming” “帝國”概念在西方和中國: 歷史 淵源和當代爭鳴 [The concept of ‘empire’ as existed in the West and China: Its

not make its appearance in the Chinese political vocabulary until the late nineteenth century. Historically, the ruling dynasties in China called themselves as the “Heavenly Dynasty” (*tianzhao* 天朝) or the center of “all-under-Heaven” (*tianxia* 天下). The Western notion of ‘empire’ was first introduced to the narrative of Chinese history from Chinese contacts with the Western imperial powers in the nineteenth century. The Western empires, seen as violent polities eager for territorial and hegemonic expansion, carried negative connotations. In contrast, the Chinese order of all-under-Heaven based on *li* 禮 (proper rituals) was considered to be reciprocal in a non-violent relationship. Hence, some of the Chinese scholars, adhering to modern Chinese experiences of semi-colonialism, charged that the ‘New Qing History’ not only emphasizes the imperialist nature of the high Qing expansion as having been inspired by Western imperialism of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, but also branded it as a “new imperialist historiography” (*xin diguozhuyi shixue* 新帝國主義史學).<sup>14</sup> Wang regards the Qing as an empire, yet cautions that the high Qing expansionism prior to contacts with European powers should be distinguished from European imperialism or colonialism.

The Chinese empire under the Qing as defined by Wang was not of the European type and was comprised of two dimensions: the territorial Chinese empire and the politico-cultural Chinese empire. The territorial Chinese empire was equal to the Great Qing’s territory under the emperor’s rule while the politico-cultural Chinese empire encompassed both the Great Qing’s territory and the outer *fan* where the authority of the emperor was recognized as the Son of Heaven who presided over the world of all-under-Heaven.

Within the *Zongfan* world, according to Wang, the *Zhong* represented by the Qing court and the *fan* represented by surrounding subordinate states shared the notion of the unequal hierarchical world order. Their shared world of “all-under-Heaven” was understood to operate under the

historical origins and contemporary debates], *Quanqishu pinglun* 全球史評論 2018-2 (2018).

<sup>14</sup> Li Zhiting, “‘Xin Qingshi’: ‘xin diguo zhuyi’ shixue biaoan.”

principle of *Zongfan* system determined not by the power politics of modern diplomacy but by the “bilateral arrangement” based on cosmopolitan Confucian ideology. Seen from this perspective, what was defeated in the wars with France in Vietnam in 1883 and with Japan in Joseon in 1894 was not the territorial Chinese empire but the politico-cultural one. With the decline of the politico-cultural empire after 1895, Wang argues that there emerged a modern Chinese state.<sup>15</sup>

The book is critical of the ‘High Qing Imperialism’ thesis and the ‘New Qing History’ thesis alike on the ground that the territorial expansion, carried out during the High Qing period of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, should not be detached from the pre-Qing Chinese historical context. The book is also critical of the argument regarding the ‘Late Qing Imperialism’ thesis that views the Qing’s growing control of Joseon in the late nineteenth century as bearing an astonishing resemblance to Western imperialism.<sup>16</sup> In interpreting the late Qing’s foreign policy toward its neighboring countries, Wang chooses Korea to see the Sino-Korean relationship within the *Zongfan* framework formed between the Qing and Joseon. The ‘Zongfanism’ as defined by Wang refers to a Chinese system of political and diplomatic communication and exchange between what was identified as the civilized center of the world and the political polities, less civilized or even barbaric, on its periphery. Under this hierarchical system, the center (*Zong* 宗) possessed absolute patriarchal authority over the subordinate states (*fan* 藩) while the two sides retained mutually constitutive legitimacy informed by their shared politico-cultural norms.<sup>17</sup>

Wang’s definition of the Qing as a Chinese empire is premised on its successful consolidation of the *Zongfan* system with its outlying vassal

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<sup>15</sup> Wang Yuanchong, *Remaking the Chinese Empire: Manchu-Korean Relations, 1616-1911*, p.15.

<sup>16</sup> Lee Yur-Bok, *Diplomatic Relations between the United States and Korea, 1866-1887* (New York: Humanities, 1970), pp.136-142; Martina Deuchler, *Confucian Gentlemen and Barbarian Envoys: The Opening of Korea, 1875-1885* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1977), p.220; Kim Key-hiuk, *The Last Phase of the East Asian World Order: Korea, Japan, and the Chinese Empire, 1860-1882*, 348; Kirk W. Larsen, *Tradition, Treaties, and Trade: Qing Imperialism and Chosŏn Korea, 1850-1910*, pp.11-19.

<sup>17</sup> Wang Yuanchong, *Remaking the Chinese Empire: Manchu-Korean Relations, 1616-1911*, pp.17-18.

states, in particular, Joseon which played the key role in consolidating this relationship. According to Wang, the Qing had already proclaimed itself as the Chinese empire even prior to the crossing of the Great Wall in 1644 by forging the *Zongfan* system with Joseon. By using Joseon's status as the Qing's prototypical outer fan—the 'Joseon model'—the Qing revitalized the well-established and highly programmed formalities of the Ming in its contacts with its outer *fan* and incorporated them into the Qing's geopolitical hegemony after 1644. Since Joseon had remained the key component of the Qing's Chinese empire by providing for its legitimacy and mechanism, the loss of Joseon meant the collapse of the Qing's politico-cultural power in East Asia. Therefore, Wang asserts, the Qing was willing to risk war with its competitors to protect Joseon from their encroachment in the late nineteenth century.

The major historical events covered by the book include subduing Joseon, 1616-43 (Chapter 1), barbarianizing Joseon, 1644-1761 (Chapter 2), justifying its civilized position through its relations with Joseon, 1762-1861 (Chapter 3), defining Joseon's status at the face of Western inroad after the Opium War, 1862-1876 (Chapter 4), supervising Joseon in its relations with Western powers and Japan, 1877-1884 (Chapter 5), and finally losing Joseon in the end, 1885-1911 (Chapter 6). In the course of the 1630s, the 1760s, and the 1860s, the Qing presented itself as the Chinese empire by utilizing its relations with Joseon. Under the crisis of Western encroachments into the East, the Qing reinforced the *Zongfan* framework of its foreign relations by reaffirming its conventional relations with Joseon. The Qing defeat in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895 ended the Qing-Joseon *Zongfan* system and resulted in the collapse of the politico-cultural Chinese empire. Yet, the legacies of the *Zongfan* system between the two countries persisted, as was shown in the Qing annual imperial calendar (*huangli* 皇曆) that denoted Joseon as an inner province (*neixing* 內省), or a lost vassal state.

Therefore, Wang argues that it was not until after World War II, especially after the Korean War (1950-1953) that China became a modern nation-state capable of recognizing the absolute independence and sovereignty of the Korean state. This argument goes so far as to imply that Republic

can China still subscribed to the idea of the politico-cultural Chinese empire in which Korea was a key part. It was only after Korea became sovereign nations, though divided into two polities, and thus removed from the Chinese politico-cultural empire that China developed into a nation-state system. In other words, Korea in the Joseon and modern eras was of central importance in the construction of the Qing as the Chinese empire and also crucial to China's transformation into a modern nation-state.

## Foundations of the Qing's Relationship with Its Subordinate Countries (*waifan* 外藩)

### 1. Revival of the Conception of *Zongfan* 宗藩

As the conceptual framework of the Qing's foreign relations, Wang employs the *Zongfan* system instead of the tributary system centered on paying tributes (*chaogong* 朝貢) and giving investitures (*cefeng* 冊封). By the time of the Ming, Wang assumes, Joseon was fully committed to the Confucian statecraft ideology of the Ming. The Qing forged the *Zongfan* system with Joseon by force in order to secure the orthodox legitimacy (*zhengtong* 正統) as a Chinese empire and consolidated thereafter the *Zongfan* system in its relations with neighboring countries. Wang chose to employ the term '*Zongfan* system' instead of the more common term 'tributary system' used among Western scholarly circles because the latter has certain shortcomings, as pointed out by many scholars. The tributary system, employed by John K. Fairbank, is a synonym for the 'Chinese world order,' in contrast to the 'treaty system' that he coined to explain the Sino-Western diplomatic relations after the Opium War. As such, the term 'tributary system' has obscured the multiplicity of China's external relations, including the Qing-Joseon relations.

Still, the value of the *Zongfan* frame as a conceptual interpretative tool for explaining the Qing's foreign relations is debatable. The Chinese scholar Li Dalong's 李大龍 study shows that the usage of the term *Zongfan* could date back to the Western Zhou era but it was not until the Song era that the term appeared frequently on historical documents, referring to

members of the imperial family or feudal kings (*fanwang* 藩王), and lasted through the Qing era—that is to say, the term was rarely used to refer to neighboring states.<sup>18</sup> Though not included in Li’s reference, the *Da Ming huidian* 大明會典 (Collected Statutes of the Great Ming) uses the term *Zongfan* in association with the regulations pertaining to feudal kings and not neighboring states like Joseon.

This is not to say, however, that there was no example of Joseon being treated as a *Zongfan*. As an important example of such a treatment, Wang points to the Qing investiture of King Yeongjo (r. 1724-1776)’s grandson Yi San 李祘 (later King Jeongjo r.1776-1800) as the crown successor to the throne. Since the Qing court had not experienced the same kind of situation, the Qianlong emperor ordered the search for appropriate precedents for the title of “crown grandson” (Ch., *shisun*; K., *seson* 世孫). The Board of Rites, after consulting Confucian classics and historical records, found at least two precedents in the Song and Ming periods respectively. The Ming precedent served as a crucial rationale for the investiture of King Yeongjo’s grandson as crown grandson. In the fourth year of the Ming Hongzhi emperor (r. 1487-1505), the eldest son (Zhu Zhenyu 朱真澂) of a princely king (Zhu Gongzong 朱貢鏞) had been invested as the crown prince. However, due to his death, his second son (Zhu Biguang 朱弼枕) was invested as the crown grandson. The Board of Rites asserted that “the outer fan is fundamentally the same as *Zongfan*,” and recommended the emperor to invest Yi San as the crown grandson. Wang interprets this event as an evidence that the Qing treated Joseon as “an extended royal family member of the Middle Kingdom.”<sup>19</sup> He contends that the kinship tie of the *Zongfan* system, traced back to the Zhou feudal system, as well as the Confucian moral principle of benevolent rule was an important reason behind

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<sup>18</sup> Li Dalong, 李大龍, *Cong ‘tianxia’ dao ‘Zhongguo’: duominzu guojia jiangyu lilun jiegou* 從“天下”到“中國”: 多民族國家疆域理論解構 [From ‘all-under-Heaven’ to ‘China’: Deconstruction of the theory of multi ethnic nation], (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2015), pp.191-195. He uses the term *fanshu* 藩屬 (subordinate) instead of *Zongfan* 宗藩.

<sup>19</sup> Wang Yuanchong, *Remaking the Chinese Empire: Manchu-Korean Relations, 1616-1911*, pp.42-43. The issue of “crown grandson” took place in 1763 (the 28th year of Qianlong, or the 29th year of Yeongjo) instead of 1768 in page 42 of the book.

the Qing court's restraint from "provincializing Joseon."<sup>20</sup>

It is true that the Qing court paid special attention to the matter of investing Joseon's royal family members. Though not mentioned in the book, there was one incidence of the Qing court's rejection of Joseon's request for investment of a crown prince. In 1697, King Sukjong(r. 1674-1720) sent an emissary to Beijing asking for the investiture of Yi Yun 李昞, his concubine Lady Jang's son, as the crown prince. But, the Qing court rejected the king's request by way of citing a regulation in the *Da Ming huidian* that appointing the secondary son as crown prince was possible only after the king and queen reached the age of fifty without an heir. The Joseon court maintained that the regulation in point was for the inner fan and not for a foreign state like Joseon. The Qing court decided that Joseon should be regarded as the same as an inner fan,<sup>21</sup> thus treating it as a *Zongfan* member. Nevertheless, I think, it is debatable whether that rule did apply particularly to Joseon or could be extended broadly to other outer fan like Vietnam and Ryukyu. More research is needed to see if the remark that "the outer fan is fundamentally the same as *Zongfan*" is valid and whether similar cases can be found in the Qing's relations with other outer fan other than Joseon.

The *Zongfan* system as an analytical framework began to be used in earnest by Chinese scholars from the 1930s. Shao Xunzheng's 邵循正 M. A. thesis "Zhong Fa Yuenan guanxi shimo" 中法越南關係始末 (An outline of the relations between China, France, and Vietnam), presented to Qinghua University in 1933, defines the Qing-Vietnam relations in the context of the Sino-French War as a *Zongfan* system.<sup>22</sup> Jiang Tingfu's 蔣廷黻 *Jindai*

<sup>20</sup> For a detailed account for the issue of provincializing Korea in the 1880s and the 1890s, see Wang Yuanzhong, "Provincializing Korea: The Construction of the Chinese Empire in the Borderland and the Rise of the Modern Chinese State" *T'oung Pao* 105 (2019), pp.128-182.

<sup>21</sup> Son Sungwook, 손성욱, "Wangseja chaekbong euro bon Cheong Jo gwangye (Ganghui 35 nyeon-Geonryung 2 nyeon)" 王世子 冊封으로 본 淸·朝 관계 (康熙 35년~乾隆 2년) [Qing-Joseon relations (from the 35th year of Kangxi to the 2nd year of Qianlong) seen through the investment of crown grandson], *Dongyang sahak yeon'gu* 동양사학연구 146 (2019), pp.196-206.

<sup>22</sup> Shao Xunzheng 邵循正, Zhong Fa Yuenan guanxi shimo 中法越南關係始末 [An account of relations between China and France, and Vietnam], (Shijiazhuang: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe,

*Zhongguo waijiaoshi ziliao jiyao* 近代中國外交史資料輯要 (Selection of diplomatic materials of modern China) sees the conceptual conflict between China's conventional *Zongfan* system and Western international relationship, based on modern international laws, as one crucial cause of the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895.<sup>23</sup> Chinese scholars in the 1930s put forth the *Zongfan* system as a contradiction to the Western international order rather than as a comprehensive interstate system for explaining China's pre-modern foreign relations,<sup>24</sup> thus displaying their critical attitude toward the late Qing's outdated and incompetent treatment of foreign relations as well as the imperialist aggression of the West. In short, what should not go unnoticed is the fact that the term *Zongfan* was a projection of the nationalistic sentiments in the 1930s among Chinese intellectuals who were deeply concerned with the Qing failure to cope with Western imperialism in the late nineteenth century. Therefore, we need to use the term *Zongfan* with reservation in explaining China's foreign relations before the nineteenth century.

2000).

<sup>23</sup> Jiang Tingfu 蔣廷黻, ed., *Jindai Zhongguo waijiaoshi ziliao jiyao*, zhongjuan, 近代中國外交史資料輯要, 中卷 [Collection of diplomatic materials of modern China], (Shanghai: Shangwu chubanshe, 1934), p.364.

<sup>24</sup> For a study on the conflicts and adaptations of the concept of suzerain rights between China and the West, focused on translation, see Okamoto Takashi 岡本隆司, "Sōshuken to kokusaihō to honyaku: tōhō mondai kara Chōsen mondai e" 宗主權と國際法と翻譯—'東方問題'から'朝鮮問題'へ [Suzerainty, international law, and translation: From the Eastern question to the Korean question], in *Sōshuken no sekaishi: Tōzai Ajia no kindai to honyaku gainen* 宗主權の世界史: 東アジアの近代と翻譯概念 [A world history of suzerainty: A modern history of East and West Asia and translated concepts], ed. Okamoto Takashi 岡本隆司 編, (Nagoya: Nagoya daigaku shuppankai, 2014), pp.90-118. Yu Bada 유바다, "1882 nyeon joyak jangjeong eui chegyeol gwa sokguk banjugiguk Joseon eui gukjebeop jeok jiji" 1882년 조약장정의 체결과 屬國·半主之國 조선의 국제법적 지위 [Conclusion of the 1882 treaties and regulations, and international status of Joseon as a subordinate and semi-independent state], *Yeoksa wa hyeonsil* 역사와 현실 99 (2016); Yi Dongwuk 이동욱, "Cheong mal jongjugweon gwannyeom eui byeonhwa wa Joseon jeongchaek eui jeonhwan" 청말 중주권 관념의 변화와 조선 정책의 전환 [Change in the concept of suzerain rights in the late Qing, and shift of its policy towards Joseon], *Sachong* 사총 96 (2019).

## 2. The ‘Joseon Model’

Wang traces the Qing’s bid for a Chinese empire to the establishment of the Qing-Joseon *Zongfan* system in 1637 previous to the Qing entry into the Chinese inner land through the Shanhai Pass in 1644.<sup>25</sup> Even before its occupation of Beijing in 1644, the Manchu regime, through its frequent contacts with Joseon, converted Joseon into a typical “outer subordinate” (*wai fan* 外藩), and after 1644, developed a mature political relationship model—referred to as the ‘Joseon model’ by Wang—of a Qing-centric *Zongfan* system for managing its relations with other outer subordinates newly incorporated into the system under the jurisdiction of the Board of Rites. The Qing secured its orthodox legitimacy by establishing its *Zongfan* system with Joseon (the ‘Joseon model’), and proceeded to extend its influence on other outer subordinates by applying the ‘Joseon model’ predicated upon sophisticated Confucian rituals. To the Qing, the significance of outer subordinates meant more than just its borderland fence and Joseon was its key component to be preserved for the continuation of such a system.<sup>26</sup>

However, many studies on the Qing-Joseon relations put stress on the uniqueness of Joseon’s position, distinguishable from other outer subordinates under the jurisdiction of the Board of Rites. In addition to the disagreement on seeing Joseon as the representative pattern/model of outer subordinates, some Korean scholars like Koo Bumjin, Kim Changsu, and Yi Jaegyong have demonstrated the distinctive nature of Joseon’s position from that of other tributary states like Annam (Vietnam) and Ryukyu.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Wang Yuanchong, *Remaking the Chinese Empire: Manchu-Korean Relations, 1616-1911*, p.7.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p.8, p.55.

<sup>27</sup> Koo Bumjin 구범진, “Cheong eui Joseon sahaeng inson gwa ‘dae Cheong jeguk cheje’” 淸의 朝鮮使行 人選과 ‘大清帝國體制’ [Selection of the Qing emissaries to Joseon, and the system of ‘great Qing empire’], *Inmun nonchong* 人文論叢 59 (2008); Kim Changsu 김창수, “Cheong eui joseo banpo sasin eul tonghae bon Joseon eui jiwu” 淸의 詔書 반포 사신을 통해 본 조선의 지위 [Joseon’s status seen through the Qing’s imperial edicts and emissaries], *Yeoksa wa hyeonil* 역사와 현실 89 (2013); Yi Jaegyong 이재경, “Dae Cheong jeguk cheje nae Joseon gukwang eui bopjeok wising—gukwang e dachan euicheo beoleun eul jungsim euiro” 大清帝國體制 내

Wang, however, maintains that the Qing-Joseon *Zongfan* system should not be seen as a specific case of the *Zongfan* system. Instead, the relationship can be best understood as “a prototype that shaped the formation of the Qing’s *Zongfan* system and helped the Manchu regime transform its political identity” into the civilized center of the known world and secure its orthodox legitimacy in East Asian international relations.<sup>28</sup>

This argument, however, raises some questions. First, the subjugation of Joseon begs the question that the Qing aimed to declare itself as a legitimate Chinese empire. In the second Manchu invasion of Joseon in 1636, Hongtaiji enumerated the acts of Joseon that led to his campaign against it. These include Joseon’s obstinate loyalty to the Ming, its refusal to send congratulatory envoys on the occasion of his enthronement as emperor, its defiance against the Mandate of Heaven bestowed on the Qing, and the preparation for the war with the Qing.<sup>29</sup> Hongtaiji made it clear that the subjugation of Joseon was the first crucial step to reconstruct the Manchu regime as a Chinese empire by appropriating terminologies reserved for an empire, such as the ‘Son of Heaven,’ and the Chinese world of ‘all-under-Heaven.’ Still, what is questionable is how much important Joseon was to the Qing in the making of a legitimate empire.

Following the famous Dalinghe 大凌河 battle, on the eighteenth day of the sixth month of the seventh year of the Tiancong 天聰 reign (1633), Hongtaiji consulted with Gusaeojeon and other generals over the first target of attack among the Ming, Joseon, and the Chahar Mongols. A general agreement among the participants was that for Joseon, given the peace treaty already in force, it should not be a priority. Gusaeojeon, in particular, maintained that as soon as the Jin 金 would take hold of the “inner land”

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조선국왕의 법적 위상-국왕에 대한 議處·罰銀을 중심으로 [Legal status of Joseon kings in Qing imperial jurisdiction— with a focus on the Qing court’s deliberations on penalties and the silver fines imposed on them], *Minjok munhwa yeon’gu* 民族文化研究 83 (2019).

<sup>28</sup> Wang Yuanhong, *Remaking the Chinese Empire: Manchu-Korean Relations, 1616-1911*, pp.59-60.

<sup>29</sup> Zhang Cunwu and She Quanhong 張存武, 葉泉宏, ed., *Qing ruguan qian yu Chaoxian wanglai guoshu huibian, 1619-1643* 清入關前與朝鮮往來國書彙編: 一六一九-一六四三 [Collection of state letters exchanged between the Qing and Joseon, 1619-1643], (Taipei: Guoshiguan, 2000), pp.193-198.

(neidi 內地; mainland China), Joseon would submit to it naturally.<sup>30</sup> His remark can be construed to mean that the Manchu regime could achieve its legitimacy by conquering the Ming rather than Joseon. It is unlikely that in less than four years, the subjugation of Joseon was considered indispensable by the Qing leaders in their quest for legitimacy as a Chinese empire. Rather, what was at stake was not so much the legitimacy as a Chinese empire as the imperial prestige of Hongtaiji who had already possessed emperorship. Hongtaiji's enthronement ceremony, which he desired to hold in unanimous acknowledgment of his "brotherly" state, was done imperfectly because of Joseon's decline to send a congratulatory mission, damaging his imperial authority. As Koo Bumjin, it seems that the second Manchu invasion was carried out for the purpose of securing the legitimacy of Hongtaiji's imperial pretension by completing his previously imperfect enthronement ceremony on the soil of Joseon, far from securing the legitimacy needed for claiming a Chinese empire.<sup>31</sup> The second Manchu invasion shifted the Qing-Joseon relationship from one between elder brother and younger brother to one between monarch and subject.

What is debatable is to what extent the Qing could institutionalize its relations with Joseon on the base of the ritual model during the period from 1637 to 1644 when it crossed the Great Wall. The Qing instituted the system of Six Boards as the mainstay of central administration and put the Board of Rites in charge of diplomatic ritual when exchanging envoys with neighboring states. Following the Ming protocol, the Joseon court was made to send tributary missions to the Qing emperor regularly, instead of sending communication missions for friendship with neighbors (named *chunsinsa* 春信使 and *chusinsa* 秋信使). In addition, the Joseon court was given a newly cast golden seal to be used for its communication with the Qing court, and the format of its state letter was determined to denote its

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<sup>30</sup> Bak Minsu 박민수, "Cheong eui ipgwan gwa giin cui Bukgyeong iju yeon'gu" 清의 入關과 旗人の 北京 移住 研究 [Study on the Qing's crossing of the Great Wall, and migration of bannermen to Beijing], Ph. D. dissertation, Seoul National University (2017), pp.25-27.

<sup>31</sup> Koo Bumjin 구범진, Byeongja horan, Hongtaiji eui jeonjaeng 병자호란, 홍타이지의 전쟁 [Second Manchu invasion of 1636: Hongtaiji's war], (KKachi, 2019), pp.64-71.

subordinate position vis-à-vis the Qing.

Establishment of these ritual formalities notwithstanding, the matters of practical importance between the two states were handled not by the Board of Rites but by the Board of Revenue. It was Inggūldai and Mafuta, two top Manchu generals in charge of the contents of tribute items and state letters. In fact, the affairs related to the erection of the stele of Samjeondo 三田渡碑, such as its inscription and size, were put under the management of the Board of Revenue. Considering the wartime conditions, the full prolonged performance of tributary rituals might not be advisable. As a result, the ritual practices by Joseon emissaries were not performed with punctiliousness, with no advance sessions to rehearse the complicated ceremonies in front of the imperial audience, not a few of which were skipped.<sup>32</sup> Hence, the Qing's commitment to building a 'Joseon model' based on the ritual practices can be called into question. Rather, it seems to me that the Qing, at least in its inauguration period, was more interested in the leverage power that the ritual practices could produce with a view to enacting a strict hierarchical relationship with Joseon.

Significantly, the ritual relationship with Joseon under the management of the Board of Rites began in earnest with the first incorporation of a former Ming tributary system into the Qing-centric world order after the Qing occupation of Beijing in 1644. In the second month of 1653 (the tenth year of Shunzhi reign), the Ryukyu kingdom sent the envoy Ma Zongyi 馬宗毅 to return the imperial seal once bestowed by the Ming court. His mission arrived in Fujian in the fifth month, and in Beijing early next year. The envoy received an imperial seal with the inscription "Seal of the King of Ryukyu" in Manchu and Chinese. Previously, in the sixth month of 1653, the Joseon king was given an identical seal with the inscription both in Manchu and Chinese, replacing the one inscribed only in Manchu letters. These two simultaneous events indicate that Joseon was also a part of the Qing effort to reorganize former Ming tributary states into the jurisdic-

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<sup>32</sup> Son Sungwook 손성욱, "Cheong jogongguk sasin euirye eui hyeongseong gwa byeonhwa" 清朝貢國使臣儀禮의形成과變化 [Formation and change of the ritual procedures of the Qing's tributary states], *Dongyang sahak yeon'gu* 東洋史學研究 143 (2018), pp.277-279.

tion of the Board of Rites.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, in the same year, the Qing fully implemented the edict of 1644 (the first year of Shunzhi's reign) that the Board of Rites be the single channel in contacts and exchanges with the Joseon court.<sup>34</sup>

The 'Joseon model' is Wang's rendering of the Chinese terms *Chaoxian shili* 朝鮮事例 or *Chasoxian zhi li* 朝鮮之例, which first appeared in the Later Jin (1616-1636) historical materials in 1629 (the second year of Tiancong's reign). In a policy memorial toward the Ming submitted to Hongtaiji, Gao Hongzhong 高鴻中, a Han Chinese scholar serving the Later Jin, suggested that "if the Ming would want a peace agreement, depending on their genuine intent, we (the Later Jin) will follow the 'Joseon model' to receive the [Ming] investiture of kingship and to use the [Ming] regnal title to count the date."<sup>35</sup> Conventionally, the status of Joseon as an outer *fan* of the Ming had been manifested in its reception of the Ming investiture of kingship and use of the Ming calendar.

Another example of the 'Joseon model,' Wang argues, came out in the 1660s when Zheng Jing 鄭經 negotiated with the Qing to retain his occupation of Taiwan. The Qing was trying to persuade him to surrender to the Qing but Zheng insisted on "following the 'Joseon model' (*zhao Chaoxian shili* 照朝鮮事例)," by which he meant to enter into tributary relation with the Qing without adopting the Qing hair style and costume, thus securing for Taiwan an independent status like that of Joseon. However, the Kangxi emperor rejected his proposal on the grounds that Joseon was "always a foreign state" (*conglai suoyou zhi waiguo* 從來所有之外國),<sup>36</sup> thereby making a clear distinction between foreign state (*waiguo* 外國) and

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<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.282-283.

<sup>34</sup> Kim Changsu 김창수, "Joseon Cheong oegyo munseo eui gyoseop gyeongno wa Seonggyeong eui yeokhal" 조선·청 외교문서의 교섭경로와 성격의 역할 [Communication channels of the diplomatic documents between the Qing and Joseon, and the role of Shengjing], *Yeoksa wa hyeonsil* 역사와 현실 107 (2018), p.158.

<sup>35</sup> Wang Yuancong, *Remaking the Chinese Empire: Manchu-Korean Relations, 1616-1911*, 28. The memorial was presented in 1629 (the 3rd year of Tiancong) instead of 1630 in the page 28 of the book.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p.52, p.56.

inner subordinate (*neifan* 內藩) to which Taiwan belonged.

However, it is insufficient to invariably equate the ‘Joseon model’ with a standard model applicable to all other outer *fan* of the Qing. The tributary relations had been ostensibly manifested through granting Chinese investitures (political legitimacy) and having tributary states accepting the Chinese calendar (cultural hegemony). This is best exemplified by frequent visits of Joseon emissaries to Beijing in the Ming era. Gao Hongzhong and Zheng Jing must have been very familiar with such Joseon tributary practices and hence cited them as a precedent that could be followed in their times as well. In order to strengthen the ‘Joseon model’ as the general norm for all other outer *fan* within the Qing Chinese empire, further research must gather more concrete examples regarding the hegemonic narratives of the Manchu regime.

The term *Chasoxian zhi li* 朝鮮之例 often appeared when the Qing “followed the model of Joseon” (*zhao Chaoxian zhi li* 照朝鮮之例) in its ritualized contacts with other outer *fan* such as Annam, Ryukyu, and Siam.<sup>37</sup> Since Joseon had been the first outer *fan* to the Qing and well known for the frequent visits of its emissaries to the Qing court, Joseon’s ritualized contacts with the Qing had left many precedents (K., *jeollye* 前例) for the later outer *fan* to follow. It is debatable whether these precedents were taken by the Qing as standard models (K., *jeollye* 典例) from the beginning onwards.

Moreover, in my view, it is also debatable whether the term *Chasoxian zhi li* retained the same connotations even in later periods of the Qing, especially in the later Qianlong 乾隆 era when the term was used more frequently than earlier times with the extension of banquet ceremonies hosted by the emperor.<sup>38</sup> If Wang takes the term *Chasoxian zhi li* to be

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p.72.

<sup>38</sup> Song Sungwook, “Cheong jogongguk sasin cuirye eui hyeongseong gwa byeonhwa,” pp.280-294; Koo Bumjin 구범진, “Cheong Geonryung yeon’gan oebon yeonrye eui byeonhwa wa Geonryung eui ‘seongse’” 清 乾隆 연간 外藩宴禮의 변화와 乾隆의 ‘盛世’ [Changes in the banquet ceremonies for emissaries from outer *fan*, and the prosperity of the Qianlong era], *Yeoksa munhwa yeon’gu* 역사문화연구 68 (2018), pp.170-182.

synonymous with the ‘Joseon model,’ there is a possibility that the ‘Joseon model’ from the early Qing could be different in nature from the same model in the later Qianlong era. As a matter of fact, Huang Zhilian’s recent study informs that banquet ceremonies for emissaries during the Qianlong era represented a regression of the traditional (Ming) “rule by ritual (*lizhi* 禮治) of the Heavenly Dynasty” during the Ming dynasty.<sup>39</sup> Apart from his criticism against the Qianlong emperor’s proclivity for ostentation, Huang’s study reveals that there was a marked change in the way the emissaries were treated in the Qianlong era from that of the early Qing, which bore much similarity with the Ming practices. Along this line, it is certain that the thesis of a consistent ‘Joseon model’ from the early Qing should be reconsidered.

## Expansion and Maintenance of the Chinese Empire (*Zhonghua diguo* 中華帝國)

### 1. Conceptual Expansion of the Chinese Empire

A number of recent studies regarding the Qing, such as those of the ‘New Qing History’ with Manchu ethnic perspectives and the Qing historical studies in Japan with the focus on its Inner Asian nature are opposed to those studies approaching the Qing as a Chinese empire.<sup>40</sup> Featuring the multifaceted nature of the Qing, Pamela K. Crossley explains that the Qing rulers were supposed to perform manifold roles as the Son of Heaven of the Middle Kingdom, Great Khan of the Mongol world, and ‘wheel-turning king’ of the Tibetan Buddhist realm. In the process, the Qing was able

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<sup>39</sup> Huang Zhilian 黄枝连, *Tianzhao lizhi tixi yanjiu, xia, Chaoxian de ruhua qingjing guozao: Chaoxian wangchao yu Man Qing wangchao de guanxi xingtai lun* 天朝禮治體系研究 下 (朝鮮的儒化情境構造朝鮮王朝與滿清 王朝的關係形態論) [Study on the rule of rituals by the Heavenly Dynasty, part 2—The context and structure of Joseon’s Confucianization: Relationship between the Joseon dynasty and the Manchu Qing dynasty], Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe, 1994), pp.471-488.

<sup>40</sup> Kim Seonmin 김선민, “Cheong jeguk eui jibae inyeom gwa jibae cheje” 청 제국의 지배이념과 지배체제 [Ruling ideology and system of the Qing], *Sachong* 사총 88 (2016).

to define itself as a universal empire embracing a variety of ethnic groups and polities and moving beyond a Chinese dynasty.<sup>41</sup>

In contrast, Wang posits the idea of the Chinese empire as an overarching framework of the world order to dominate and embrace diverse ethnic polities on the grounds that it based its legitimacy on its position as the civilized center of the known world. Under this universalistic Chinese empire, the emperor as the Son of Heaven held the Mandate of Heaven and exercised a hegemonic control over the peripheral states who accepted their subordinate status vis-à-vis the emperor. Here, the Chinese empire does not refer to an empire of ethnic Han Chinese but a universalistic politico-cultural empire whose ideology and civilization could be shared by its surrounding states.

Furthermore, Wang draws our attention to the fact that Hongtaiji, even before crossing the Great Wall into Beijing in 1644, had already defined his Manchu regime as the Chinese empire on the occasion of his assuming the emperorship, and in so doing defines the hierarchical *Zongfan* system with Joseon as the best resource to support the Qing regime's legitimacy as the Chinese empire. He, thus, underlines the Manchu regime's initiation to transform itself into a Chinese empire "even if it had remained in Manchuria and had not crossed the Great Wall in 1644"<sup>42</sup> to intimate that the Chinese empire in politico-cultural terms could transcend ethnic boundaries.

While the 'New Qing History' school and Chinese scholars have engaged in a debate over the extent to which the Manchu ruling class, including the Qing rulers, identified themselves as having Sino-centric attributes, Wang's research interest lies in tracing the trajectory of the Qing as a Chinese empire through its relations with Joseon. The non-Chinese or Inner Asian elements within the Qing are not Wang's primary subject of research. Hence, it will be of little use to raise questions about the issues outside of the book's purview. The scope of Wang's research is restricted to

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<sup>41</sup> Pamela Kyle Crossley, "The Rulerships of China," *American Historical Review* 97:5 (1992), pp.1468-1483; Pamela Kyle Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), pp.223-246.

<sup>42</sup> Wang Yuanhong, *Remaking the Chinese Empire: Manchu-Korean Relations, 1616-1911*, p.32.

the Qing's foreign relations with outlying subordinate states under the management of the Board of Rites, and the institutions and practices that the Qing had largely inherited from the Ming. It is beyond question that the very field of his research abounds in evidence of the Qing's adoption of elements of Chinese civilization.

All the same, some of the book's arguments require critical re-evaluation. The book clings to the Qing-centric *Zongfan* system. The 'Joseon model,' in spite of a forced practice under the *Zongfan* hierarchical system, did help both parties to secure their orthodox legitimacy within the Qing-centric world order. Generally speaking, Wang thinks, it is in the Qing's relations with its neighboring states that mutual consent rather than unilateral coercion was the order of the day. Following Joseon, the kingdom of Ryukyu, once a tributary state of the Ming, was incorporated into the Qing-centric system of foreign relations. In 1647, following the Qing armies' occupation of the Zhejiang and Fujian provinces, the Shunzhi emperor issued an imperial edict proclaiming pacification of the Central Plain (i.e., China proper) and demanded that the Ming's outer *fan* such as Ryukyu and Annam return their seals given by the Ming and receive investiture from him. However, Ryukyu, observing the shifts of the fortunes of the Ming dynasty in the south, did not return the Ming seal and investiture until 1653.<sup>43</sup>

To be certain, it is hard to deny that the incorporation of the Qing's major outer *fan* like Joseon, Ryukyu, and Annam into the Qing-centric world order was prompted not only via the politico-cultural rationales, but also by the formidable Qing military. Even though these states conceded to the Qing's claim in replacing the Ming in its asymmetrical foreign relations, conducted on the basis of the former established rituals, their seemingly willingness should be appreciated with a degree of reservation. The room for power politics in the interactions between the Qing and these

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<sup>43</sup> Wu Yuanfeng 吳元豐, "Qingchu Liuqiuguo wangjiu Ma Zongyi shihua ji qi yiyi" 清初琉球國王舅馬宗毅使華及其意義 [A Ryukyu emissary Ma Zongyi in the early Qing, and its significance], *Qingshi yanjiu* 清史研究 2017-2 (2017). For another outer *fan*, Annam, which followed Ryukyu, see Sun Hongnian 孫宏年, *Qingdai Zhong Yue Zongfan guanxi yanjiu* 清代中越宗藩關係研究 [Study on the Sino-Vietnamese *Zongfan* relations in the Qing era], (Harbin: Heilongjiang jiaoyu chubanshe, 2006), pp.1-15.

states should be taken into account given that the assumed legitimacy of the Qing as the civilized center of the world was not immune to the internal challenges from divergent political and cultural forces of the Qing from within.

Wang also states that the military campaigns during the Qianlong period (1735-1796) extended the Qing's territory to its peak and he intensified the efforts to reinforce the Qing's identity of Chineseness and its status as the civilized center of the world while upholding the rhetoric of the "great one unity" (*da yitong* 大一統). Accordingly, Wang sees the period of 1762-1861 as a maturation of the Qing's claim to be the civilized center of the world and maintains that "the Qing eventually prevailed over Joseon" in a contested discourse about the politico-cultural legitimacy. In order to illustrate the changing perceptions toward the Qing among some of the Joseon intellectuals, Wang enumerates the three figures of the School of Northern Learning (Bukhak pa 北學派)—Hong Daeyong, Bak Jega, and Bak Jiweon. Bak Jiweon 朴趾源 (1737-1805), who, in his *Rehe Diary* (*Yeolha ilgi* 熱河日記), used the Qing regnal title to date his arrival in Beijing on August 30, 1780. Wang counts this event as a sign of Bak's embracing of the *Zongfan* ideology by acknowledging the Qing as the civilized center.

Still, Wang's argument that by the late eighteenth century Joseon basically accepted the Qing as the Chinese empire and that there occurred a reversal of the discourse on the civilized status between the Qing and Joseon needs some more critical revision. It is true that many Joseon emissaries in Beijing witnessed the firm conviction of the Qing rulers, in particular, the Yongzheng and Qianlong Emperors, that the Qing inherited the status of the civilized center from the previous Ming. It is also true that many Joseon intellectuals came to understand the concept of civilized status as cutting across ethnic and national boundaries,<sup>44</sup> whereby changing their

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<sup>44</sup> For the issue of the role ethnicity and nationality played in Joseon Koreans' view on *Zhonghua* 中華 (civilized center), see Kye Seungbum 계승범, "Joseon hugi Joseon Junghwa jueui wa geu haeseok munje" 조선후기 조선 중화주의와 그 해석문제 [Late Joseon Koreans' view on Zhonghua, and the question of its interpretation], *Hanguksa yeon'gu* 한국사연구 159 (2012); U Gyeongseop

perception of the Qing as an uncivilized state.

But, to the eyes of the Joseon ruling elites in general, the Qing was still in short of civilizing influence (K., *gyohwa* 教化), still wearing the Manchu hairstyle and robes. Furthermore, numerous scholars in Joseon still used the reign title of the last emperor of the Ming, Chongzhen 崇禎 to record dates. A state ceremony to commemorate the Ming Wanli emperor 萬曆帝, who was believed to have saved Joseon from the Japanese invasions of the 1590s, also continued to be performed in the Great Altar for Gratitude (*Daebodan* 大報壇). Despite Joseon's demonstration of its loyalty to the Qing court, I believe, these acts of defiance clearly show Joseons' deep rooted antipathy against the Qing of the Manchu origin and reluctance to fully acknowledge the claim of the Manchu regime to be the civilized center of the known world.

## 2. Unchanged *Zongfan* 宗藩 Conventions?

The three key issues—sovereignty, borders, and subjectivity—in the relationship between China and its outer *fan* came to the fore as the Western powers made their inroad into the Chinese world. Wang alleges that this relationship was not determined by China's "suzerainty" but by the each side's acknowledgment of "mutually constitutive legitimacy" buttressed by Confucian political ideology.<sup>45</sup> Within the *Zongfan* system, the issues of sovereignty, borders, and subjectivity were not complex but became the source of conflicts with the Western powers who tried to apply the international law and norms to the Qing's foreign relations with its neighboring states. The book shows that the Qing's incorporation of the outer *fan* in politico-cultural terms remained unchanged until the end of the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895, and that it was only through the decline of this po-

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우경섭, "Joseon Junghwa jueui e daehan haksol jeok geomto" 조선중화주의에 대한 학설사적 검토 [Theoretical review of Joseon Koreans' view of *Zhonghua*], *Hanguksa yeon'gu* 한국사연구 159 (2012); Kim Yeongmin 김영민, "Joseon Junghwa jueui eui jaegomto" 조선중화주의의 재검토 [Review of Joseon Koreans' view of *Zhonghua*], *Hanguksa yeon'gu* 한국사연구 162 (2013).

<sup>45</sup> Wang Yuanchong, *Remaking the Chinese Empire: Manchu-Korean Relations, 1616-1911*, p.12.

litico-cultural empire that a modern Chinese state emerged after 1895. According to Wang, as the most cardinal component of the politico-cultural empire of the Qing, Joseon was the top priority in the Qing's protection of its outer *fan*.

Following the end of the Second Opium War of 1856-1860, the Qing's relations with Western countries changed. The West entered into a series of modern treaties with the Qing, established permanent diplomatic representatives in Beijing, and began to take interest in approaching the Qing tributary state of Joseon. As a result, Joseon was about to make its appearance on the new international order insisted on by the West.<sup>46</sup> France and the United States executed military expeditions against Joseon in 1866 and 1871 respectively. These ended without the intended results due to the strong resistance from Joseon.

In the course of these armed conflicts and negotiations, the issue of Joseon's relationship with the Qing and its international status came to the fore and the two Western states pushed the Qing to clarify the definition of its relationship with and responsibility for Joseon. The Qing, Wang avers, made it clear that Joseon as a subordinate state possessed the right of self-

<sup>46</sup> F. C. Jones, "Foreign Diplomacy in Korea, 1866-1894," Ph. D. Dissertation, Harvard University (1935); Gweon Hyeoksu 權赫秀, "Byeong'in yang'yo was Jungguk Cheong jeongbu eui daeung yeon'gu" 병인양요와 중국 청정부의 대응 연구 [French invasion of 1866, and the response of the Qing government], *Baeksan hakbo* 백산학보 63 (2003); Kim Weonmo 金源模, *Geundae Han Mi gyoseopsa* 近代韓美交涉史 [History of contacts between Korea and the U. S. in the modern era], (Hongseongsa, 1979); Bak Ilgeun 朴日根, *Miguk eui gaeguk jeongchaek gwa Han Mi oegyogwangye* 美國의 開國政策과 韓美外交關係 [Policy of the U. S. for opening Korea, and Korea-U. S. diplomatic relations], (Ilchogak, 1981); Gweon Hyeoksu 權赫秀, "1871 nyeon eui sinmi yangyo wa Jungguk Cheong jeongbu eui daeung yeon'gu" 1871년의 辛未洋擾와 中國 清政府의 應對 研究 [Study on the American invasion of 1871, and the Qing government's response], in *Geundae Han Jung gwangyesa eui jaejomyeong* 近代 韓中關係史의 再照明 [Rethinking of Sino-Korean relations in the modern era], (Hyeon, 2007), pp.51-77; Kirk W. Larsen, *Tradition, Treaties, and Trade: Qing Imperialism and Chosŏn Korea, 1850-1910*, pp.43-61; Jiang Bo 姜博, "Yangrao zhong de tianchao: xifang qinrao Chaoxian yu Qing zhengfu de yingdui" 洋擾中的天朝: 西方侵擾朝鮮與清政府的應對 [Heavenly dynasty during the Western invasions: Joseon under attack from the West, and the Qing government's response], M. A. thesis, Shandong University (2016); Son Sungwook 손성욱, "'Oegyog' eui gyunyeol gwa mosaek: 1860-1870 nyeondae Cheong Jo gwangye" '外交'의 균열과 모색: 1860~70년대 清·朝관계 [Diplomatic rupture and undertaking: the Qing-Joseon relations in the 1860s and 1870s], *Yeoksa hakbo* 역사학보 240 (2018).

rule (Ch., *zizhu*; K., *jaju* 自主). Wang attributes “a range of conceptual, textual, ideological, and epistemological conflicts between China and its Western counterparts” during the expeditions to the discrepancies in understanding the different norms of international relations between Chinese officials and their Western counterparts. Western countries no longer regarded Joseon as a tributary of the Qing but considered it as a state with independent sovereignty for which China did not take responsibility.<sup>47</sup> As for the Qing, however, Joseon remained a central part of its politico-cultural empire, in addition to its strategic value for state security on its eastern border.

As Wang points out, there was a discrepancy in the understanding of the Chinese term *shuguo* 屬國 or *shubang* 屬邦 (subordinate state) between the Qing officials and Western diplomats. The Western diplomats found that the relationship, as had been conventionally conducted between the Qing and Joseon, was of a puzzling nature in terms of Western international norms applied to sovereign states. They turned to the relationship of suzerain and vassal as the closest framework of international relations so as to accommodate East Asian interstate relations to a Western interpretive setting. The Qing officials, however, asserted that Joseon was a *shuguo* of the Qing while Joseon managed its own affairs with its right of *zizhu* 自主 (self-rule) without any interference from the Qing. Western diplomats in East Asia generally interpreted this declaration as a formalistic one, with the Qing exercising little power over Joseon, to allow the Western states to apply their international system to East Asia.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Wang Yuanchong, *Remaking the Chinese Empire: Manchu-Korean Relations, 1616-1911*, p.125, p.131.

<sup>48</sup> For conflicts and adaptations of the conventional concept of subordinate state in the context of international law, see Yu Bada, 유바다, “19 segi jugweon gukga jilseo ha banju sokguk Joseon eui jjiwi” 19세기 주권국가 질서 하 半主·屬國 조선의 지위 [Status of semi-independent, subordinate Joseon under the international order of sovereign states in the nineteenth century], *Gukje beophakhoe nonchong* 국제법학회논총 62-2 (2017); Kim Bongjin 김봉진, “Joseon=sokguk, sokbang’ eui gaenyem sa” ‘조선 = 속국(屬國), 속방(屬邦)’의 개념사 [Conceptual history of Joseon as subordinate state], *Hanguk dongyang jeongchi sasang sa yeon’gu* 한국동양정치사상사연구 18-1 (2019); Yi Dongwuk 이동욱, “Cheong mal gukjobop beonyeok gwa ‘beonsok’ gwallyeon gaenyem eui hwakjang” 청말 국제법 번역과 ‘藩屬’ 관련 개념의 의미 확장 [Translation of

Both the Qing and the Western powers were willing to use military forces to move Joseon into their desired foreign relationship: the *Zongfan* or ‘tributary’ relationship for the Qing and the international relationship based on international law for the Western powers respectively. Yet, during the Korean crises of 1866 and 1871 when the French and the Americans invaded Joseon, there was a bare possibility of any Qing military intervention because the Second Opium War and the suppression of the Taiping Rebellion with the military aid from Britain and France held the Qing on the defensive in potential military conflicts with Western powers until the 1880s. The Qing’s defensive position was testified at the time of the impending French invasion of Joseon in 1866. The minister of the Board of Rites Wan Qingli 萬青藜 warned the Joseon envoy in Beijing, Yu Hujo 柳厚祚, that “even if [your state] would be unable to make peace with [the French], it is completely inadvisable to ask for military aid [from the Qing]. The distance is too far to give any timely help and [the Qing] cannot afford to raise an army. An unfulfilled promise would only make things worse. [your state] may well ask the Middle Kingdom to assume a role of mediator with its reasonable measures.”<sup>49</sup>

In the 1880s, the Qing carried out interventionist policies in handling the affairs of Joseon. Wang does not see this transformation of the Qing policy toward Joseon in light of an imperialist approach, but interprets it in the context of fulfilling its commitment to keep the *Zongfan* system of which Joseon constituted the key component. As an instance of the Chinese role in the *Zongfan* system, Wang locates the justification given by Li Shuchang 黎庶昌, the Qing minister in Tokyo, that by dispatching Qing soldiers to Joseon in the 1882 mutiny, the Qing was following the principle of cherishing the small (*zixiao* 字小) where China was the “patriarch of a family” (*jiazhang* 家長) and had the obligation to investigate the “houses of his

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international law in the late Qing, and conceptual expansion of the term *beonsok* ‘藩屬’ (subordinate)], *Jungguk geunhyeondae sa yeon’gu* 중국근현대사연구 80 (2018).

<sup>49</sup> “Sang busa jae Bukgyeong si pildam” 上副使在北京時筆談 [Brush talks by vice envoy while in Beijing], in *Eoyang surok* 樂洋隨錄 [Writings on defending the sea], edited by Han Ungpil 韓應弼, (Seoul: Kyujanggak Library), 50.

sons or brothers” (*zidi jia* 子弟家) when a problem occurred. Thus, according to Wang, the Qing military intervention was a manifestation of the Qing patriarchal authority over Joseon, acknowledged ever since 1637, not as an act of imperialism in modern times.

Similarly, Wang indicates that the Qing’s detainment of Daeweon’gun 大院君 (1820-1898) from Joseon to Baoding, close to Beijing, was an example for a legitimate exercise of Qing’s power to “punish any official of the *fan* and even to depose the king, if necessary,” as shown by the exile of the Goryeo (918-1392) King Chunghye 忠惠王 (r. 1330-1332/1339-1344) by Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368), and the dethronement of the last king of the Lê Dynasty of Annam by the Qing in 1789. Li Hongzhang 李鴻章 cited the historical precedent of the banishment of two Goryeo Kings, King Chungseon 忠宣王 (r. 1308-1313) and King Chunghye, by the Yuan to the border provinces in order to obtain the approval of Emperor Guangxu 光緒帝 (1875-1908). Yet, in an official instruction to Joseon issued jointly by Ma Jianzhong 馬建忠, Wu Changqing 吳長慶, Ding Ruchang 丁汝昌, and Wei Lunxian 魏綸先, the Qing officials explained that the summon of Daeweon’gun was for investigation, different in nature from the cases of King Chungseon and King Chunghye, and that the Joseon should not be suspicious of the emperor’s intent and should remain settled.<sup>50</sup> Thus, what should not be dismissed is the fact that apart from Li Hongzhang’s statement for punishing unruly *fan* officials the Qing officials on the scene were worried about possible Joseon resentment if Daeweon’gun’s case resulted in punishments similar to those received by the two Goryeo kings. It seems to me that the episode shows that even though the Qing and Joseon took the *Zongfan* hierarchical order for granted, the two parties did not necessarily agree with its *modus operandi*.

In the midst of growing pressure on Joseon from the Western powers since the late 1870s, the Qing initiated the first Sino-Korean treaty of a semi-modern nature as both states adapted to such pressure and attempted

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<sup>50</sup> Gojong sillok 高宗實錄 [Veritable records of King Gojong], gweon 19, the 13th day of the 7th month of the 19th year of Gojong.

to strengthen their mutual ties. Wang interprets this treaty as representing the dual policy toward Joseon adopted by the Qing in endeavors to cope with the conflict with the West in justification of its *Zongfan* conventions. A majority of scholars outside of the Chinese academic circles have tended to interpret the Qing policy toward Joseon after the “Regulations for Maritime and Overland Trade between Qing and Joseon” (K., Jo Cheong sangmin suryuk muyeok jangjeong 朝清商民水陸貿易章程) in 1882 as an imperialist approach to strengthen its suzerain control over Joseon and to pursue its own commercial benefits. In contrast, Wang formulates the “inner dual network” of Sino-Korean contacts on the occasion of the 1882 Sino-Korean Regulations, with the two states keeping the conventional “court-to-court system” while adjusting to the newly created “state-to-state system.”

Wang also argues that the Qing court in the 1880s still adhered to the conventional *Zongfan* rules and precedents in its policies toward Joseon. For example, he cites a lenient and paternal discourse of Emperor Guangxu on the issue of how to treat the illicit crossings of Korean peasants in the borderland between the Qing and Joseon. It is worthy of note that the emperor’s evoking of the *Zongfan* system with the outer *fan* like Joseon was done in contradiction of the serious concerns of local officials with the problems of border trespassing against the imperial principle of the “ancestral [Manchurian] territory.” Nonetheless, it is hardly deniable that when the Qing was set in a competitive position for controlling Korea with other powers in the late nineteenth century, it strove to strengthen its suzerain authority over Joseon.

Wang also sees the “Regulations for Trade at the Border between Jilin and Joseon Whenever Necessary” (K., Gillm Joseon sangmin susi muyeok jangjeong 吉林朝鮮商民隨時貿易章程) in 1883 as another example of the regulations, not a treaty, between the Qing and Joseon based on the “format of bilateral official correspondence in accordance with the *Zongfan* hierarchy.” Wang maintains that the norms expressed in the three trade regulations between the Qing and Joseon by the end of 1883 “continued to serve as a way of institutionalizing the hierarchical relationship,” and “articulating the parties’ identities in the Chinese world,” just as the *Zongfan* discourse had served the same purposes in the 1630s, 1760s, and

1860s.<sup>51</sup> International law was of no concern to the Qing policymakers when it comes to the Sino-Korean relations. According to Wang, the two issues concerning the sovereignty of Joseon—the Qing settlements and the extraterritoriality in the settlements—were negotiated and handled by the two states so that the Qing could practice no imperialism.

It should be noted, however, that the contacts between the Qing and Joseon, conducted in the traditional *Zongfan* framework with little reference to ‘international law,’ do not preclude a possibility of change in the nature of the Sino-Korean relations. The international circumstances of the time were unprecedented and sudden to the extent that the hitherto hegemonic Qing order was put in a relativistic position vis-à-vis the treaty system instituted by a series of modern treaties between the Qing and the Western powers. Such radically altered international circumstances made a tremendous impact on the relationship between the Qing and Joseon. Joseon opened its doors to the Western nations and began to perform state diplomacy with them.

At this juncture, as Joseon had been introduced into an international stage dominated by the Western nations, Wang insists, the Qing government devised a dual system of relationship with Joseon—the overlapping operation of the *Zongfan* framework in the court-to-court contacts and at the same time the treaty system in the two countries’ state-to-state diplomatic relations. Wang tries to verify the continuity of the *Zongfan* system between the two states in which the Qing sent condolence delegations on the occasion of the death of Queen Dowager Jo (Jo daebi 趙大妃) in 1890. Although the Joseon court was reluctant to receive an official condolence on the ground of expense burdens, Yuan Shikai 袁世凱 did his best for the Qing court to dispatch it. Sending an imperial mission to mourn the death of a royal member of Joseon was a routine ritual practice in the traditional tributary relations between the Qing and Joseon.

Hence, Wang explains that this case displays the constant operation

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<sup>51</sup> Wang Yuanchong, *Remaking the Chinese Empire: Manchu-Korean Relations, 1616-1911*, p.6, p.167.

of the *Zongfan* system and that Yuan's request for that was not an act of presumption. As mentioned out in the book, Yuan could not attend the grand ceremony performed by the imperial mission because of his status. Nor did he meet with the imperial envoys. Yet, what was worth noting was that he exerted pressure on the Joseon court to follow his demands for the conventional ritual regulations, such as the king's welcoming of the Qing envoys at outside of the court. In so doing, Yuan desired to show the peculiarity of the *Zongfan* system to the Western diplomats. Furthermore, the fact that Yuan made sure of publishing in English the imperial mission's performance of the condolence rituals for the sake of Queen Dowager Jo<sup>52</sup> testified to the existence of his ulterior motive going beyond simply conforming to the traditional *Zongfan* system.<sup>53</sup>

But, what is unclear is whether Yuan Shikai in Hanseong—Seoul—had the authority to interfere with the matter of sending an imperial mission to Joseon. Wang spotlights the dual diplomacy of court-to-court and state-to-state contacts in the Qing-Joseon relations after 1882, with Yuan Shikai falling on the latter. Yuan, for his part, blurred the line between the court-to-court sphere and the state-to-state sphere by initiating an issue that was supposed to be handled by the Board of Rites. In retrospect, since 1653, the relations of the Qing with Joseon had been placed under the jurisdiction of the Board of Rites, indicative of a return to the established diplomatic norms during the bygone Ming tributary relations, so as to bolster the legitimacy of the Qing as the central civilized empire.

Under these circumstances, Yuan Shikai's initiative can be seen as an interference with the long established arrangement of the Qing government in handling tributary affairs with Joseon. The Qing response to Yuan's interference with tacit understanding signified a growing laxity of the tributary rituals as performed between the two states. In fact, from the early

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<sup>52</sup> Private Secretary to the Imperial Commissioners, *Notes on the Imperial Chinese Mission to Corea*, 1890 (Shanghai, 1892).

<sup>53</sup> Joshua Van Lieu, "The Politics of Condolence: Contested Representations of Tribute in Late Nineteenth-Century Chosŏn-Qing Relations" *Journal of Korean Studies*, vol. 14 no.1 (2009), pp.83-115.

nineteenth century on, the ritual regulations that Joseon envoys kept in Beijing had become increasingly lax.<sup>54</sup> Ever since 1882, the weight of the Qing-Joseon relations shifted to modern state diplomacy and away from the conventional rituals.

Wang interprets the Qing's policy on Joseon in terms of 'Zongfanism' as opposed to the colonialism of the West. He argues that the Qing court's refusal to give official consideration to the proposal from some Qing officials to provincialize Joseon was predicated on the tenets of 'Zongfanism,' as manifested in the early Qing-Joseon relations. Many high-ranking Qing officials and intellectuals, such as Huang Zunxian 黃遵憲 and He Ruzhang 何如璋 in 1880, Zhang Shusheng 張樹聲 and Zhang Peilun 張佩綸 in 1882, Shengyu 盛昱 in 1884, and Kang Youwei 康有為 in 1890, forwarded proposals to either supervise and protect Joseon by dispatching Qing imperial officials or to provincialize it but their proposals had little impact on the Qing court's established policy on Joseon. While the Yuan and the Ming had officially discussed plans for the provincialization of Korea, the Qing court did not bring any issue to official debate.

Even though the Qing court believed that it had the theoretical authority to incorporate Joseon into its territorial empire, it remained committed to *Zongfan* principles in its interactions with Joseon. Both Empress Dowager Cixi 慈禧太后 (1835-1908) and Emperor Guangxu did not listen to proposals to incorporate Joseon into mainland China. The Qing court's perception of Joseon cannot be the same as when it decided to provincialize Xinjiang in 1884 and may explain the difference between the territorial empire and the politico-cultural empire. Then, the perceptions of the Qing court as represented by Empress Dowager Cixi and Emperor Guangxu about contemporary Joseon and international relations may not be as unambiguous as Wang believes. Moreover, now that multiple treaties between Joseon and Western powers were in place and Russia and Japan had keen interests in extending their power into the Korean Peninsula, it is

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<sup>54</sup> Son Sungwook, "Oegyo eui gyunyeol gwa mosaek: 1860-70 nyeondae Cheong Jo gwangye," pp.294-306.

highly unlikely that the Qing could provincialize Joseon.

Since the Sino-Japanese War in 1894, many Qing officials and elites had predicted a disastrous fate of their country. When both the Qing and Japan issued a declaration of war, Wang notes, the former justified the Qing's action under the principle of "cherishing the small (i.e., Joseon)" to protect its outer *fan* within the *Zongfan* system. On the contrary, Japan used European terminologies of international relations such as its treaties with the Qing and Joseon under the international law. The *Zongfan* discourse on defending the politico-cultural frontier of the Qing as a regional hegemon provided the Qing with the rationale for protecting all of its inner *fan* and outer *fan*.

As for the Qing, Wang insists, the Sino-Japanese War was a great cause not only to keep its territorial integrity, but to uphold its ideological legitimacy for its politico-cultural frontier. But, we should not dismiss the fact that the defeat of the Qing by Japan captured the grave failure of the Qing discourse to justify its politico-cultural frontier including Manchuria, Mongolia, Xinjiang, Tibet, and Taiwan. What is more, Wang's argument for the ongoing operation of the *Zongfan* system by the Qing in international relations from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century should be equipped with more academically meticulous clarification able to contextualize a strikingly contingent process of interaction between the Qing and its neighbors and a remarkably open-ended intersection of engagement and counterengagement in East Asia.

## Concluding Remarks

Wang reevaluates the international relations of the Qing in such a way that the Manchu regime began to create a Chinese empire even before crossing the Great Wall in 1644 by subjugating Joseon in 1637 and applying the hierarchical *Zongfan* system to it. This argument is predicated upon three theses of an ethnic and political transcendence of the Qing boundaries; 1) a standardization of the 'Joseon model' as a prototype for the Qing-centric world, 2) a continuity of the *Zongfan* system between the Qing and Joseon for two and half centuries especially from the seventeenth century to the

nineteenth century, and 3) a combination of territorial hegemony and politico-cultural hegemony. The sincere and proactive attitudes of the Manchu ruling elites in appropriating Han Chinese elements in their early stage of empire building may well be seen as a distinguishable feature of the Qing from the traditional Chinese empires. So, it is meaningful for Wang to employ the conceptual framework that illustrates the Qing-centered world order, in particular, its foreign relations with Joseon—the field hitherto less heeded by the Western academia.

Some Korean scholars have also displayed a similar approach to the distinction between territorial empire and politico-cultural empire. Jeon In-gap categorizes the Qing into the ideological empire, in pursuit for the Chinese worldview of civilized center versus barbarian periphery, and the real-world empire in *realpolitik*. According to Jeon, the ideological empire secured its legitimacy by transforming “the Qing-centric world order into a cosmopolitan ideology of international order” while the real-world empire successfully exercised indirect rule over those areas outside of the Qing jurisdiction—what he calls “non-Chinese areas of the Qing”—in alliance with local power-holders.<sup>55</sup> Jeon’s argument that the Qing’s defeat in the Sino-Japanese War in 1895 signified the collapse of the Qing ideological empire is in line with Wang’s argument that it was the politico-cultural empire, less than the territorial empire, that was vanquished in the war.

Yet, Jeon does not regard the Qing as a Chinese empire because “defining two heterodox worlds as a Chinese empire is too Han Chinese vantage point.”<sup>56</sup> Thus, unlike Wang, Jeon does perceive Zhongguo and Chineseness to be of Han Chinese in essence. His view of the Qing may well explain why the Qing did not make persistent efforts to impose Chinese culture on the “non-Chinese areas of the Qing.” Jeon’s view is close to that of Pamela Crossley who regards the Qing as a multifaceted empire far from a Chinese empire. Hence, we must take into account both the Chinese historical point of view and the Inner Asian point of view in observing the

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<sup>55</sup> Jeon In-gap, *Ibid.*, (2012b), p.254.

<sup>56</sup> Jeon In-gap, *Ibid.*, (2012a), p.165.

traits of the Qing hegemony.

Meanwhile, in understanding the Qing as one of the Chinese empires, Wang places legitimacy before ethnicity and focuses on the discourse and actions of the Manchu ruling elites and their Han Chinese supporters. Yet, it should be noted that the polities and groups in Mongolia, Tibet, and Xinjiang under the management of the Lifan yuan 理藩院 (Mongolian Superintendency) were crucial parts of their identities. Moreover, even though the Joseon court officially acknowledged the Qing's position as the civilized center of the world after its military subjugation in 1637, the majority of Joseon intellectuals believed that the civilization of Joseon was more advanced than that of that of the Qing. They believed that the orthodox legitimacy of the Confucian civilization rested with their state, deemed as a "Another Center of Civilization" (*so Junghwa* 小中華), whereas mainland China was occupied by the barbarian Manchus after the collapse of the Ming. What is more, it is an overstatement to say that the nature of that relationship had been uniform throughout the entire period of their interaction. In early Qing, diplomatic issues with Joseon were managed simultaneously by the Lifan yuan and the Board of Rites but after the fall of the Ming in 1644 they were transferred completely to the Board of Rites. And, the Qing interventionist policies in the late 1870s and the early and mid-1880s can be also seen as a reversal to the earlier diplomatic practice of the Qing in the seventeenth century.

That is why more systematic comparative studies need to be required in illuminating the historical, by no means historically retrospective, characteristics of the regional hegemony of the Qing, or what Wang calls the *Zongfan* system. Then, there is a multidimensional explanation in respect of whether any overrepresented concept of the Qing-Joseon relationship may played a role in creating the *Zongfan* system. Alongside this, what is also to be done is further diachronic and structural analyses regarding the historical attributes of the *Zongfan* system for clarifying the Qing's relations with the other outer *fan*, other than Joseon, within East Asia.

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