

The Qing's Military Deception and Manipulation of the *Qing Veritable Records*: A Critical Analysis of the Records of Diplomatic Contacts on the Eve of the 1637 Qing Invasion of Joseon Korea*

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A Question Raised: Did the Qing Actually Deliver Joseon an Ultimatum?

The Manchu/Qing invasion of Joseon Korea, which took place in the 12th lunar month of the 14th year of King Injo's 仁祖 reign and the first year of the Chongde 崇德 (lofty virtue) reign of Hong Taiji, has been remembered as one of the momentous events bringing about crucial changes in the East Asian world order during the first half of the 17th century. In recent years, this war has attracted general public attention as the subject of novels and movies in Korea, against the backdrop of changes in international conditions surrounding the Korean Peninsula, and academia has also responded by presenting higher-level research results than in the past.¹ There was a solid harvest of research publications in 2019 in par-

* This translated article is a reviewed and supplemented version of Bumjin Koo, 「병자호란 전야 외교 접촉의 실상과 청의 기만 작전, 그리고 『청태종실록』의 기록 조작」, 『동양사연구』 150 (March, 2020): 253-298.

¹ Concerning the recent research on the Manchu/Qing invasion of Joseon in early 1637, Han Myeonggi, Oh Soochang, Heo Taegu, Jang Jeongsu and Bumjin Koo are active in Korea, as are Suzuki Kai and Tsuji Yamato in Japan. For a few of Korean scholars' research results, refer to the reference list of monographs introduced in footnote 2 below.

ticular, with several monographs on the Manchu/Qing Invasion of Joseon.² Interesting academic discussions have also taken place over the causes of the war's outbreak, as well as the issue of responsibility.³

In the discussions until now, the decisive incident that caused the war's outbreak has been seen as either that of the third lunar month of 1636, when the so-called “decree of severing relations” (*jeolhwa gyoseo* 絶和教書) was issued by the Joseon court, and shortly thereafter intercepted by the Later Jin envoys, or that of the fourth lunar month of the same year, when a Joseon embassy led by Na Deokheon 羅德憲 refused the request to kneel down three times, each time making three prostrations (Ch. *San gui jiu koutou* 三跪九叩頭), at the magnificent ceremony in which Hong Taiji assumed his imperial title, thereby seriously damaging

² Bumjin Koo 구범진, 2019, *Byeongja horan, Hong Taiji ui jeonjaeng* 병자호란, 홍타이지의 전쟁 [The Manchu/Qing Invasion of Joseon: Hong Taiji's War], Seoul: Kkachi Geulbang; Heo Taegu 허태구, 2019, *Byeongja horan gwa ye, geurigo junghwa* 병자호란과 예, 그리고 중화 [The Manchu/Qing Invasion of Joseon and Ritual Propriety, and Chinese Civilization] (Seoul: Somyeong Chulpansa; Han Myeonggi 한명기, 2019, *Choe Myeonggil pyeongjeon* 최명길 평전 [A Biography of Choe Myeonggil], Paju: Bori.

³ Oh Suchang 오수창, 2017, “Byeongja horan e daehan gieok waegok gwa geu hyeonjaejeok uimi” 병자호란에 대한 기억의 왜곡과 그 현재적 의미 [Distorted Memories of the Manchu/Qing Invasion of Joseon, and Their Present Meaning], in *Yeoksa wa hyeonsil* 104; Jo Ilsu 조일수, 2017, “Injo ui dae Jungguk oegyo e daehan bipanjeok gochal” 인조의 대중국 외교에 대한 비판적 고찰 [King Injo's Diplomatic Policy toward China, and a Critical Review of It], in *Yeoksa bipyeong* 121; Han Myeonggi 한명기, 2017, “Myeong Cheong gyoche sigi Han Jung gwangye ui chui” 명청교체 시기 한중관계의 추이 [Trends of Relations between Korea and China during the Ming-Qing Transition], in *Dongyang sahak yeongu* 140, 70–72; Han Myeonggi 한명기, 2019, “Jo Cheong gwangye ui jeongae yangsang gwa gyoryu” 조·청관계의 전개 양상과 교류 [The Evolution of Relations between Joseon and the Qing, and their Interactions], in *Cheong hwangsil ui achim Simyang gogung* 청 황실의 아침 심양 고궁 [The Old Imperial Palace of the Qing in Shenyang], Seoul: Gungnip Gogung Bakmulgwan, 292; Bumjin Koo 구범진, *Byeongja horan, Hong Taiji ui jeonjaeng* 병자호란, 홍타이지의 전쟁, 33–71; Bumjin Koo 구범진, 2019, “Joseon ui dae Hu-Keum, Cheong oegyo wa Byeonja horan ui balbal wonin” 조선의 대(對)후금·청 외교와 병자호란의 발발 원인 [Joseon's Diplomacy toward the Later Jin and the Qing, and the Causes of the Manchu/Qing Invasion of Joseon], in Baek Yeongseo and Jeong Sanggi, eds., *Naeil eul ingneun Han · Jung gwangyesa* 내일을 읽는 한·중관계사 *History of Korea-China Relations for Reading Future*, Seoul: RHK, 163–173; Chae Hongbyeong 채홍명, 2019, “Jeongmyo maengyak (1627) ihu Joseon ui dae Hu-Geum gwangye chui wa patan” 정묘맹약(1627) 이후 조선의 대후금 관계 추이와 파탄 [Trends and Breakup of Joseon's Relations with the Later Jin after the 1627 Pact], M. A. thesis, Korea University.

that ceremony's grandeur.⁴ However, it was not until the early 12th lunar month of that year that the war actually broke out. In other words, the 'calm before the storm' lasted as long as eight to nine months before the war's outbreak, and during that time, Joseon and the Qing were by no means idle. In particular, the Joseon side did not give up its diplomatic attempts to avoid war until the very moment it broke out. With regard to the attempts at diplomatic contact on the part of the Joseon court to avoid war, the related facts have become known to a substantial degree through previous researches.⁵ Hence, contrary to the Qing claim that it waited months to give Joseon time for 'repentance,' it has been revealed that the Qing had been preparing to send armies to Joseon while waiting for the arrival of winter to ensure the swift movement of its armies and a quick victory in the war,⁶ and that the diplomatic negotiations that Joseon attempted during this period had thus had "no prospect for success in the first place."⁷ Inasmuch as the facts about the diplomatic negotiations and the Qing's preparations for war have been established, it might seem at first glance to be little need for further inquiries into what happened during this period.

However, when reading through the records of diplomatic contacts between the Qing and Joseon from the fourth lunar month of 1636, one finds puzzling stories that cannot be explained by the findings so far.⁸

⁴ Han Myeonggi, who have emphasized the upsurge of anti-Manchu sentiment in the Joseon court and King Injo's decree of severing relations with the Later Jin in the spring of 1636 as causes of the war, argues in a recent work that the "breakup of relations between the two states" took place on the 11th day of the 4th lunar month. See Han Myeonggi, *Choe Myeonggil pyeongjeon* 최명길 평전, 272–276.

⁵ Suzuki Kai 鈴木開, "Heishi no ran chokuzen no Chō-Shin kōshō ni tsuite, 1634–1636" 丙子の亂直前の朝清交渉について(1634-1636) [Negotiations between Joseon and the Qing prior to the Manchu/Qing Invasion of Joseon, 1634–1636], in *Sundai shigaku* 159 (2017), 54–57; Hang Myeonggi, *Choe Myeonggil pyeongjeon* 최명길 평전 [A Biography of Choe Myeonggil], 279–316.

⁶ Bumjin Koo, *Byeongja horan, Hong Taiji ui jeonjaeng* 병자호란, 홍타이지의 전쟁, 90–94.

⁷ Bumjin Koo, "Joseon ui dae Hu-Keum, Cheong oegyo wa Byeonja horan ui balbal wonin" 조선의 대(對)후금 · 청 외교와 병자호란의 발발 원인, 176.

⁸ The sources of the facts sketched in this paragraph will be presented later, when each fact is explained in greater detail.

Between the date of Hong Taiji's coronation ceremony on the 11th day of the fourth lunar month of 1636 (May 15, 1636) and the dispatch of the Qing troops to Joseon from Shenyang on the second day of the 12th lunar month of that same year (December 28, 1636), there were only three diplomatic contacts between Joseon and the Qing that were noteworthy and thus documented. The first was in the middle of the fourth lunar month (May, 1636) when Na Deokheon and his retinue left Shenyang and returned home; the second took place early in the ninth month, when the Qing envoy Mafuta 馬夫大 came to the market town of Junggang 中江, situated across the Yalu River from the border town of Uiju 義州, to pay for goods purchased from Joseon; and the third was late in the tenth lunar month (November, 1636), when a Korean interpreter of the Manchu language named Bak Inbeom 朴仁範 visited Shenyang. What is noteworthy is that, the *Qing Taizong shilu* 清太宗實錄 (Qing Veritable Records of Emperor Taizong) records that, in the mid-fourth lunar month, the Qing court notified the above-mentioned Na Deokheon group of the date of the Qing's military expedition against Joseon in advance, while privately-compiled histories of Joseon, such as the *Byeongja rok* 丙子錄 (*Records of the Byeongja War*) by Na Man'gap 羅萬甲, mention that the Qing court announced the expedition date to Bak Inbeom's party. In other words, prior notification of the date of the military expedition was given to the enemy in advance, which can be considered an ultimatum.⁹

Are these stories really true? In other words, did the Qing present Joseon with an ultimatum informing it of the date of its expedition in advance during the period of diplomatic contacts before the war? However, before we delve into this question, we should not miss that there are serious contradictions between these ultimatum-related accounts. One contradiction is that the timeframes of the accounts from the Qing and the

⁹ Regarding the Manchu/Qing invasion of Joseon, Tanii Yōko said, "The Qing, against a background of issues related to Hong Taiji's recognition as emperor, saw their ultimatum ignored and decided to exercise their power." See Tanii Yōko 谷井陽子, 2015, *Hakki seido no kenkyū* 八旗制度の研究 [A Study of the Eight Banners System], Kyoto: Kyoto Daigaku Gakujutsu Shuppankai, 228. This is a remark placing great importance on the existence of the ultimatum on the eve of the war.

Joseon sources do not add up. If the ultimatum was given in the fourth lunar month, as reported by the Qing source, then Joseon's account of its occurring in the tenth lunar month would be false. And vice versa. The other contradiction is that, regardless of which side is correct, the ultimatum accounts conflict with the actual course of events in the war, in which the initial surprise attack of the Qing forces rendered any defense of Joseon meaningless. If the date of the invasion had been notified to Joseon in advance, allowing it time for preparation, it would have been very difficult for the Qing forces to score such a quick victory.

In this study, with the question of 'whether the Qing did indeed give an ultimatum to Joseon' in mind, I will first conduct a critical analysis of the contradictory dates of the ultimatum presented in the two sources, one of which stated that it occurred during the diplomatic contacts in the fourth lunar month and the other in the tenth lunar month. To be more specific, Section II will examine carefully whether the claim in the *Qing Taizong shilu* that Hong Taiji gave an ultimatum to Na Deokheon (hereafter referred to as the 'ultimatum in May' according to the Gregorian calendar) is true or not. Through this examination, it will be revealed that the 'ultimatum in May' was fabricated and later inserted during the compilation of the *Qing Taizong shilu* in the Shunzhi 順治 reign (1644–1661). After that, Section III will review the reliability of the ultimatum account in the *Byeongja rok* that Bak Inbeom received the ultimatum in Shenyang in the late tenth lunar month (hereafter referred to as the 'ultimatum in November'). This review will show that the 'ultimatum in November' account was not untrue per se, but that the proposed date of the military expedition Bak heard from the Qing party was false. It will then be revealed that, contrary to the hopes of Joseon, the Qing used the diplomatic contacts with Joseon on the eve of its invasion as an opportunity to deceive Joseon. The Qing carried out this deceptive scheme in order to increase the chances of success of their surprise attack, by leaking a false deadline and false information to Bak Inbeom, and as a result the Joseon court was led to false hopes that it might be able to avoid war through diplomatic means until the last minute. At the end of this article, as conclusive evidence to confirm the argument this

study sets forth, I will illustrate the realities of the manipulation of historical records committed by the editors of the *Qing Taizong shilu* to conceal what really happened at that time.

Fabrication of the Ultimatum Notice in the *Qing Veritable Records*

In the entry dated the 15th day of the fourth month of the tenth year of the Tiancong 天聰 (heavenly wisdom) reign (May 19, 1636) in the *Qing Taizong shilu* (Shunzhi edition), after citing a fairly long state letter from Hong Taiji to Injo, a remark by Hong Taiji giving what could be called an ultimatum to Joseon is presented:

(A) [The emperor] again enlightened the envoys from Joseon and said, “If your king admits his fault and sends his son or brother as hostage, there will be an end of the matter. Otherwise, I will mobilize armies at ‘such time of such month’ (某月某時), and will arrive in your land in person. In such an event, it will be too late to regret. I will make you aware of this. . . .”¹⁰

The “envoys from Joseon” here refer to Na Deokheon and his party, who had damaged the prestige of Hong Taiji’s ceremony four days earlier.¹¹ On the 15th day of the fourth month, Hong Taiji entrusted the

¹⁰ *Qing Taizong shilu* 清太宗實錄 [Qing Veritable Records of Emperor Taizong: QTZSL hereafter] (Shunzhi Edition), juan 卷 (fascicle) 22, 64a, Tiancong 10/4/15(jichou). It is very inconvenient to use the Shunzhi Edition of *QTZSL*, preserved only at the Guoli Gugong Bowuyuan 國立故宮博物院 in Taipei, yet the entry related to Joseon on that date (juan 22, 58b–64b) is also included in Zhang Cunwu and Ye Quanhong 張存武 葉象宏, eds., 2000, *Qing ruguan qian yu Chaoxian wanglai guoshu huibian* 清入關前與朝鮮往來國書彙編, 1619–1643 [Collection of State Letters with Joseon before the Qing Entered the Shanhai Pass], Taipei: Guoshiguan, 180–185. I have therefore used that collection for the entry in this study. However, it should be noted in advance that the entry in the *Qing Taizong shilu* (Shunzhi Edition) on the 25th day of the 11th month of the 1st year of the Chongde reign, cited in the conclusion of this study, is not contained in that collection.

¹¹ On the Joseon envoys’ “commotion” at the imperial coronation ceremony, see Bumjin Koo,

lengthy state letter to Na Deokheon, for delivery to Injo.¹² This was the first state letter sent by Hong Taiji under the title of “Great Qing Emperor of Lenience, Kind-heartedness, Beneficence, and Sacredness” (*Da Qingguo kuan wen ren sheng huangdi* 大清國寬溫仁聖皇帝), and at the same time the last letter sent to Joseon prior to the outbreak of the Manchu/Qing invasion.

After quoting the full text of the state letter, the *Qing Taizong shilu* states that Hong Taiji warned Na Deokheon and his party directly that if the king of Joseon did not send his son or brother as hostage by the deadline of “such time of such month,” he would launch a war and lead his troops to Joseon “in person,” as shown in quotation (A).¹³ In other words, Hong Taiji is said to have issued a de facto ultimatum to the enemy and presented the ‘conditions’ and ‘deadline’ of the ultimatum almost eight months prior to the war - something almost unprecedented in premodern warfare.

Any Korean readers well aware of the unearned military victory of the Qing forces’ surprise attack immediately after the war broke out may well ask instantly in anger, “Why was Joseon helplessly defeated by the Qing forces when it had been given this ultimatum as early as eight months before?”¹⁴ However, if one takes a step back and thinks about the

Byeongja horan, Hong Taiji ui jeonjaeng 병자호란, 홍타이지의 전쟁, 64–71.

¹² *Qing ruguan qian yu Chaoxian wanglai guoshu huibian* 清入關前與朝鮮往來國書彙編, 180–185. This state letter can also be found in the entries of the *Qing Taizong shilu* (Qianlong Edition) 清太宗實錄, the *Jiu Manzhou dang* 舊滿洲檔 [Old Manchu Archives]/the *Manwen laodang* 滿文老檔 [Revised Old Manchu Archives], all for the same date. If the same entry can be found in multiple sources as in this case, only one representative source is cited in the footnote.

¹³ In the *Qing Taizong shilu* (Qianlong Edition)—the most widely used edition today—on the 15th day of the 4th month of the 10th year of the Tiancong reign, the sentence “又諭來使曰” (“Again [Hong Taiji] spoke to the envoys [from Joseon] to enlighten them”) is changed to “復特頒明旨示之” (“Again [Hong Taiji] specially issued a clear edict to show them [i.e. the envoys]”), with little change therefore in the basic meaning except for the issuance of an edict. In addition, the phrase “某月某時” (such time of such month) is changed to “某月某日” (such day of such month). Unless otherwise indicated, the *Qing Taizong shilu* [= *QTZSL*] in this study refers to the Qianlong Edition.

¹⁴ For the course of the Manchu/Qing invasion of Joseon, and in particular its surprise attack at the beginning of the war, see Bumjin Koo, *Byeongja horan, Hong Taiji ui jeonjaeng* 병자호란, 홍타이

historical context surrounding the war, this account of ‘the ultimatum in May’ in quotation (A) needs to be reassessed.

In the first place, if there had been an ultimatum, including a deadline, why is it that the *Qing Taizong shilu* does not specify the exact date, instead of just stating vaguely “such time of such month” or more commonly “such day of such month (某月某日),” as expressed in the Qianlong Edition of the *Qing Taizong shilu*?¹⁵ It is possible, for example, that if the deadline had been the winter solstice of that year, at which time Hong Taiji offered a sacrificial service to Heaven in order to announce his expedition to Joseon, it could have been dated as the ‘winter solstice’ or the ‘25th day of the 11th month,’¹⁶ rather than “such day of such month.” It is also possible that, since Hong Taiji commenced his expedition from Shenyang on the ‘second day of the 12th month,’¹⁷ this date could have been cited as the deadline rather than “such day of such month.”

The dubiousness of the ‘ultimatum in May’ account is not limited to concerns about the expression “such day of such month.” The fact that the ultimatum was said to have been issued verbally also raises doubts.¹⁸ This is because it would seem reasonable for the ultimatum to have been included in the state letter entrusted to Na Deokheon on his trip for Han-seong (Seoul).¹⁹

It may have been only after they had sealed the state letter that it occurred to the Manchus that they should issue an ultimatum. However, if this ‘ultimatum in May’ did exist, considering its enormous importance, shouldn’t there have at least been a mention of it somewhere in Joseon’s records? Furthermore, among the Joseon envoys who supposedly

 지의 전쟁, 73–115.

¹⁵ See footnote 13.

¹⁶ *QTZSL*, Chongde 1/11/25(yichou).

¹⁷ *QTZSL*, Chongde 1/12/2(renshen).

¹⁸ In the entry of the *Qing Taizong shilu* (Qianlong Edition), however, the method of delivery of the ultimatum is changed to a written form.

¹⁹ The state letter does not carry the message of the ultimatum. See *Qing ruguan qian yu Chaoxian wanglai guoshu huibian* 清入關前與朝鮮往來國書彙編, 180–185.

heard this 'ultimatum in May' from Hong Taiji, some might well have left records of it, but Na Deokheon's travel account *Bukhaeng ilgi* 北行日記 (Daily Record of the Northern Travel) does not contain any indication of his having met with Hong Taiji on the day when he left Shenyang, let alone any mention of an ultimatum.²⁰ At most, one can find a story that, when leaving Shenyang, Na was threatened by Inggūldai 英俄爾岱/龍骨大 that if Joseon did not send a response to the state letter, it would be taken as a breach of the two states' brotherhood pact on the part of Joseon.²¹

The Qing records are no different from Joseon's in their absence of references to the 'ultimatum in May.' Although the *Jiu Manzhou dang* 舊滿洲檔 (Old Manchu Archives) is a chronological record that offers primary sources for compilation of the *Qing Taizong shilu* (in its first edition in the Shunzhi era), its entry on the 15th day of the fourth month of 1636 cites only the long state letter sent to Injo without any reference to quotation (A).²² Since an account, not included even in the *Jiu Manzhou dang*, suddenly appears in the *Qing Taizong shilu*, it would seem highly likely that quotation (A) is fabricated and later inserted by the editors of *Qing Taizong shilu* during the Shunzhi era.

One might argue that the *Qing Taizong shilu* may have been making up for the omission of the ultimatum in the *Jiu Manzhou dang* with supplements from other historical sources. However, if one looks into the 'war of words' between the two parties to the war during the first lunar

²⁰ According to *Bukhaeng ilgi* 北行日記 [Daily Record of the Northern Travel], Na Deokheon arrived in Shenyang on the 29th day of the 3rd month (May 4th), and met Hong Taiji on the 2nd day of the 4th month (May 6th). See *Bukhaeng ilgi* 北行日記 in *Jang'am yujip* 壯嚴遺集 [Posthumous Literary Collection of Na Deokheon], *gwon* 卷 (fascicle) 2 (Seoul: Kyujanggak Institute of Korean Studies, 古4655-48), 10b–11a. However, Na had no audience with Hong Taiji when he left Shenyang. In the *Qing Taizong shilu*, the date of Na Deokheon's arrival in Shenyang was the 22nd day of the 3rd month (April 27th), while his departure date (the 25th day of the 4th month, or May 29th) was ten days later than that stated in the *Bukhaeng ilgi*. It is not clear at this time why there is such a difference between the two documents.

²¹ *Bukhaeng ilgi* 北行日記 in *Jang'am yujip* 壯嚴遺集, *gwon* 2, 22a–22b.

²² *Jiu Manzhou dang* 舊滿洲檔, 10 ce (冊), 4739–4751, Tiancong 10/4/5. It is only natural that the entry of the same date of the *Manwen laodang* 滿文老檔, VI, 997–1010 also has no reference to quotation (A).

month of 1637, one can conclude that the ‘ultimatum in May’ of the *Qing Taizong shilu* is merely a fabrication inserted in a later era.

Amid this war of words, Hong Taiji, who had ordered the invasion, said to the Joseon people “It is not really that I want for you to fall into disaster. Your country’s king and his ministers have themselves made you face disaster” and claimed that he had raised up a ‘righteous army’ (Ch. *yibing* 義兵; Ma. *jurgan i cooha*).²³ According to Hong Taiji, it was Joseon itself that had caused the war and he adhered steadfastly to his theory of ‘just war’ (*uijeon* 義戰) to the effect that the Manchu/Qing invasion of Joseon was righteous.²⁴ There is no doubt that in the *Qing Taizong shilu*, the ‘ultimatum in May’ served as an essential piece of evidence supporting the view of the Manchu/Qing invasion as a just war. Nevertheless, when examining the letters sent by Hong Taiji to Injo in the first lunar month of 1637, which was the height of the war,²⁵ nowhere in the letter suggests, either explicitly or implicitly, the existence of any ultimatum issued to notify Joseon of the invasion’s date in advance.

²³ “Gaoyu/Goyu” 誥諭 [Edict from Hong Taiji] in *Injo sillok* 仁祖實錄 [Veritable Records of King Injo], Injo 15/1/2(renyin). According to the Qing records, this document was composed in the Manchu language on the 29th day of the 11th month of 1636. See *Manwen laodang* 滿文老檔, VII, 1473–1476; *QTZSL*, Chongde 1/11/29(jisi). However, the date of official issuance of the “Gaoyu/Goyu” 誥諭 delivered to Joseon was the 2nd day of the 12th month. See the *Jochik deungnok* 詔勅勝錄 [Records of Edicts] (Kyujanggak 奎 12904 –2) 1a–2a; and “Yu aguk gwanmin seo” 諭我國官民書 [Edict to our officials and people] in *Dongmun hwigo* 同文彙考 [Collection of Diplomatic Documents of Joseon], special edition 別編, gwon 3, 1a–2a.

²⁴ Just as Nurhaci of the Later Jin had justified the war against the Ming by invoking the so-called “Seven Grievances” (Ch. *qi dahan* 七大恨), so the Later Jin/Qing during its invasions of Joseon in 1627 and 1637 argued that it had started wars to chastise Joseon for its offenses of various kinds, and therefore that Heaven (Ch. *tian* 天; Ma. *abka*) would take its side. Bumjin Koo, *Byeongja horan, Hong Taiji ui jeonjaeng*, 271, 273.

²⁵ The state letters sent by Hong Taiji to King Injo in the 1st lunar month of 1637, at the height of the war, are all included in the *Jochik deungnok* 詔勅勝錄 [Records of Edicts] of Joseon Kyujanggak 奎 12904 –2), 2a–8a, as well as in *Man Qing ruguan qian yu Gaoli jiaoshe shiliao* 滿清入關前與高麗交涉史料 [Historical Materials on Relations with Korea before the Manchu/Qing Entered the Shanhai Pass], selected from the *Neige daku dang'an* 內閣大庫檔案 [Grand Secretariat Archives] of the Qing Dynasty (Guoli Beiping Lishi Bowuguan 國立北平歷史博物館, reprinted in 1933), 2–28. In addition, they are also included in *Dongmun hwigo* 同文彙考 (special edition), and *Qing ruguan qian yu Chaosian wanglai guoshu huibian* 清入關前與朝鮮往來國書彙編.

Even in the quarrel over the legitimacy of starting the war, there was no clue suggestive of any ultimatum. Injo, isolated in the mountain fortress of Namhan in the first lunar month of 1637, had been forced into a state of military quandary.²⁶ Regardless of whether it was true or not, he had to acknowledge Hong Taiji's claim that Joseon was responsible for causing the war. Injo put the blame for the outbreak of the war on himself in his state letter dated the 13th day of the first month, saying that "I just scold myself, what else can I say?"²⁷ However, at the same time, he also protested as follows:

(B) When I think of the elder brother's position towards the younger brother, it is truly appropriate for him to scold the younger one with anger. But if the scolding is too severe, it will go against a righteous brotherhood relationship. [In this case,] how can you not invite a rebuke from Heaven?²⁸

No matter how much of a mistake the younger brother had made, Injo protested, "if the scolding is too severe," such as the sudden mobilization of such a large army, it would violate the "righteous brotherhood" (*hyeongje ji ui* 兄弟之義), sworn officially in 1627, after the Manchus' first invasion of Joseon, and result in "a rebuke from Heaven."

Hong Taiji devoted quite an amount of space, in his state letter of the 17th day of the first month, to argue against Injo's protest:

(C) [Your] letter said that, "if the scolding is too severe, it will go against a righteous brotherhood relationship. [In this case,] how can you not invite a rebuke from Heaven?" ... It was not until the letter [you] sent to your frontier officials was obtained by our envoy Inggūldai that I knew for certain that your country had the will to wage war [against us.]

²⁶ Bumjin Koo, *Byeongja horan, Hong Taiji ui jeonjaeng* 병자호란, 홍타이지의 전쟁, 117–163.

²⁷ *Man Qing ruguan qian yu Gaoli jiaoshe shiliao* 滿清入關前與高麗交涉史料, 8–11.

²⁸ *Man Qing ruguan qian yu Gaoli jiaoshe shiliao* 滿清入關前與高麗交涉史料, 9.

[However,] **I said to your spring and autumn envoys, as well as other merchants**, that “your country’s men have behaved so recklessly that **I have to attack your country** and you may tell your king and his subjects about this on returning to your country.” **I clearly informed them [of the imminent expedition], and did not use deceit for the purpose of this invasion.** Moreover, I moved armies only after announcing to Heaven in writing that it is Joseon that broke the brotherhood oath [of 1627] to wage a war. If I had broken the oath as you did, I ought to be afraid of Heaven’s rebuke. But since you did not honor the oath, the disaster has befallen your country. So why do you try to invoke the word “Heaven” (tian 天) as if you had nothing to do with this.²⁹ [Emphases are all mine]

Hong Taiji argued that, despite his discovery of Joseon’s intention to wage war against the Qing after obtaining the letter Injo sent to his frontier officials, or the decree of severing relations, he had warned Joseon’s “spring and autumn envoys, as well as other merchants,” of an impending expedition in advance. He also claimed that he had nothing to be ashamed of, as he had moved armies only after announcing to Heaven in writing that it was Joseon that broke the oath of brotherhood. Needless to say, Hong Taiji was articulating his own claim on just war in this state letter.

In 1636, however, the autumn envoy Bak No 朴簪 left Seoul for Shenyang only on the fourth day of the 12th month (December 30, 1636)³⁰ and it was two days after Hong Taiji’s forces had already left

²⁹ *Jochik deungnok* 詔勅勝錄 (Kyujianggak 奎 12904– 2), 4a-4b; *Man Qing ruguan qian yu Gaoli jiaoshe shiliao* 滿清入關前與高麗交涉史料, 11. As to the Manchu translation of this state letter, which later was retranslated into literary Chinese to be included in the *Qing Taizong shilu* (Shunzhi Edition), see Kawachi Yoshihiro 河内良弘, trans. and ed. *Neikokushien Manbun tōan yakuchū: Chūgoku daiichi rekishi tōan kansō, Sūtoku ni san nenbun* 內國史院滿文檔案譯註: 中國第一歷史檔案館藏 崇德二·三年分 [Translation and Annotation of the Manchu Language Archives in the Palace Dynastic History Office, Second and Third Years of the Chongde Reign, 1637, 1638], Kyoto: Shōkōdō, 2010, 39-47.

³⁰ *Seungeongwon ilgi* 承政院日記 [Daily Records of the Royal Secretariat], Injo 14/12/4(jiaxu).

Shenyang and begun their march toward Joseon. Thus, the reference to the “spring and autumn envoys, as well as other merchants” in quotation (C) cannot be said to match the actual situation. There are other statements that should also not be believed at face value but it is particularly worth noting here that, when claiming that he “did not use deceit for the purpose of this invasion,” Hong Taiji mentioned only that he had warned Joseon envoys and merchants of his invasion, which is not something beyond a simple warning or threat of war. If there had indeed been a full-blown ultimatum before the war, Hong Taiji would have never failed to cite it here, as there could not have been any better evidence than that to support his claim that his invasion was legitimately validated as a just war devoid of any deception.

At this point, it seems safe to conclude that the account of the ‘ultimatum in May’ in the *Qing Taizong shilu* was fabricated and inserted at a later time. But what, then, was the motive of the Qing Taizong shilu’s editors in fabricating this account? I would like to raise some important points here as follows.

The editors’ fabrication of the ‘ultimatum in May’ was part of ‘constructing a narrative of a just war,’ something the Qing had already begun less than one year after the invasion. As previous studies have revealed,³¹ the Qing intervened actively in the composition of the inscription on the stele erected on Samjeondo 三田渡 by the Han River. In the first lunar month of 1638 (the third year of the Chongde reign), the contents of the draft inscription prepared by Joseon officials were presented in detail. At that time, Fan Wencheng 范文程 (1597-1666), one of the Qing grand secretaries, reviewed the draft inscription and demanded substantial revisions.³² More significantly, it was Fan who was later put in charge of supervising the compilation of the *Qing Taizong shilu* during the Shunzhi

³¹ Bae Useong 배우성, 2010, “Seoul e on Cheong ui chiksa Mabudae wa Samjeondo bi” 서울에 온 청의 칙사 馬夫大 와 삼전도비 [The Qing Imperial Envoy Mafuta Who Came to Seoul, and the Samjeondo Stele], *Seoul hak yeongu* 38, 235–271.

³² *Simyang janggye: Simyang eseo on pyeonji* 심양장계: 심양에서 온 편지 [Collection of Reports from Shenyang: Letters from Shenyang], Seoul: Changbi, 2008, 131–133.

era.³³ The document containing the demand for revision by Fan Wencheng has remained to this day,³⁴ and is referred to as the ‘Fan Wencheng’s Memorandum.’ The part of the demand for revision that seems closely related to the account of ultimatum is the following:

(D) Even though [the emperor] knew that our Joseon had broken the compact, he explained our guilt to us clearly, and with a heart of magnanimity told us the secret that he would launch an expedition on ① **such day of such month of such year**, as if Heaven was teaching us, a father was teaching his son, or an elder brother was teaching his younger brother. ② **If he had really wanted to kill and hurt our people, how could he have been willing to teach us clearly [when he would invade] instead of moving armies unexpectedly to attack us when we were unprepared?** [Nonetheless], our king still did not repent and so the emperor led his armies to chastise us Joseon in person.³⁵ [Emphases are all mine]

Comparing quotation (D) with the corresponding part of the actual Samjeondo Inscription, it can be seen that ① “such day of such month of such year” (某年月日) was rewritten as “the time of war (師期)” while sentence ② was omitted altogether.³⁶ At least as far as quotation (D) is concerned, Fan Wencheng’s demand was not reflected in the inscription as it finally appeared. However, it should be noted that Fan Wencheng, a grand secretary in charge of literary matters from the time of Hong Taiji’s rule, as well as the chief editor of the *Qing Taizong shilu* during the Shunzhi era, had wished to see Hong Taiji’s alleged notification in advance of

³³ *Qing Shizu shilu* 清世祖實錄 [Qing Veritable Records of Emperor Shizu], Shunzhi 6/1/8(ding-mao); Shunzhi 9/1/29(xinchou).

³⁴ *Ming-Qing dang'an cunzhen xuanji chuj* 明清檔案存真選輯初集 [Selected Originals from the Ming-Qing Archives, vol. 1] (Taipei: Zhongyang Yanjiuyuan Lishi Yuyan Yanjiusuo 中央研究院歷史語言研究所, 1959), 101.

³⁵ *Ming-Qing dang'an cunzhen xuanji chuj* 明清檔案存真選輯初集, 101.

³⁶ See the Samjeondo Inscription contained in *Injo sillok*, Injo 16/2/8(renyin).

his expedition included in the Samjeondo Inscription. Given this situation, it is possible to surmise the motive for the fabrication of the 'ultimatum in May' in *Qing Taizong shilu*, which is not found in the *Jiu Manzhou dang*.

The entire text of the Samjeondo Inscription is also included in the *Qing Taizong shilu*.³⁷ If quotation (D) of the 'Fan Wencheng Memorandum' had indeed been reflected in the inscription as demanded, fabrication of the 'ultimatum in May' would not have been necessary. Quotation (D) was not, however, reflected in its entirety in the inscription. The editors of the *Qing Taizong shilu* must then have picked the last possible time when Hong Taiji could have met the Joseon envoys prior to the war's outbreak (i.e. the 15th day of the fourth month of 1636) and inserted that as the date of the ultimatum in the above quotation (A).

However, even if the account of the 'ultimatum in May' in the *Qing Taizong shilu* was fabricated and inserted later, it is still too early to conclude that the Qing gave no ultimatum at all before its invasion of Joseon. In his state letter of the 17th day of the first month of 1637, Hong Taiji said that he had warned the Joseon envoys in advance of the impending expedition twice, in the spring and in the autumn, even if those warnings may not have been *bona fide* ultimatums delivered with conditions and deadlines. What has been revealed through our examination above is that the account of the 'ultimatum in May' given to the Joseon spring envoy, Na Deokheon, was a fabrication of a later time. To prove that the Qing never gave any ultimatum whatsoever to Joseon, wouldn't it be necessary to confirm the absence of any ultimatum in autumn as well?

However, as mentioned earlier, Joseon's 1636 autumn envoy, Bak No, left Seoul on the fourth day of the 12th month (December 30, 1636). Thus, there cannot have been any meeting between Hong Taiji and that envoy before the war's launch. Still, it is worth noting that even though they were not official envoys, Joseon did send an interpreter of the Manchu language (*hoyeok* 胡譯), Bak Inbeom, along with others to Shenyang

³⁷ QTZSL, Chongde 4/12/28(gengxu).

in the autumn of 1636 with a letter in the name of the king. If it is not possible to completely rule out the possibility that the ‘autumn envoys’ mentioned in the Qing state letter was a convenient reference to the Bak Inbeom party, isn’t it then necessary to look into what happened at the time of Bak Inbeom’s trip to Shenyang?

Bak Inbeom’s Trip to Shenyang, and the Qing’s Deceptive Ultimatum Notice

As mentioned earlier, bearing a long state letter entrusted to them by the Qing, Na Deokheon’s embassy left Shenyang in the middle of the fourth month of 1636. It was not until Na arrived at Tongyuanbao 通遠堡, on his way back to Joseon, that he opened that letter and discovered that it not only adopted a presumptuous title for Hong Taiji - “Great Qing Emperor of Lenience, Kind-heartedness, Beneficence, and Sacredness” (*Da Qingguo kuan wen ren sheng huangdi* 大清國寬溫仁聖皇帝) - but was also depraved and arrogant in its contents. Na Deokheon therefore left the original letter at his residence in Tongyuanbao and returned home with only a copy of its contents. Upon receiving the handwritten copy of the letter from Na Deokheon, the Joseon court, fearing that the Qing might misunderstand that the state letter in question had actually been delivered to Injo, sent a letter in the name of Na Deokheon to Tongyuanbao, informing the Qing that Na had abandoned the original letter there.³⁸

After Na’s embassy returned to Joseon, diplomatic contact between the two countries was cut off for a while. Although it was possible that a war might break out at any time, there was nothing remarkable in the atmosphere. Over time, however, realist voices got louder insisting on the prevention or at least delay of the outbreak of war through diplomatic efforts. The opinion favoring diplomatic negotiations then gained strength as the Ming envoys who visited Seoul, Bai Dengyong 白登庸 and Huang Sunwu 黃孫茂, advised maintaining, rather than severing, diplomatic rela-

³⁸ *Injo sillok*, Injo 14/4/26(gengzi).

tions with the Qing, so as to detect the enemy's situation and any internal divisions that it might be experiencing.³⁹ Against this backdrop, the Joseon court pressed for diplomatic contacts to restore the brotherly relationship with the Qing, led by Choe Myeonggil and others, who overcame fierce objections from hardliners fervently opposing peace talks. Concerning the progress of diplomatic contacts at that time, the basic facts have already been made known through previous studies.⁴⁰

Among Joseon's attempts at diplomacy, the notification letter (*gyeokseo* 檄書) written on the 17th day of the sixth month of 1636 was the first step toward restoring relations with the Qing. Although that letter was of lower grade than a state letter, it was the first to use the new dynastic title of "Qing State" (Cheongguk 清國), rather than the conventional "Jin State" (Jinguk 金國). It was virtually a reply state letter responding to the Qing state letter abandoned by Na Deokheon at Tongyuanbao. Its main point was to urge the Qing government to maintain the principle of a "state relationship between an elder and a younger brother" (*hyeongje ji guk* 兄弟之國) by emphasizing that Joseon had never broken their brotherhood pact of 1627.⁴¹

Among the diplomatic attempts of Joseon on the eve of the Manchu/Qing invasion, the second most notable measure after the above-cited notification letter and at the same time the most important diplomatic contact during this period was the visit by Bak Inbeom to Shenyang. As will be mentioned again later, the task given to Bak Inbeom was to deliver a letter from Injo stating the reason for his dispatch along with the notification letter of the 17th day of the sixth month.⁴² However, although Bak's dispatch was realized only with great difficulty, against strong opposition, he could not fulfill his mission of delivering the two letters. This was because when Bak arrived in Shenyang on the 27th day of the

³⁹ *Injo sillok*, Injo 14/7/28(jichou); 14/9/3(jiachen).

⁴⁰ See footnote 5.

⁴¹ *Injo sillok*, Injo14/6/17(gengyin).

⁴² *Injo sillok*, Injo14/9/19(gengshen).

tenth month (November 24, 1636), the Qing firmly refused to accept the letters.⁴³

Nevertheless, Bak Inbeom's trip to Shenyang was not without meaning. While there is only a terse mention of it in the Qing's records, simply stating that Hong Taiji refused to receive the letters from Joseon, many accounts related to Bak's trip to Shenyang are found in Joseon's records, even if they may not be all direct or coherent and are mixture of facts and fiction. Considering the limited space available here, I would like to introduce just two accounts noteworthy, particularly in the context of this study.

The first is an entry in the *Injo sillok*, dated the 13th day of the 11th month of 1636. It says that, upon hearing Bak Inbeom's written and oral reports, the Border Defense Council (Bibyeonsa 備邊司) suggested that, "since it has been revealed that the barbarians do not wish to cut off the [relations] with our country," the court should hurriedly dispatch an official envoy "in order to explore their situation on the one hand and show them that we do not wish to cut off the [relations] on the other." At the same time, it worried that, "since Bak Inbeom's party returned without delivering the letters, the enemy may move its armies at any moment," and insisted that military preparations should be made in anticipation of "a sudden attack after the rivers freeze."⁴⁴

The Joseon government was thus discussing both the dispatch of an official envoy and preparations for military action immediately after Bak Inbeom's return. Given this, it should be considered that Bak's report probably contained the prospect that there was still a hope of preventing catastrophe, as well as information that there could be an invasion in the freezing winter.⁴⁵

⁴³ *Manwen laodang* 滿文老檔, VII, 1362.

⁴⁴ *Injo sillok*, Injo 14/11/13(guichou).

⁴⁵ At the royal lecture on the 12th day of the 12th month, Yi Seonggu stated that, "Hearing from the interpreter of Manchu language (hoyeok 胡譯) upon his return, the bandits are ready to move their armies." See *Injo sillok*, Injo 14/11/12(renzi). By this time, moreover, information that war was imminent had been obtained through other channels. For example, prior to Bak Inbeom's report

The other entry that I will introduce here is contained in the *Byeongjarok* 丙子錄 (Records of the Byeongja War), written privately by Na Man'gap, the key parts of which are as follows:

(E) The Khan 汗 of the Jin said to this interpreter (i.e. Bak Inbeom), “if your country will not restore peaceful relations by way of sending its minister and prince [as hostages] before **the 25th day of the 11th month** [of 1636], I shall raise up a large army to send eastward (i.e. to Joseon).” And **his reply letter** stated that . . .⁴⁶ [Emphases are all mine]

In other words, Hong Taiji had delivered a verbal ultimatum to Bak Inbeom's party, even stating a deadline of “the 25th day of the 11th month” (December 21, 1636) before which time Joseon should send “minister and prince” as hostages. Moreover, the *Byeongjarok* makes reference to Hong Taiji's “reply letter” and states that “when this humble interpreter delivered these words, the court wanted to send a high official to Shenyang” but dared not bring up the issue because of fierce objection to any peace talks. It is also noted that when Bak No finally left Seoul, only after being delayed by opposition from the contrarian officials, he missed the “deadline set by the Khan of the Jin.”⁴⁷

In the records of the Qing, it is stated that a Joseon envoy (meaning Bak Inbeom) arrived in Shenyang on the 27th day of the tenth month (November 24), and so let us call the ultimatum mentioned in quotation (E) the ‘ultimatum in November.’ Following a round of fierce controversy over the dispatch of an official envoy after Bak Inbeom's return to Joseon, the autumn envoy Bak No then left Seoul on the “fourth day of the 12th month (December 30).”⁴⁸ Therefore, if Hong Taiji had indeed set a

upon his return home, there was intelligence that the Qing armies were “fattening horses to come eastward and attack Joseon in the upcoming winter.” See *Injo sillok*, Injo 14/11/4(jiachen).

⁴⁶ Na Man'gap 羅萬甲, *Byeongjarok* 丙子錄 [Records of the Byeongja War] (Kyujianggak 奎 12493), 6b.

⁴⁷ *Byeongjarok* 丙子錄, 6b–7a.

⁴⁸ *Seungjeongwon ilgi* 承政院日記, Injo 14/12/4(jiaxu).

deadline of “the 25th day of the 11th month (December 21),” as claimed in quotation (E), Joseon had obviously missed the “deadline set by the Khan of the Jin (i.e. Hong Taiji).”

Compared to the Qing records, which only indicate the deadline vaguely as “such day of such month” at best, the *Byeongjarok* has a specific deadline date of “the 25th day of the 11th month,” and thus more effectively backs the Qing claim of its invasion having been a just war. In addition, if the account of the ‘ultimatum in November’ were true, the ‘ultimatum in May’ in the *Qing Taizong shilu* could not be discarded as complete fabrication on the grounds that it might also be seen as having involved a simple error in dating the ultimatum.

The editors of the *Qing Taizong shilu* might defend themselves in the following way. The ultimatum in the year 1636 was made only verbally, without documentation, and in consequence, only memories of that event remained when the *Qing Taizong shilu* was later compiled and no one could specify whether it had been during the middle of the fourth month (May) or the end of the tenth month (November). Under these circumstances, the editors had had no choice but to select the date when Hong Taiji had been more likely to meet an envoy from Joseon, which was the 15th day of the fourth month, and had inserted that date for the ultimatum.

The deadline of the ‘25th day of the 11th month’ also fits well with the context of the Qing’s preparations for invading Joseon. On the fifth day of the tenth month of 1636 (November 2), Hong Taiji revealed his plan to wait “until after the rivers freeze” and to raise up a large number of troops.⁴⁹ On the 16th day of that same month (November 13), Hife 喜福, one of the Qing grand secretaries, was dispatched to the assemblies of *waifan Menggu* 外藩蒙古 (nomadic Mongol nobles) to notify them of the Qing’s plan for an expedition to Joseon when the rivers freeze.⁵⁰ By the

⁴⁹ *QTZSL*, Chongde 1/10/5(bingzi).

⁵⁰ *QTZSL*, Chongde 1/10/16(dinghai). For the connection between the assemblies of *waifan Menggu* and the Manchu/Qing invasion of Joseon, see Bumjin Koo and Lee Jaegyong 丘凡眞 · 李在瑒, 2017, “Sütoku gennen (ichi roku san roku) no gaihan Mōko kaimei to heishi koran” 崇德元年

time Bak Inbeom arrived in Shenyang on the 27th day of the tenth month, the Qing had already begun preparing to dispatch troops to Joseon. And on the 11th day of the 11th month (December 7),⁵¹ Hong Taiji sent an order to the Mongol nobles to gather in Shenyang by the 30th day of the 11th month (December 26).⁵² On the 19th day of that month, he also ordered the Eight Banners to complete preparations for the expedition and gather by the 29th day (December 25).⁵³ And on the 25th day of the month, the winter solstice of 1636 (December 21), a sacrificial offering was held to announce the dispatch of troops to Joseon to Heaven as well as to the divine spirit of the Nurhaci shrine.⁵⁴ In view of the fact that the sacrificial offering marking the dispatch of troops to Joseon was made on the winter solstice day, about one month after Bak Inbeom's arrival in Shenyang on the 27th day of the tenth month, it is possible to assume that the '25th day of the eleventh month' (December 21) had been presented as the deadline.

However, it is still too early to acknowledge the 'ultimatum in November' detailed in the *Byeongjarok* as an established fact. To begin with, since there is no evidence anywhere else in the Qing or Joseon official records that Hong Taiji did give a reply to Bak Inbeom, the *Byeongjarok*'s mention of Hong Taiji's "reply letter" in quotation (E) casts doubt on the credibility of its account of the ultimatum notification. The official records of the Qing and Joseon all note that Hong Taiji refused to accept the documents delivered by Bak Inbeom and it seems absurd to suppose that a reply letter was given to a person whose letter had been rejected in the first place. In addition, given that Bak Inbeom was not an official envoy and his letter was not accepted, it seems doubtful that Hong Taiji would have met Bak in person. In fact, according to the Qing records,

(一六三六)の外藩蒙古會盟と丙子胡亂 [The Assemblies of *Waifan* Menggu in the First Year of the Chongde Reign (1636) and the Manchu/Qing Invasion of Joseon], in *Shirin* 100:6, Kyoto.

⁵¹ *Manwen laodang*, VII, 1362.

⁵² *QTZSL*, Chongde 1/11/11(xinhai).

⁵³ *QTZSL*, Chongde 1/11/19(jiwei).

⁵⁴ *QTZSL*, Chongde 1/11/25(yichou).

Hong Taiji merely issued an order on the 27th day of the tenth month (November 24) that the Joseon king's letter not be accepted.⁵⁵ In other words, Hong Taiji never actually met a Joseon envoy at that time. But even if Hong Taiji did not meet Bak Inbeom, it is still deemed possible that an ultimatum notification might have been given through a negotiating party, such as Inggūldai, who was certain to have met Bak.⁵⁶ In other words, the passage regarding the ultimatum - "if your country will not restore peaceful relations by way of sending its minister and prince [as hostages] before the 25th day of the 11th month [of 1636]" - may well reflect to some extent what actually happened.

Nevertheless, in consideration of certain contradictions, it seems hard to trust the account of the 'ultimatum in November' in the *Byeongjarok* in its entirety. One crucial contradiction is an entry in the *Injo sillok* dated the 13th day of the 11th month (December 9) of 1636, which mentions an episode out of line with the claim of the ultimatum deadline of the '25th day of the 11th month.' It is said there that on the 13th day of the 11th month, the Border Defense Council, fearing that an outbreak of war was imminent, suggested military preparations as follows:

(F) If there is an invasion alarm after the rivers freeze, it will be difficult to muster soldiers from the southern provinces. As we have already ordered that 18,300 soldiers be made ready, now we should order the left and right commanders of Gyeongsang Province, . . . to move the soldiers up to the provinces' borders **by the tenth day of the 12th month**, . . .⁵⁷
[Emphasis is mine.]

⁵⁵ *Manwen laodang*, VII, 1362.

⁵⁶ Inggūldai seems to have been a major contact point with Bak Inbeom, for extensive talks. See "Injo jo gosa bonmal" 仁祖朝故事本末 [Old stories of King Injo's reign] in *Yeollyeosisil gisul* 燃藜室記述, *gwon* 25 (Yi Geungik's Private History of the Joseon Dynasty), 11th month of the *byeongja* year; and Jo Gyeongnam 趙慶男, *Sokjamnok* 續雜錄, *gwon* 4 [Sequel to the Miscellaneous Records], 12th month of the *byeongja* year.

⁵⁷ *Injo sillok*, Injo 14/11/13(jichou).

It was suggested here that in order to quickly deploy the troops from the southern provinces to the front line in the event of war, the “18,300 soldiers,” recruited previously,⁵⁸ need to be moved up to the various provinces’ borders in advance. One particular point of note here is the date mentioned, which is the ‘tenth day of the 12th month (January 5, 1637).’ If the deadline date given to Bak Inbeom at Shenyang had been the ‘25th day of the 11th month,’ it seems only natural that the Border Defense Council would have set the deadline for moving up the soldiers from the southern provinces to the provinces’ borders as the ‘25th day of the 11th month’ or earlier. Furthermore, the winter solstice fell on the 25th day of the 11th month (December 21) in 1636, already long after winter had begun, so rivers could have been frozen by then. However, the Border Defense Council set the deadline for mobilizing the troops as the tenth day of the 12th month (January 5, 1637), 15 days later than the deadline supposedly given by the Qing. Injo even ordered the Border Defense Council to “take it slow for the time being,” in regard to its military preparation measures.⁵⁹ This suggests that even the ‘tenth day of the 12th month’ seemed too early to the King. The deadline of the ‘25th day of the 11th month’ appearing in the ‘ultimatum in November’ thus seems hardly plausible, in light of Joseon’s troop mobilization date in quotation (F) - the tenth day of the 12th month - together with Injo’s opinion that even that date was too early.

Moreover, the deadline of the ‘25th day of the 11th month’ also fails to fit well in the context of autumn envoy Bak No’s dispatch on the ‘fourth day of the 12th month,’ finally authorized by the Border Defense Council after fierce opposition. If the Council, which had pursued the dual tracks of diplomatic negotiations and preparations for war after hearing Bak Inbeom’s report, had already been informed of the alleged deadline, there would have been no reason for it to dispatch an envoy af-

⁵⁸ This recruitment seems to refer to the select 20,000 Sog’o soldiers 東伍軍 of the provinces, suggested by Kim Ryu early in the 7th month in preparation for emergencies. See *Injo sillok*, Injo 14/7/4(bingwu).

⁵⁹ See *Injo sillok*, Injo 14/11/13(jichou).

ter Joseon had already missed that deadline. It would have been only rational for the Joseon court to have given up all hopes of peace talks and instead concentrate on military preparations, in line, for example, with the precedent set by the Goryeo dynasty that moved its capital to Ganghwa Island in 1232 to defend against the Mongol invasion.⁶⁰

Hence, the alleged deadline of the ‘25th day of the 11th month’ in the ‘ultimatum in November’ does not match well with the dates of the ‘tenth day of the 11th month’ suggested for mobilizing the Joseon forces, or the ‘fourth day of the 12th month’ on which Pak No left Seoul. In addition, just like the ‘ultimatum in May,’ the ‘ultimatum in November’ is not mentioned in the state letter from Hong Taiji, dated the 17th day of the first month of 1637. Therefore, it is difficult to trust the veracity of the ‘ultimatum in November’.

Nonetheless, it is still possible that an ultimatum was indeed given by the Qing, in one form or another, on the eve of its invasion of Joseon. Looking at *Yeollyeosil gisul* 燃藜室記述 (Yi Geungik’s Private History of the Joseon Dynasty), we find, in addition to its duplication of the *Byeongjarok*’s account of the ‘ultimatum in May,’ two more stories to the effect that the Qing did notify Joseon of the expedition date in advance. One states that in the tenth month of 1636, Mafuta came to the border town of Uiju and notified Yim Gyeonggeop of an expedition date of “the 26th day of the 11th month (December 22),” telling him that the troops heading toward Joseon would turn around, at once, if Joseon dispatched an envoy to make a new peace agreement with the Qing before the deadline. The other story states that Hong Taiji, having waited for a Joseon envoy to restore relations with Joseon until the “27th day of the 11th month (December 23)” - a date originally set for an expedition against the Ming - not only decided to invade Joseon instead of the Ming when no envoy from Joseon appeared by the “29th day”, but also declared that “we have no choice but to chastise Joseon for its guilt first.”⁶¹ Consider-

⁶⁰ This seems a possibility in view of the proposals made from early 1636 for the timely evacuation of Seoul. See *Injo sillok*, Injo14/2/29(jiachen), 14/6/13(bingxu).

⁶¹ “Injo jo gosa bonmal” 仁祖朝故事本末 in *Yeollyeosil gisul* 燃藜室記述, *gwon* 25, 10th and 11th

ing the existence of such differing versions of the ultimatum notification, including the 'ultimatum of November' of the *Byeongjarok*, it would seem quite possible that there might have been some event that served as the background basis for them.

It can also be said that, even if the account of a deadline date of the '25th day of the 11th month' may be wrong, this does not mean that there was no deadline given at all. In fact, the troop mobilization date proposed by the Border Defense Council - the 'tenth day of the 12th month (January 5, 1637)' - in quotation (F) from the *Injo sillok* and Injo's opposition to it suggest that with respect to a date for troop mobilization, both the Border Defense Council and the King had in mind a certain deadline date for Joseon's response set by the Qing. Then, the remaining question is when that deadline was. The reason why the 'ultimatum in November' of the *Byeongjarok* conflicts with quotation (F) from the *Injo sillok* is its citing of the '25th day of the 11th month' as the deadline. Hence, supposing that there was indeed an ultimatum and that its deadline was not the '25th day of the 11th month,' the contradiction between the two historical sources may be resolved. With this in mind, let us hypothesize that the Qing did in fact deliver an ultimatum to Bak Inbeom, yet that the deadline stated was the '25th day of the 12th month' instead of the alleged '25th day of the 11th month.' This hypothesis seems possible, considering that in Chinese characters there is a mere one-stroke difference between '11th month' and '12th month.'

Furthermore, Na Man'gap, the author of the *Byeongjarok*, hadn't been in a position to know exactly what had happened in the court until after he entered the Namhan Mountain Fortress to which the Joseon court had fled when the Qing invaded. This is because he had been dismissed during the previous year of 1635, and left Seoul.⁶² He would have thus heard about Bak Inbeom's report much later and only secondhandedly.

months of the byeongja year.

⁶² Kim Sangheon 金尙憲, "Hyeongjo chamui Na gong Man'gap sindobimyong" 刑曹參議羅公萬甲神道碑銘 [Biographic Inscription of Na Man'gap, Third Minister of the Ministry of Punishments], in *Cheongeum jip* 淸陰集 [Collection of Kim Sangheon's Works], *gwon* 28.

On top of this, misunderstandings and errors caused by individual prejudices may likely be involved in the translation of secondhand news into written words. The error in the *Byeongjarok* stating that Hong Taiji had given Bak Inbeom a “reply letter” must also have been caused by the uncritical duplication of secondhand news. Similarly, NaMan’gap may have erroneously taken the original deadline of the ‘25th day of the 12th month’ as the ‘25th day of the 11th month’ and concluded that it was the correct date because it matched well with the outbreak of the war in the early part of the 12th month. Based on that mistaken date, he might have reached an interpretation that Joseon had failed to prevent the outbreak of war because it had not met the deadline imposed by Hong Taiji.

It may be criticized that this inference seems too far-fetched but the hypothesis that there was an ultimatum notification with a deadline date of the ‘25th day of the 12th month’ (January 20, 1637) makes good sense of the defensive measures taken by the Joseon court after receiving Bak Inbeom’s report on his trip to Shenyang. If the deadline was the ‘25th day of the 12th month,’ then the date of troop mobilization proposed by the Border Defense Council - the ‘tenth day of the 12th month (January 5, 1637)’ - would have been 15 days before that deadline. And Injo’s suggestion - “let’s take it slow for the time being” - is also understandable enough. Moreover, the date of the autumn envoy Bak No’s departure - the ‘fourth day of the 12th month (December 30, 1636)’ - would have been 21 days before the deadline, enough of a time span to travel from Seoul to Shenyang.

Moreover, it has now been revealed that the hypothesis that Bak Inbeom received the ‘25th day of the 12th month’ deadline while in Shenyang is not supported solely by the above inference. As a matter of fact, a Qing deadline of the ‘25th day of the 12th month’ can be ascertained by an entry in the *Seungjeongwon ilgi* 承政院日記 (Daily Records of the Royal Secretariat), an almost real-time official daily record of happenings during the Qing invasion of Joseon and hence a much more reliable source than the *Byeongjarok*, a private history written by Na Man’gap. This entry testifies:

(G) [Jeong Myeongsu, a Joseon-born interpreter from the Qing camp] said, “we (i.e. the Qing) did not make any error but your country made a mistake on its own. ㉠ **Initially, Bak Inbeom was informed in much detail when he left for Joseon** and told to send a [special] embassy by ㉡ **the ‘25th day of the 12th month.’** But your country did not send an embassy on time. ㉢ **Although Bak No was sent, he was a regular envoy as usual.** For this reason, we were obliged to lead [our forces] deep inside...”⁶³

Quotation (G) is a report to Injo by Yi Gyeongjik 李景稷, who met the Qing party outside of the Namhan Mountain Fortress on the 20th day of the 12th month of the *byeongja* year (January 15, 1637). Yi stated that according to the Qing side, the reason why the Qing had invaded deep into Joseon at that time was the Joseon side's failure to meet the conditions and deadline delivered to Bak Inbeom. In what follows, the main points of that report will be expounded.

To begin with, in part ㉠, “when Bak Inbeom... left for Joseon” refers to the date of his departure from Shenyang, which was the 29th day of the tenth month of 1636 (November 26, 1636) according to the Qing records. It should have been Qing working-level officials such as Inggūldai and/or Jeong Myeongsu, rather than Hong Taiji, by whom Bak had been “informed in much detail.” Then comes the most important part, ㉡, in which the deadline for satisfying the conditions (i.e. the dispatch of a special embassy) presented to Bak by the Qing was stated not as the ‘25th day of the 11th month’ (December 21, 1636), but rather the ‘25th day of the 12th month’ (January 20, 1637).

The conversation detailed in quotation (G) took place on the 20th day of the 12th month (January 15, 1637) when there were five days left before this Qing deadline of the ‘25th day of the 12th month.’ And the Joseon court had appointed Bak No as the autumn envoy and dispatched

⁶³ *Seungjeongwon ilgi* 承政院日記, Injo 14/12/20(gengyin); *Namhan ilgi* 南漢日記 [Daily Records of the Namhan Mountain Fortress] (Kyujanggak 奎 998), 2 *chaek* (冊), 1a; *Namhan ilgi* (National Library of Korea, 古 2154-8-245), 1 *chaek* (冊), 123.

him to Shenyang on the fourth day of the 12th month (December 30, 1636). Joseon negotiator Yi thus had good reason to refute the Qing claim that “your country did not send an embassy on time.” However, Jeong from the Qing side then added immediate clarification to the effect that even though Joseon had dispatched the autumn envoy Bak No before the deadline, he was just a routine envoy dispatched every autumn, less than the kind of special embassy including prince and high-ranking minister as hostages, and Joseon had thus failed to meet the Qing’s demands.

In sum, three important facts concerning Bak Inbeom’s trip to Shenyang can be derived from quotation (G). First, on the 29th day of the tenth month, when Bak left Shenyang to return home without having completed his original mission of delivering the letters from Injo, he received a verbal ultimatum from the Qing working-level officials, including Inggūldai and/or Jeong Myeongsu. Second, the conditions presented in the ultimatum were the dispatch of a special embassy consisting of Joseon’s prince and high-ranking minister as hostages, distinct in nature from the usual spring and autumn envoys.⁶⁴ Third, and yet most importantly, the deadline given in the ultimatum was the ‘25th day of the 12th month’ of the *byeongja* year (January 20, 1637).

⁶⁴ On the 15th day of the 12th month of the *byeongja* year (January 10, 1637), Choe Myeonggil, who had gone to the Qing army camp the previous day to buy time for Injo to evacuate to the Namhan Mountain Fortress, returned and reported, “Looking at their words and facial expressions (*sasaek* 辭色), I do not think they have anything else in mind other than settling (*gangjeong* 講定) three issues (*sangeonsa* 三件事).” Injo said, in reply, that “You must have been deceived. How could they have come this far only for those three issues?” See *Injo sillok*, Injo 14/12/15(yiyou). Looking at their conversation, both seem to have known already what the “three issues” were, adding to the two issues of sending one of Injo’s sons or brothers and one of his ministers as hostages, the one issue of sending the officials who had led the anti-Manchu opinion in the court. See Suzuki Kai 鈴木開, 2017, “Heishi no ran to Chō-Shin kankei no seiritsu” 丙子の亂と朝清關係の成立 [The Manchu/Qing Invasion of Joseon in 1637, and Establishment of the Joseon-Qing Relationship], in *Chōsenshi kenkyūkai ronbunshū* 朝鮮史研究會論文集 55 [Collection of Papers of the Korean History Research Society], 57. Even though this was the first contact with the Qing army since outbreak of the war, it can be assumed that the three issues were in fact the ‘conditions’ that Bak Inbeom had received from Shenyang, as Injo and Choe Myeonggil had already known of them.

By now, the Qing deadline of the '25th day of the 12 th month' should be taken as actual fact, and not a hypothesis. This deadline provides a key to questions that cannot be answered by the deadline of the '25th day of the 11 th month' of the *Byeongjarok*. First of all, as mentioned above already, it explains the measures taken by Joseon after Bak Inbeom's return from Shenyang. The deadline date of the '25th day of the 12th month' also answers the question of why Hong Taiji, in his war of words with Injo over the war's legitimacy, mentioned only a preliminary warning given about the outbreak of war without any mention of ultimatum with a definite deadline. As it happened, the Qing had presented an ultimatum to Bak Inbeom's party with a deadline date of the '25th day of the 12 th month' (January 20, 1637), yet launched a surprise attack by its forward forces crossing the Yalu River on the 8th day of the 12th month (January 3, 1637), or 17 days ahead of that deadline.⁶⁵ In his state letter dated the 17th day of the first month (February 11, 1637), Hong Taiji emphasized that he had "clearly informed" Joseon's envoys before they returned home and did not deceive Joseon. In fact, however, he had deceived the Joseon side into believing in the false deadline date of the '25th day of the 12th month.' For that very reason, he did not in his state letter mention the ultimatum given to Bak Inbeom at Shenyang. He tried to gloss over the false deadline of the '25th day of the 12th month' with deliberate silence. Injo, on the other hand, who was in desperate crisis at that time, could not dare to raise this issue to protest why Hong Taiji had launched a surprise attack well before the deadline delivered to Bak Inbeom. Hong Taiji was thus free to insist on his innocence of deceiving Joseon and could claim that his Joseon expedition was a just war.

⁶⁵ Bumjin Koo, *Byeongja horan, Hong Taiji ui jeonjaeng* 병자호란, 홍타이지의 전쟁, 90-100.

The Reality of Diplomatic Contacts on the Eve of the War: Joseon's Hope versus the Qing's Deception

In the analysis so far, it has been shown that just before the Qing launched its invasion of Joseon, the Joseon court, in hopes of avoiding war, made diplomatic efforts by sending Bak Inbeom to Shenyang but that the Qing took advantage of these hopes to deceitfully offer a false deadline for conciliatory measures by Joseon, viz., the '25th day of the 12th month' (January 20, 1637). The Qing then launched a surprise attack far before the false deadline date given to Bak. In view of the success of that surprise attack in the beginning of the war, it can be said that the Qing enjoyed great benefits from this deception.

As suggested by the title of one book, *Jeonjaeng eun sokimsuda* 전쟁은 속임수다 (War is a Deception),⁶⁶ the more you deceive your opponent in a war, the more likely you are to win. When it comes to war, the so-called *SongXiang zhi ren* 宋襄之仁 ([unnecessary] benevolence of Duke Xiang of Song) represents not a virtue but a symbol of incompetence. It is thus rather natural that the Qing would practice deceit against Joseon prior to the invasion. In fact, it is well known that Hong Taiji used a similar stratagem to induce the Ming to kill General Yuan Chonghuan 袁崇煥 (1584–1630),⁶⁷ the mainstay of the Ming forces deployed against the Manchus. But why is it that the strategic deception of the Qing before the invasion of Joseon has not received scholarly attention? Isn't it because the narrative of a just war in the *Qing Taizong shilu*, promoted by the Qing court historians, has blinded modern historians to that deception for a long time? As pointed out previously, the *Qing Taizong shilu* covered up the existence of this deception by recording the expedition dispatch date

⁶⁶ Li Ling 李零, Kim Sungho 김승호, 2012, trans., *Jeonjaeng eun sokimsuda: Li Ling ui Sonja gangui* 전쟁은 속임수다: 리링의 『손자』 강의 [War is a Deception: Li Ling's Lecture on Sunzi] (Paju: Geulhangari. The Chinese title of Li Ling's book is “兵以詐立”(a quotation from *Sunzi bingfa* 孫子兵法 [The Art of War by Sunzi], 軍爭篇), while the title of its Korean translation is “兵者詭道也”(a quotation from 孫子兵法, 始計篇).

⁶⁷ *QTZSL*, Tiancong 3/11/27(wushen), Tiancong 3/11/29(gengxu).

that Hong Taiji notified Joseon of as simply “such day of such month.”

Given that this deceptive stratagem of the Qing, glossed over by the narrative of a just war in the *Qing Taizong shilu*, has been revealed by this study, a new reading of the diplomatic contacts attempted by the Joseon court on the eve of the Qing invasion is now to be called for. To begin with, it is plausible that Bak Inbeom's trip to Shenyang was itself induced by the Qing.

As mentioned previously in this article, a notification letter was written by the Joseon court on the 17th day of the sixth month of 1636, but it was only in the early part of the ninth month that the first practical attempt to deliver this notification letter was made. What follows is the context surrounding these facts, in some detail. Late in the sixth month, Mafuta came to Zhongjiang 中江 (K. Junggang), across the river from Uiju, saying that he would pay the price of the goods that Na Deokheon's party had brought to Shenyang.⁶⁸ A meeting with the responsible official on the Joseon side was not realized at that time and Mafuta said he would return to settle the balance in the eighth month. The Joseon court might have surmised that it would be worthwhile trying to deliver the notification letter to Mafuta when he came again,⁶⁹ because the Qing official returned and paid the price for the goods even though he “must have known that relations between the two countries had already been cut off.”⁷⁰ In fact, Mafuta did return to Zhongjiang as promised in the early part of the ninth month, albeit a little late, and this provided a chance for diplomatic contact between the two countries.⁷¹ However, when the Joseon side asked him to receive its notification letter, Mafuta said that he could not by affirming that it had nothing to do with the mission he was

⁶⁸ *Manwen laodang* 滿文老檔, VI, 1158–1159; Jo Gyeongnam 趙慶男, *Sok jammok* 續雜錄, gwon 4, 1st day of the 7th month of 1636. According to Na Deokheon, when he left Shenyang in the 4th month he heard from Inggüldai and Mafuta that they would come to Junggang on the 25th day of the 6th month, to pay the price for the goods. See *Bukhaeng ilgi* 北行日記 in *Jangam urok* 壯巖遺錄, gwon 2, 21b.

⁶⁹ *Seungeongwon ilgi*, Injo 14/8/2(guiyou).

⁷⁰ *Injo sillok*, Injo 14/8/2(guiyou).

⁷¹ *Manwen laodang*, VI, 1244; VII, 1281–1282; *Injo sillok*, Injo 14/9/10(xinhai).

in charge of. He added, however, that if Joseon “sincerely wished to send it, Joseon should entrust it to a specially appointed envoy.”⁷² On top of this, Mafuta even left a statement that the Qing “regretted the Joseon envoys having been insulted” in the fourth month previously.⁷³

For Joseon, this was the first diplomatic contact to restore relations between the brotherly countries (*hyeongje ji guk* 兄弟之國) since the return of Na Deokheon’s party. And although Joseon failed to deliver the notification letter, Mafuta’s response at that time was seen as a ‘green light’ to keep hopes for negotiations alive. Subsequently, the Joseon court decided to dispatch Bak Inbeom to Shenyang, entrusted with the notification letter left in Uiju, together with a new state letter.⁷⁴

Bak Inbeom’s journey to Shenyang was thus decided by the Joseon court in an active response to Mafuta’s signals, which were enticing enough to stimulate hope on Joseon’s part of restoring the relationship. Before that, Mafuta’s returning to settle the balance owed for the goods might have been the overture to a deception, aimed at luring Joseon to send someone to Shenyang. This might be dismissed as excessive suspicion, but at any rate, Bak Inbeom’s trip to Shenyang did make it possible for the Qing to deceive Joseon by giving it a false deadline for its expedition.

Further, it appears that the Qing’s deception of Joseon did not stop at giving it the false deadline date. According to the *Sok jammok* 續雜錄 (Sequel to the Miscellaneous Records), which contains several accounts concerning Bak Inbeom’s trip to Shenyang, Bak observed that “the barbarians demonstrated their desires to not sever [relations] with our country, in words and attitudes.” In addition, the Qing officials provided false information that might have thwarted Joseon’s prompt and correct judgment of the situation. For example, on the 21st day of the tenth month, near Tongyuanbao 通遠堡, Bak Inbeom met a person named Aengnam 鶯男 who had been taken prisoner during the 1627 Manchu invasion of Jo-

⁷² *Injo sillok*, Injo14/9/10(xinhai).

⁷³ *Injo sillok*, Injo14/9/19(gengshen).

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

seon. When Bak inquired of him about the consequences of the Qing raid against the Ming led by Ajige 阿濟格, Hong Taiji's half-brother, from the sixth to the ninth month of 1636 (hereafter referred to as 'Ajige's raid'),⁷⁵ Aengnam said that he had himself participated in that raid and that the Qing had suffered severe damage, losing "Abatai, the Kahn's younger brother" (sic), thereby causing Hong Taiji to harshly scold the commander Ajige. When asked whether the Qing was planning to invade Joseon, Aengnam replied, "I do not know yet but they always say that they are looking forward to seeing Joseon's high-ranking ministers come to Shenyang." Bak Inbeom also reported that he had heard through multiple channels, including the Qing officers at Tongyuanbao, that the Qing forces were preparing weapons and equipment for a plan to attack the Shanhai Pass (Shanhaiguan 山海關) with a large number of troops during the 12th month.⁷⁶

Putting aside the actual course of events on Ajige's raid on the Ming,⁷⁷ the information from the Qing party that Abatai 阿巴泰/押大 (1589–1646) - Hong Taiji's half-brother - had been killed in action and that Hong Taiji had disciplined Ajige for the serious loss he brought was all a blatant lie.⁷⁸ When asked about the plan to invade Joseon, the Qing party also gave false information that the Qing also hopes to restore the diplomatic relationship with Joseon. The information that the Qing army was planning to move to the Shanhai Pass (Shanhaiguan 山海關) in the 12th month was false as well.

At the time, however, the Joseon court could not notice that those pieces of information were false. As a matter of fact, on the 29th day of the tenth month, Yim Gyeong'eop, Magistrate of Uiju, also reported in-

⁷⁵ For the Qing's gains from 'Ajige's raid' and its connection to the Manchu/Qing invasion of Joseon, see Bumjin Koo, *Byeongja horan, Hong Taiji ui jeonjaeng* 병자호란, 홍타이지의 전쟁, 39–42.

⁷⁶ Pyeonggam seojang" 平監書狀 [Report from the Governor of Pyeongan Province], in Jo Gyeongnam, *Sokjammok, gwon* 4, 23rd day of the 11th month of the *byeongja* year.

⁷⁷ According to the Qing records there were only four deaths of officers, and 75 deaths of soldiers. See *Manwen laodang*, VII, 1275.

⁷⁸ See footnote 75.

correct intelligence that the Qing invasion had been defeated by the Ming, with one of Hong Taiji's brothers killed in action.⁷⁹ It was hence possible for Joseon to gauge that since the Qing had been badly defeated by the Ming in Ajige's raid, there would be little chance for it to attack Joseon. It could also be assumed that if the Qing were preparing for a war, it would probably be for revenge or a (preemptive) defensive action against the Ming, not Joseon.

If such false information flowed into the Joseon court through Bak Inbeom, it seems possible that Bak had fallen into a trap to deceive Joseon set by the Qing, during his journey to and from Shenyang. And in fact, hadn't the Qing used a similar trick to eliminate the Ming general Yuan Chonghuan? Later, Injo, who was besieged in the Namhan Mountain Fortress immediately after the Manchu's Invasion of Joseon began, lamented on the 18th day of the 12th month (January 13, 1637) that "now I see that [the Qing] deceived us with the interpreter's false report of the Qing's defeat by the Ming, in order to [strike an unexpected blow] against us before we could shore up our defenses."⁸⁰ He thus belatedly realized that Bak's information was false.

From this, it seems possible to say that Bak Inbeom's trip to Shenyang was used as an opportunity for the Qing to attempt a deception ploy against Joseon. The deadline that the Qing told Bak Inbeom in the ultimatum notification proves to have been a false one. Much of the information collected by Bak on his trip to Shenyang was untrue as well and this is also likely to have been part of the trap of deception set up by the Qing in advance. After Bak returned home, the Joseon government was, on the one hand, wary of an outbreak of war but on the other hand, continued to hope that diplomatic efforts could prevent it. Eventually, it led Joseon hesitant to immediately switch to a war footing until the last minute. It can therefore be said that the Qing achieved the results they desired by carrying out a deception on the occasion of Bak Inbeom's trip to Shenyang.

⁷⁹ *Injo sillok*, Injo 14/10/29(gengzi).

⁸⁰ *Seungjeongwon ilgi*, Injo 14/12/18(wuzi); *Namhan ilgi* 南漢日記 (National Library of Korea, 古 2154-8-245) 1 *chaek*, 57.

Concluding Remarks: Traces of the Unerased Truth

To briefly summarize the results of this research so far, here is an answer to the question posed at the beginning of this article: “Did the Qing actually deliver an ultimatum to Joseon?” Yes, the Qing did indeed give Joseon an ultimatum. This was done when Bak Inbeom went to Shenyang in the late part of the tenth month of 1636. However, the deadline that the Qing presented to Bak at that time was the ‘25th day of the 12th month’ (January 20, 1637), a false date given to maximize the effectiveness of their surprise attack in the war, which actually began when the first unit of Qing forces crossed the border on the eighth day of the same month (January 3, 1637). The Qing leaked additional false information as well, such as the report of severe damage suffered during its raid on the Ming just a few months earlier. The Qing conducted a deception stratagem by taking advantage of Bak Inbeom’s trip to Shenyang.

Ultimately, the ‘calm before the storm,’ so to speak, from the break-up of relations between the two countries in the fourth month (May 1636)⁸¹ until the war broke out early in the 12th month (January 1637), meant to Joseon a ‘time for peace talks’ through which they attempted to avoid a war by restoring peaceful relations based on their brotherhood pact of 1627, whereas for the Qing, who had already determined to go to war,⁸² it meant a ‘time for deceit’ in which it could make the necessary arrangements to enhance the chances of success for their surprise attack. There appeared to have been a calm span on the eve of the storm but the Qing’s deceptive operations in the months after the season entered autumn probably signaled that war had already begun.

Nonetheless, despite what has been illustrated so far, it may be asked whether it can be indisputably concluded that the Qing did deceive Joseon based on records of the Joseon side alone. If one wishes to prove

⁸¹ Bumjin Koo, *Byeongja horan, Hong Taiji ui jeonjaeng* 병자호란, 홍타이지의 전쟁, 64–71.

⁸² It seems that Hong Taiji had already decided to lead his armies in person in an all-out war by the 11th day of the 4th month. See Bumjin Koo, *Byeongja horan, Hong Taiji ui jeonjaeng* 병자호란, 홍타이지의 전쟁, 64–71.

the charge of the Qing's deception, isn't it essential to present a firm piece of proof or 'smoking gun' from the Qing's own records, something in direct conflict with the just-war narrative of the *Qing Taizong shilu*? It is, however, difficult to find in the Qing's records a smoking gun that determines the existence of the false '25th day of the 12th month' (January 20, 1637) deadline. This is because the Qing documents recorded the expedition date that Hong Taiji supposedly informed Joseon of as "such day of such month," without any specific actual date. If the date had been specified as the '25th day of the 12th month,' the fact that the Qing deceived Joseon would have been easily discovered by modern historians. Furthermore, Hong Taiji's claim, as in his state letter, that he "did not use deceit" to invade Joseon would have turned out to be a lie.

If hopes for a piece of hard evidence of a false deadline are out of the question in the Qing records, we would seem to be facing a dead end. Fortunately, however, there is a 'detour' open to us. The purpose of the Qing's fake deadline was to launch a surprise attack by taking advantage of Joseon's failure to prepare for war. It is inconceivable that we might find a smoking gun directly proving the delivery of a fake deadline of the '25th day of the 12th month' in the Qing records, but there is instead a different type of smoking gun proving that the war was launched at a time when Joseon was not yet prepared for it. What follows presents as a conclusion this smoking gun, along with other examples of record fabrications by the Qing.

As noted above, the fraudulent editing of the 'ultimatum in May' in the *Qing Taizong shilu* from the Shunzhi era is closely related to quotation (D) drawn from 'Fan Wencheng's Memorandum.' The part from quotation (D), relevant to the Qing claim for a 'just war,' reads as follows:

- (a) If he (i.e. Hong Taiji) had really wanted to kill and hurt our people, how could he have been willing to teach us clearly [when he would invade] instead of moving armies unexpectedly to attack us when we were unprepared?

Quotation (a) from 'Fan Wencheng's Memorandum' refers to a supposed advance notification by Hong Taiji of the date of his expedition, intending to show that the Qing had not committed an unscrupulous act of launching a surprise attack on an unprepared opponent. If read without knowledge of its fabrication, the account of the 'ultimatum in May' in the *Qing Taizong shilu* will certainly be interpreted as evidence backing the argument set forth in quotation (a).

However, we can have completely different interpretations from the prayer read aloud in the Manchu language on the 25th day of the 11th month (December 21, 1636), when Hong Taiji performed a ritual aimed to notify Heaven of the launch of his expedition.⁸³ Towards the end of the prayer, Hong Taiji confided his intention to Heaven as follows:

(b) I am aware that the Joseon state changed [its mind], and so I want [to attack it] first before it is ready for war . . . (Ma: bi coohiyān gurun i gūwaliyaka be yargiyalame safi, ini **jabdunggala** bi nendeki seme. . .)⁸⁴
[Emphasis is mine]

Quotation (b) is an English translation of a passage in the original Manchu language text including the prayer, dated the 25th day of the 11th month, contained in the *Old Manchu Archives* and untouched by the editors of the *Qing Taizong shilu*. In the context of this passage, the Manchu word "jabdunggala" means "[to attack it] first before it is ready for war,"⁸⁵ making it clear that Hong Taiji was informing Heaven that he was going to launch a surprise attack on Joseon.

Here let us assess the nature of quotations (a) and (b) as historical

⁸³ According to the Manchu language records describing the prayer ceremony on the 25th day of the 11th month in detail, a Manchu official from the Board of Rites read the prayer on behalf of Hong Taiji and there seems to have been no Chinese translation of it. See *Manwen laodang* VII, 1462–1471.

⁸⁴ *Jiu Manzhou dang* 舊滿洲檔, 10 ce (冊), 5332.

⁸⁵ In the Japanese translation of the *Manwen laodang*, the passage "jabdunggala" is translated as "準備を完了する前に" ("before finishing preparing for the war"). See *Manwen laodang*, VII, 1469.

sources. Quotation (a) is a part of ‘Fan Wencheng’s Memorandum,’ designed to construct the narrative of a just war, while quotation (b) is a prayer read to Heaven under Hong Taiji’s name on the 25th day of the 11th month (December 21, 1636). And if the quotations (a) and (b) are contrasted, it is not difficult to recognize their incompatibility. Quotation (a) is a blatant lie,⁸⁶ and quotation (b) is a smoking gun that proves it.

Fan Wencheng, chief editor of the *Qing Taizong shilu*, had had attempted to get quotation (a) inscribed on the Samjeondo Stele, and when it did not go the way he wanted, he later did insert a fabricated account of the ‘ultimatum in May’ into the *Qing Taizong shilu* in order to construct a narrative of just war. Fan would not have left untouched a firm and thus unfavorable piece of evidence like quotation (b) as it was in the Manchu language. The entire text of the inscription of the Samjeondo Stele was included in the *Qing Taizong shilu*,⁸⁷ yet quotation (a) was not incorporated into the inscription. Fan thus had no need for concern about the inconsistency between the quotations (a) and (b). Still, another contradiction between the records remained unresolved.

Fan and his assistant editors of the *Qing Taizong shilu* must have noticed the inconsistency between their fabricated account of the ‘ultimatum in May’ and the Manchu word “*jabdunggala*” (“[to attack it] first before it is ready for war”) in the prayer read to Heaven on the winter solstice day. This is because the account of the ‘ultimatum in May’ was intended to portray the Manchu invasion of Joseon as a just war, with the Joseon side granted an opportunity to prepare for it.⁸⁸ It seems certain

⁸⁶ From this it can be surmised that the composer of the Samjeondo Inscription, Yi Gyeongseok, refused to include quotation (D) including the part (a), because it appeared to him as an outright falsehood.

⁸⁷ *QTZSL*, Chongde 4/12/28(gengxu).

⁸⁸ The account of the ‘ultimatum in May’ in the *Qing Taizong shilu* also includes an episode in which Hong Taiji was advised by Hife, one of his grand secretaries, against informing the Joseon envoys of the date of his expedition in advance, since Hife was worried that Joseon would strengthen its defensive readiness if he did. See the *Qing Taizong shilu* (Shunzhi Edition), *juan* 22, 64a-64b; and *Qing ruguan qian yu Chaoxian wanglai guoshu huibian* 清入關前與朝鮮往來國書彙編, 185. The point of this episode is that Hong Taiji’s giving notification of the date of his expedition, which runs contrary to common sense, came from his depth of mind that the ordinary man

that those who participated in compilation of the *Qing Taizong shilu* in the Shunzhi era must have concerned themselves with removing this inconsistency.⁸⁹ This is because the author of the memorandum containing quotation (a) and the head of the compilation committee of the *Qing Taizong shilu*, were the same person, namely, Fan Wencheng. But if so, then how did Fan and his assistants strive to solve this problem?

In the *Qing Taizong shilu* compiled in the Shunzhi era, quotation (b) in the Manchu language was translated into the literary Chinese as follows:

(c) I am aware that Joseon violated the brotherhood pact and so I want to dispatch troops and attack Joseon preemptively, before Joseon do so (欲乘其未發而先伐之)...⁹⁰

could not understand.

⁸⁹ The *Qing Taizong shilu* (Shunzhi Edition) is known to have been compiled first in the Manchu language, based on such Manchu language materials as the *Manwen yuan dang* (*Jiu Manzhou dang*), and then translated into literary Chinese. See Matsumura Jun 松村潤, 2018, “Junchi shosan Shin Taisō jitsu roku” 順治初纂清太宗實錄 [Shunzhi Edition of the Qing Veritable Records of Emperor Taizong] in *Min Shin shi ronkō* 明清史論考, Tokyo: amakawa Shuppansha, 341. It was from the time of the Kangxi reign that the *Qing shilu* 清實錄 were prepared in literary Chinese first and then translated into the Manchu and Mongolian languages. Endymion Wilkinson, 2013, *Chinese History: A New Manual* (中國歷史新冊), Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 833.

⁹⁰ *QTZSL* (Shunzhi Edition), juan 23, 48b, Chongde 1/11/25(yichou). As early as 1930, Nakamura Hidetaka 中村榮孝 reported the “Shin Taisō Chōsen seitō kokusaimon sōkō” 清太宗朝鮮征討告祭文草稿 [Draft of the Prayer of the Qing Emperor Taizong on the Expedition against Joseon], which he learned of from the documents of the *Neige daku* 內閣大庫 [Grand Secretariat Archives] collection, preserved by Luo Zhenyu 羅振玉. See Nakamura Hidetaka 中村榮孝, 1970, “Shin Taisō no Chōsen seibatsu ni kansuru komonjo” 清太宗の朝鮮征伐に關する古文書 [Old Document about the Qing Emperor Taizong's Expedition against Joseon], in *Nissen kankeishi no kenkyū* 日鮮關係史の研究 [Study on Japan-Korea Relations], vol. 2 Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 613–616. This document, which can be viewed as photographic material (SJ000009753) and as glass film (GF 3348 [25-241-14]) of the National Institute of Korean History, translates the original Manchu language source of quotation (c) as “乘其未發，而欲先發之” in literary Chinese. Comparing the entire document with the original text in the Manchu language and with the translation in the *Qing Taizong shilu* (Shunzhi Edition), this document seems to have preceded the latter in sequence. It seems that this draft translation was also made in the Shunzhi era.

The meaning of the word “fa” 發 of the compound *weifa* 未發 here is “to dispatch troops” (fabing 發兵). Thus, the whole sentence can be read as saying that ‘the Qing will attack Joseon first before Joseon launches its attack,’ so that it does not conflict with the account of the ‘ultimatum in May.’

But quotation (c) is an obvious misinterpretation. In addition, the Manchus were well aware that Joseon, at that time, had neither the ability nor the intention to make a preemptive attack.⁹¹ Therefore, quotation (c), a translation as meaning that the Qing would launch a preemptive strike before Joseon could launch one, was an intentional misinterpretation to resolve the contradiction caused by fabrication of the account of the ‘ultimatum in May.’ In other words, in order to hide one lie, another lie was told, which can be seen as a smoking gun proving that the Qing court historian of Shunzhi era attempted to cover up their forgery of historical records.

The efforts made by the editors of the *Qing Taizong shilu* in the Shunzhi era to conceal their forgery through an intentional misinterpretation, in combination with the fabricated account of the ‘ultimatum in May,’ present a ‘warning’ to scholars conducting research on the Manchu/Qing invasion of Joseon, that the entries in the *Qing Taizong shilu*, especially those related to its narrative of a just war, should not be trusted at face value. This warning also applies to the following findings illustrated by recent researches: the letter of the Mongol princes sent to Joseon, which is cited in its entirety for the second day of the second month of the tenth year of the Tiancong reign (March 8, 1636) in the *Qing Taizong shilu*, differs substantially from the original letter in the terms used and contents;⁹² the imperial edict (*chiyu* 勅諭) of Hong Taiji, cited on the 28th day of the first month of the second year of the Chongde reign (February 22, 1637) in the *Qing Taizong shilu*, is different from the

⁹¹ Bumjin Koo, *Byeongja horan, Hong Taiji ui jeonjaeng* 병자호란, 홍타이지의 전쟁, 41–42.

⁹² See the report (1930) by Nakamura Hidetaka 中村榮孝, “Shin Taisō no Chōsen seibatsu ni kansuru komonjo” 清太宗の朝鮮征伐に関する古文書, 607–613.

extant original in many sentences;⁹³ the imperial edict cited on the 24th day of the first month of the second year of the Chongde reign (February 18, 1637) in the *Qing Taizong shilu* proves to be a fabrication inserted at a later time;⁹⁴ and the editors of the *Qing Taizong shilu* deliberately glossed over the facts about smallpox epidemics during the first Manchu invasion in 1627 and the second Manchu invasion in 1637.⁹⁵

Finally, I would like to wrap up this article with an interesting post-script about quotation (c) as it appeared in subsequent redactions of the *Qing Taizong shilu*. If one looks up the text of the prayer to Heaven (*gaotian zhuwen* 告天祝文) in the *Qing Taizong shilu* edited in the Qianlong era - the most widely used edition today - the second sentence in quotation (c) has been revised to the following:

(d) When it (i.e. Joseon) is not yet ready for war, [I] want to dispatch troops to subdue it (欲及其未備, 興師致討) . . .⁹⁶

With regard to the Chinese translation of “*jabunggala*” in the original Manchu language prayer, the term *weifa* 未發 of quotation (c) has been revised to *weibei* 未備 (“not yet ready for war”) in quotation (d). And this revision is a slight change to the Kangxi edition of the *Qing Taizong shilu*, which read as follows:

⁹³ Hong Seonggu 홍성구, “Gungnip jungang doseogwan sojang ‘Cheong Taejong joyu e dachayeo’ 국립중앙도서관 소장 「청태종 조유」에 대하여 [A Study on Qing Taizong’s Edicts, Housed in the National Library of Korea], in *Daegu sahak* 123 (2016) 7-10.

⁹⁴ Bumjin Koo 구벽진, 2016, “Byeongja Horan gwa cheonyeondu” 병자호란과 천연두 [The Manchu/Qing Invasion of Joseon, and Smallpox] in *Minjok munhwa yeongu* 72, 49-50. This fabricated edict is also included in the Manchu Language Archives of the Qing. See Kawachi Yoshihiro 河内良弘, trans. and ed. *Neikokushien Manbun tōan yakuchū: Chūgoku daiichi rekishi tōan kansō, Sūitoku ni san nenbun* 内國史院滿文檔案譯註: 中國第一歷史檔案館藏 崇德二·三年分, 62–65. The document in question points to the need for caution that one should take even in using the Manchu archives.

⁹⁵ Bumjin Koo, *Byeongja horan, Hong Taiji ui jeonjaeng* 병자호란, 홍타이지의 전쟁, 270–274.

⁹⁶ *QTZSL* (Qianlong Edition), Chongde 1/11/25(yichou).

(e) [When] it (i.e. Joseon) is not yet ready for war, [I] want to dispatch troops first (欲其未備而先興師). . .⁹⁷

Quotation (d) from the Qianlong edition of the *Qing Taizong shilu* deleted the word *xian* 先 (“first”) appearing in the Kangxi edition. It seems that the editors viewed that word as redundant, because it was too obvious in the context of Joseon’s unpreparedness for war. Importantly, however, quotations (d) and (e), both from later editions of the *Qing Taizong shilu*, made revisions to quotation (c) from the Shunzhi edition, returning to the original meaning of quotation (b) in the Manchu language. The reason behind these later revisions seems to have stemmed from the Kangxi emperor’s desire to give priority to accuracy of the translations of Manchu language text into literary Chinese. The Kangxi emperor was in fact much concerned with the problem of discrepancies in meaning between the Manchu language texts and their Chinese translations. For example, he recollected that, in the process of editing the Kangxi edition of the *Qing Taizong shilu*, he himself spent two years reviewing the translation drafts under the editorial chiefs, such as grand secretaries Tuhai 圖海 and Du Lide 杜立德, and correcting what appeared to be incorrect translations.⁹⁸

While the editors of the Shunzhi edition of the *Qing Taizong shilu* focused on creating the narrative of a just war by manipulating historical records, their counterparts involved in the Kangxi edition valued accuracy of translation with a result that they inadvertently damaged the consistency of the narrative of a just war against Joseon. Since the editors of the Shunzhi edition were the very authors of the fabricated account of the ‘ultimatum in May,’ they were bound to be sensitive to its contradiction

⁹⁷ *QTZSL* (Kangxi Edition), juan 32, Chongde1/11/25(yichou).

⁹⁸ *Qing Shengzu shilu* 清聖祖實錄 [Qing Veritable Records of Emperor Shengzu], Kangxi 45/10/23(dingwei). Considering the Kangxi emperor’s recollections, and the correction of mistranslations in the *Qing Taizong shilu* (Kangxi Edition), it can be surmised that the original text of the prayer in the Manchu version of the *Qing Taizong shilu* (Shunzhi Edition) had not been manipulated, unlike its Chinese translation.

with the prayer of the 25th day of the 11th month whereas the editors of later editions, unaware of the fabrication of their predecessors, might well have paid little attention to this contradiction. It is of course still an open question whether they decided to put priority on the accuracy of their own translation while being aware of adverse and critical consequences that their revised translation would generate for the narrative of a just war.

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