

Preface

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Research on international relations in Joseon Korea (1392-1910) has revolved around the relations with Ming China (1368-1644) and Qing China (1644-1911). Significant efforts have been made to examine diplomatic rituals, based on the tribute-investiture system, and offer macroscopic explanations regarding the Sino-Korean relationship at that time. However, we need to think more about how to unveil actual issues, lying underneath formalistic rituals, and elucidate the complex and strategic stance of the three states towards various political forces of the others. In this context, the diplomatic line which Joseon maintained with the Later Jin (1616-1636), a Jurchen state before the advent of the Qing, should not be treated as a merely transitional phase but an important preparatory stage for the future Joseon-Qing relationship covered in the ritualistic repertoire of the Joseon-Ming relationship. This special issue contains three papers on Joseon's interstate relations with the Later Jin that became a prelude to its relations with the Qing. The first paper covers how Joseon reorganized its relations with the Jurchens prior to the Later Jin's establishment. The second paper deals with the process through which Hong Taiji (r. 1626-1636) consolidated his rule over the Later Jin as its khan. The third paper not only examines the way Hong Taiji orchestrated an invasion of Joseon once the Later Jin's relations with Joseon fell apart during the Later Jin's transformation into the Qing, but

also scrutinizes how documentation of such events was tampered with. In so doing, the three papers feature Joseon's relations with the Later Jin from different perspectives. While the first presents the relations from Joseon's perspective that regarded the Later Jin as a Jurchen polity, the second focuses on the Later Jin's policy towards Joseon, and the third traces how the Joseon-Later Jin relations became restructured into the Joseon-Qing relations as the former fell apart. These diverse angles will help offer a more comprehensive understanding about the reality of Joseon's relations with the Later Jin, lead to new interpretations about Joseon's relations with the Qing, and ultimately encourage further research regarding the historical structure and pattern of international relations in Northeast Asia.