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ABOUT THE JOURNAL OF NORTHEAST ASIAN HISTORY

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동북아역사재단
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Special Issue



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Introduction

Baihui Duan
Lancaster University

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Introduction

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Introduction

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Military conflicts have long been a central focus of history; however, contemporary military historians are increasingly seeking new directions beyond conventional discussions of war and diplomacy. The articles in this special issue shed some new light on military history. Spanning from the Mongol invasions of Korea to the Imjin War and the Second World War, these three articles cover a prolonged history and examine the environmental, strategic, and medical interactions with military ambitions in East Asia and the Pacific.

Each case study adopts a transnational perspective, crossing state boundaries to illuminate broader regional and global interactions. In the opening essay, Baihui Duan provides an environmental analysis of pests and epidemics during the Mongol invasions of Korea, revealing their connections to wider East Asian patterns of disease and warfare. Through the lens of a neighboring country's perspective, Kizaki Braddick elaborates on Toyotomi Hideyoshi's grand strategy for Korea, providing new insights into the Imjin War's strategic underpinnings. Drawing upon less-discussed sources, Hohee Cho explores the construction of the United States Naval Medical Research Unit No. 2 laboratory on the wartime frontline of the Second World War—Guam Island.

The broad coverage of space and time allows this special issue to explore both continuities and transformations in military history across

centuries. Unchanged are the persistent military ambitions—whether the Mongols, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, or the United States—and the environmental challenges inherent in waging war in a foreign country. However, notable shifts emerged in grand military strategies, advancements in the medical care of soldiers on the frontline, and consciousness of environmental factors such as tropical diseases, which spurred the development of tropical medicine.

This special issue is an outcome of a colloquium held in August 2024, sponsored by the Northeast Asian History Foundation. The panelists extend their sincere gratitude to the commentators, including Professor Peter Lorge, Dr. Hosung Shim, Dr. Jeong-il Lee, and Dr. Jaeik Ahn, as well as the anonymous peer reviewers, whose invaluable feedback greatly enriched this special issue.

Pests and Their Impacts on Humans: An Environmental History of Infectious Diseases during Mongol Invasions in East Asia

Baihui Duan
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동북아역사재단
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Abstract

Korea experienced a severe mortality crisis under Mongol rule during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Scholars have examined the high death toll during the Mongol Invasions of Korea (1231–1259), arguing epidemics exacerbated the wartime conditions. By closely scrutinizing historical documents on epidemics and pests, this article situates epidemics within a broader environmental context that encompasses not only Korea but also Song China, Japan, and Vietnam in the thirteenth century. Although there is no direct evidence to suggest the same pathogens for the parallel of epidemics across East Asia, these countries shared the similarities of being invaded by the Mongols, and such vulnerable wartime conditions and the climate anomalies of the thirteenth century could be the main environmental variables to precipitate these widespread outbreaks in these regions.

A key question remains regarding the type of wartime infectious diseases. This article adopts environmental perspectives to explore whether the thirteenth-century outbreaks in East Asia, especially Korea, might be connected to the Black Death or could potentially be typhus—commonly seen in warfare or something else. Without ruling out the possibility that the Mongol invasions may have transported new pathogens to the Korean peninsula, I argue that the environmental legacy of these invasions was to create a new cultural disease environment in Korea. Korean historical records frequently mention the presence of rodents and lice, likely transported by the Mongol cavalry, which posed a threat to daily Korean life during the prolonged Mongol invasion periods, suggesting the possible outbreaks of plague or typhus. Furthermore, the Mongol nomadic culture, with its affinity to livestock like horses, cattle, and sheep, also created another environment conducive to bacteria transmission. Even after the invasions ended, the established disease environments and continuous movements of people continued to affect the Korean peninsula and its animal and human inhabitants during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

Keywords

Mongol Invasions, Environment, Epidemics, Korea, Japan, Vietnam, Plague

Pests and Their Impacts on Humans: An Environmental History of Infectious Diseases during Mongol Invasions in East Asia

Baihui Duan
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Introduction

The Second Plague Pandemic, historically known as the Black Death, represents a complex epidemiological phenomenon at the intersection of environmental, climatic, and human mobility factors. Scholars have been debating its origins, with early historiography proposing a Chinese genesis transmitted by Italian merchants.¹ McNeill and Cao have posited that the 1333 outbreak in China may have served as a precursor to the European epidemics, although the evidence linking thirteenth-century Song China to the Black Death remains inconclusive.² Meanwhile, during the period of the Black Death in Europe from 1346 to 1353, only a single epidemic outbreak was recorded on the Korean peninsula.³ This outbreak,

^{*} I appreciate the feedback and suggestions from colleagues and reviewers who engaged with earlier drafts of this paper.

¹ Francis Aidan Gasquet, *The Black Death of 1348 and 1349* (G. Bell, 1908).

² William McNeill, *Plagues and Peoples* (Anchor, 2010), 42; Cao Shuji 曹树基 and Li Yushang 李玉尚, *Shuyi: zhanzheng yu heping Zhongguo de huanjing zhuangkuang yu shehui bianqian: 1230-1960* 鼠疫: 战争与和平中国的环境状况与社会变迁, 1230-1960 (Shandong huabao chubanshe, 2006), 63-65; Cao Shuji 曹树基, “Dili huanjing yu Songyuan shidai de chuanranbing” 地理环境与宋元时代的传染病, *Lishi yu dili* 历史与地理 12 (1995): 183-92.

³ *Goryeosa* 高麗史, vol. 34, 1348. 4.

occurring in the fourth lunar month, was primarily attributed to famine. However, despite its limited relevance to the Black Death during this period, it invites further exploration into earlier epidemics in Korea as potential precursors to subsequent plague outbreaks.

Recent scholarship has increasingly highlighted the presence of plague outbreaks associated with major Mongol sieges in earlier periods. The siege of Baghdad in 1258, culminating in the fall of the Abbasid Caliphate, represents one significant case, though recent scholarship has critically reexamined the source materials documenting this connection.⁴ Likewise, historians such as Hymes have proposed that the Mongols may have introduced plague to northern China during their conquest of the Jin Dynasty in the early thirteenth century.⁵ While the precise epidemiological identification of these disease outbreaks remains contested among scholars, the *History of Jin* (金史) documented a severe epidemic during the siege of Bianjing in 1232.⁶ Korean scholarship has examined the cultural history of epidemics during the Goryeo Dynasty, covering medical treatment, demographic changes, and Buddhist, Daoist, and Shaman approaches to epidemics.⁷

Emerging paleoepidemiological research has identified potential geographic origins for the pandemic. Genomic studies of *Yersinia pestis*, the causative agent of plague, have pointed to the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau and the Tien-Shan region of eastern Kyrgyzstan as possible sites of the initial outbreak.⁸ Notably, these areas were home to Mongol nomadic pop-

⁴ Nahyan Fancy and Monica H. Green, “Plague and the Fall of Baghdad (1258),” *Medical History* 65, no. 2 (2021): 157-77; Jonathan Brack et al., “Plague and the Mongol Conquest of Baghdad (1258)? A Reevaluation of the Sources,” *Medical History* (2024): 1-19.

⁵ Robert Hymes, “Epilogue: A Hypothesis on the East Asian Beginnings of the *Yersinia Pestis* Polytomy,” *The Medieval Globe* 1, no. 1 (2014): 285.

⁶ Wang Xingguang 王星光 and Zheng Yanwu 郑言午, “Yelun Jinmo Bianjing dayi de youyin yu xingzhi” 也论金末汴京大疫的诱因与性质, *Lishi yanjiu* 历史研究 1 (2019): 145-59; *Jinshi* 金史 (Zhonghua shuju, 1975; hereafter JS), 17/387.

⁷ Kim Yeongmi 김영미 et al., eds, *Jeonyeombyeong-ui munhwasa: Goryeo sidae-reul boneun tto hanau siseon* 전염병의 문화사: 고려시대를 보는 또 하나의 시선 (Hye'an, 2010).

⁸ Cui Yujun et al., “Historical Variations in Mutation Rate in an Epidemic Pathogen, *Yersinia Pes-*

ulations during the thirteenth century, suggesting a potential connection between the Mongol expansions and the spread of infectious diseases.

Recent palaeoclimatological research also notes that the Mongol invasions coincided with a relatively warm and wet period in the thirteenth century, particularly in its first half. Historians argue that this climatic condition likely facilitated population growth among the Mongols and their horses, thereby supporting territorial expansion. This was because mild temperatures and increased rainfall provided abundant pastures and water sources. Furthermore, this improved the health and nutrition of the Mongols and their livestock with higher birth rates, better survival rates, and stronger, more numerous horses. Overall, these factors collectively enhance the Mongols' ability to mobilize, sustain large armies, and effectively project power over greater distances, supporting their territorial expansion.⁹ Meanwhile, based on paleoclimatic discoveries, historians also argue that these climatic conditions, such as natural disasters and sudden changes in temperature and precipitation, also affected epidemic outbreaks and human populations, albeit with insufficient direct scientific evidence.¹⁰

The so-called “Columbia Exchange” has long been recognized for facilitating the transoceanic transmission of deadly pathogens, from smallpox to cholera.¹¹ Similarly, the Mongol expansion across Eurasia in

tis,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 110, no. 2 (2013): 577-82; Maria A. Spyrou et al., “The Source of the Black Death in Fourteenth-Century Central Eurasia,” *Nature* 606 (2022): 718-24.

⁹ Neil Pederson et al., “Pluvials, Droughts, the Mongol Empire, and Modern Mongolia,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 111, no. 12 (2014): 4375-79; Nicola Di Cosmo, *Ancient China and Its Enemies: The Rise of Nomadic Power in East Asian History* (Cambridge University Press, 2002); Timothy Brook, *The Troubled Empire: China in the Yuan and Ming Dynasties* (Harvard University Press, 2010); Neville Brown, *History and Climate Change: A Eurocentric Perspective* (Routledge, 2001); Ge Quansheng 葛全胜, *Zhongguo lichao qihou bianhua* 中国历朝气候变化 (Kexue chubanshe, 2011).

¹⁰ Michael McCormick, “Rats, Communications, and Plague: Toward an Ecological History,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 34, no. 1 (2003): 2; Maria A. Spyrou et al., “The Source of the Black Death in Fourteenth-century Central Eurasia,” *Nature* 606 (2022): 723.

¹¹ William M. Denevan, *The Native Population of the Americas in 1492* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1976), 1-12; Nathan Nunn and Nancy Qian, “The Columbian Exchange: A History of

the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries enabled the dissemination of diseases to previously less connected regions beyond the Silk Road, often with devastating effects that at times surpassed the impacts of military conflict. Building upon these foundations in the fields of history, paleo-epidemiology, and paleoclimatology, this article employs environmental history to examine the interconnectedness between Mongol invasions, climate change, and disease transmission in thirteenth and fourteenth-centuries East Asia.

Responding to recent scholarship, including Monica Green's call to expand the geographic and chronological scope of pandemic studies, this study moves beyond the confines of Europe and the fourteenth-century Black Death.¹² Instead, it situates the epidemics associated with the Mongol invasions in thirteenth-century East Asia within a broader context of world history of epidemics. Building on Philip Slavin's analysis of how landscape change, weather conditions, and seismic activity created the conditions for the plague pandemic in early fourteenth-century Central Asia, this study also employs an approach of integrating biological, climatic, and environmental factors to examine epidemics during the Mongol invasions of East Asia in the thirteenth century.¹³ Given the constraints of extant primary sources, which provide only circumstantial evidence regarding specific pathogens and symptoms of diseases in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century East Asia, this study proposes hypotheses concerning possible epidemic outbreaks and their environmental connections. It considers the role of pests—specifically rodents and lice—potentially linked to the Black Death or typhus, as key agents in these outbreaks. By incorporating more-than-human narratives, this article offers

Disease, Food, and Ideas,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 24, no. 2 (2010): 163-88; Alfred W. Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492* (Greenwood Publishing Group, 2003).

¹² Monica H. Green, *Pandemic Disease in the Medieval World: Rethinking the Black Death* (Arc Medieval Press, 2015), 12-14.

¹³ Philip Slavin, “The Birth of the Black Death: Biology, Climate, Environment, and the Beginnings of the Second Plague Pandemic in Early Fourteenth-Century Central Asia,” *Environmental History* 28, no. 2 (2023): 300-34.

an alternative interpretation of the Korean history of epidemics that complements existing scholarship on paleoclimatic analyses and environmental narratives of climatic anomalies during this period.

While the possibility remains that the Mongol invasions introduced new pathogens to the Korean peninsula, I argue that the enduring environmental legacy of these invasions was the establishment of a distinct cultural disease ecology in Korea. Korean historical records frequently reference rodents and lice, which were likely transported by Mongol cavalry and posed threats to daily life during the prolonged periods of Mongol invasions. Meanwhile, the Mongols' nomadic culture, with its affinity to livestock, including horses, cattle, and sheep, also created another environment conducive to bacterial transmission. Even after the cessation of direct military conflict, the disease environments shaped by the Mongol invasions persisted, reinforced by ongoing population movements, which continued to affect the Korean human and animal inhabitants during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

Mongol Invasions and Mortality Crisis

The establishment of the Mongol Empire (1206-1368) by Chinggis Khan (r. 1206-1227) and its transformation into the established Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) under Khubilai Khan (r. 1260-1279) marked a significant geopolitical shift in medieval Eurasia. Mongol warriors, riding horses and grasping bows and arrows, became unstoppable and united nomadic tribes in northern Asia. They went beyond Central Asia and defeated armies in Iran, Russia, Eastern Europe, China, Korea, and Japan, thus forging the Mongol Empire. Unlike various other political and military studies, this article particularly focuses on the epidemic outbreaks on the Korean peninsula during this period.

Mongols invaded Korea in 1231 and launched several campaigns over the next few decades, eventually leading to Goryeo's submission in 1259 with peace negotiations. Although formal peace was established, the Mongol influence over Goryeo continued, as the Mongol Yuan Dynasty maintained significant control over Korean affairs until the late

1270s and beyond. In 1231, Mongols dispatched governors (darughas) to Goryeo, and after peace, this position became more stable. Goryeo's royal families pursued complex kinship ties via intermarriage in 1274.¹⁴

The demographic impact of these invasions was severe during this prolonged wartime period. According to the *History of Goryeo*, by 1254, Mongol forces had captured 206,800 Korean prisoners, reaching almost seven percent of the whole population.¹⁵ The devastation extended beyond military casualties, with widespread civilian deaths and displacement. Upon a city collapse, the rest of the population, not only men but also women and children, would be slaughtered.¹⁶ For example, the fall of the Yangsan fortress resulted in the deaths of 4,700 people as those over the age of ten were killed and women and children distributed among Mongol soldiers.¹⁷

The protracted warfare spanning nearly three decades precipitated famines and epidemics, further exacerbating population decline.¹⁸ To observe the wartime epidemics, Table 1 lists years with documented epidemic outbreaks, drawing data from the *History of Yuan* (元史), the *History of Goryeo* (高麗史), and the *Complete Annals of Vietnam* (大越史記全書).¹⁹

¹⁴ Lee Myeongmi 이명미, "Goryeo, Won wangsiltonghon-ui jeongchiyeog uimi" 고려, 원 왕실통혼의 정치적 의미, *Hanguk saron* 한국사론 49 (2003): 7-85.

¹⁵ *Goryeosa*, vol. 24, Gojong 41 [1254].12; Kim Sunja 김순자, "Goryeosidae-ui jeonjaeng, jeonyeombyeong-gwa ingu" 고려시대의 전쟁, 전염병과 인구, in *Jeonyeombyeong-ui munhwasa: Goryeo sidae-reul boneun tto hana-ui siseon* 전염병의 문화사 고려시대를 보는 또 하나의 시선, edited by Kim Yeongmi et al. (Hye'an, 2010), 291.

¹⁶ William E. Henthorn, *Korea: The Mongol Invasions* (Brill, 1963), 214.

¹⁷ *Goryeosa*, vol. 101, Gwon sehu yeoljeon 權世侯列傳.

¹⁸ Kim Gu 金垚, *Jipo seonsaeng munjip* 止浦先生文集, vol. 2 (Sungkyunkwan University Press, 1984).

¹⁹ *Dayue shiji quanshu* 大越史記全書 (henceforth *DShQ*), <https://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=gb&res=442611>.

Table 1. A Comparison of Epidemic Years in Asia²⁰

Countries	Epidemic years
China	1232, 1257-1259, 1297
Korea	1231-1232, 1254-1256, 1262-1264, 1274, 1279, 1281-1282, 1348, 1359-1364, 1366, 1374, 1383, 1391
Japan	1230-1233, 1238, 1259, 1264, 1266, 1281
Vietnam	1232, 1263, 1278

This table reveals some overlaps of epidemic occurrences in East Asia, particularly in 1232, and 1259-1264. Some of these epidemic years may be linked to military conflicts. For example, 1232 was at the beginning of Mongol invasions of Goryeo and the joint Mongol and Goryeo armies landed in Japan in 1281, and their soldiers also encountered a large loss due to epidemics.²² However, the apparent absence of outbreaks in intervening years may reflect gaps in historical documentation rather than actual disease patterns. Because some records were lost due to various reasons, the compilation of Goryeo history could not reflect the real frequency of outbreaks, which explains some long periods of seemingly “normal” years. Despite concerns about the accuracy and reliability of the historical records, there is a possible relation between warfare and epidemics in the thirteenth century as shown in the three examples below.

²⁰ Epidemics-related records in the Goryeo Dynasty are mainly found in *Goryeosa*, *Goryeosa jeoryo* 高麗史節要, and *Dongsa gangmok* 東史綱目 by An Jeongbok 安鼎福. For secondary research, see also Lee Seungmin 이승민, “Goryeo sidae ‘yeokbyeong’-gwa jayeon jaehae: Han·Jung jaehae girong bunseog-ul jungsimeuro” 고려시대 ‘역병’과 자연재해: 한·중 재해 기록 분석을 중심으로, *Han’guk jungsesa yeon’gu* 한국중세사연구 71 (2022): 144-47; Kim, “Goryeosidae-ui jeonjaeng,” 59-60.

²¹ Sin Sukju 申叔舟, “Ilbon kukki” 日本國紀, in *Haedong jegukki* 海東諸國記, manuscript no. 史 233-0002, 10, National Archives of Japan Digital Archive. Accessed January 3, 2025, <https://www.digital.archives.go.jp/DAS/meta/listPhoto?LANG=default&ID=F100000000000097708&ID=M2013072221344581840&TYPE=>

²² *Goryeosa*, vol. 104, Chungnyeowang 7 [1281]. 7. 3.

1. Pan-East Asian Outbreaks in 1232

The year 1232 marked a significant period of widespread epidemics across multiple Asian countries, at least in Korea, China, and Vietnam, as evidenced by historical records. First, the vulnerability of people to the outbreaks in 1232 was likely driven by the synergistic effects of abnormal climate change. The Northern Hemisphere Ice-Volcanic Index indicates one temperature spike around 1230, leading to a succession of cold years.²³ This climatic shift manifested in various ways across Asia. Japan experienced the Kangi famine (1229-1232), an unprecedented subsistence crisis caused by cold weather. According to Farris, the devastation caused by the Kangi famine was the first recorded subsistence crisis caused by cold weather.²⁴ In parallel, Goryeo faced irregular precipitation patterns, particularly severe droughts in 1231 and 1232, prompting multiple court-ordered rain prayer ceremonies.²⁵ Vietnam also recorded a windstorm in the eighth month accompanied by severe epidemics among the civilian people resulting in numerous fatalities.²⁶ The similar geographical characteristics of the affected regions, including their northern hemisphere latitudes and monsoon climates, resulted in comparable impacts on irregular humidity and temperature patterns. These climatic anomalies, characterized by wet and cold conditions, led to more frequent natural disasters, including floods and droughts, creating conditions conducive to famines. Without sufficient food, people would be more vulnerable, and any single disease outbreak could kill them let alone severe epidemic outbreaks.

Secondly, concurrent with these climate changes, Mongol invasions exacerbated the situations of epidemics in central China and Goryeo.

²³ Michael Sigl et al., "Timing and Climate Forcing of Volcanic Eruptions for the Past 2,500 Years," *Nature* 523, no. 7562 (2015): 545.

²⁴ William W. Farris, *Japan's Medieval Population: Famine, Fertility, and Warfare in a Transformative Age* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), 38-39.

²⁵ *Goryeosa*, vol. 23, Gojong 18 [1231]. 4.

²⁶ *DShQ*, vol. 5. 1232. 8.

While the Jin Dynasty (1115-1234), ruled by the Jurchen people, still held power in northern China, its power was significantly weakened due to the ongoing Mongol invasions. The Mongol armies besieged Biancheng fortress (modern-day Kaifeng) in 1232 and the Jin Dynasty eventually fell in 1234. At the same time, an epidemic outbreak occurred in the early fourth month of 1232, lasting approximately for three months. One record documented extreme cold in the fifth month, unusual for summer weather, resulting in frostbite among soldiers. Subsequent flooding worsened living conditions and contaminated water sources.²⁷ Cao and Hymes both suggest the outbreaks in the early 1230s could have been the plague prevalent among Mongols prior to the Second Pandemic.²⁸

On the Korean peninsula, Ögedei Khan (1186-1241) ordered the invasion of Goryeo in 1231 with a pretext that Koreans killed their envoy earlier in 1225. Mongol troops encircled Hamsinjin (咸新鎮, i.e. Uiju) in the eighth month of 1231 and continued their offensive in 1232. The Mongols occupied fortresses and looted the towns, leaving behind ruins.²⁹ On the other hand, although the central court relocated to Ganghwa Island in response to the Mongol threat, the Mongols also encountered determined resistance from Goryeo troops as Goryeo people strengthened fences around Ganghwa Island to prevent Mongol invasion in the seventh month of 1232.³⁰ Despite Goryeo's resistance, Mongol advances resulted in widespread destruction, including the killing of officials and civilians, and the burning of settlements.³¹

Goryeo records from the fourth month of 1232 indicate widespread deaths due to famines and epidemics, which further led to a notable shortage of craftsmen.³² The Mongol invasions severely disrupted daily life, creating unfavorable conditions conducive to the spread of diseases,

²⁷ Wang and Zheng, "Yelun Jinmo Bianjing dayi de youyin yu xingzhi," 151.

²⁸ Cao and Li, *Shuyi*, 63-65; Hymes, "Epilogue," 285.

²⁹ Henthorn, *Korea*, 60-71.

³⁰ *Goryeosa*, vol. 23, Gojong 19 [1232]. 7. 1; 7. 3; 7. 6; 7. 7.

³¹ *Goryeosa*, vol. 23, Gojong 18 [1231]. 11.28.

³² *Goryeosa*, vol. 23, Gojong 19 [1232]. 4.12.

such as displacement, famines, and population mobility. More likely, those fleeing the conflicts inadvertently spread diseases along their routes. Due to the lack of detailed records describing epidemic situations in Goryeo, a comparison with Chinese records on the previously mentioned epidemics at Biancheng fortress, Kaifeng, the capital of Jin, gives some clues to understanding outbreaks in Goryeo. Akin to the Chinese case, numerous deaths caused by famines and epidemics could be attributed to the restless battles, including civil rebellions in Goryeo and extreme climate anomalies widely influenced in the northern hemisphere.

2. Pan-East Asian Outbreaks in the 1260s

In 1264, at a banquet with a Mongol envoy and an interpreter, Goryeo King Wonjong (1260-1274) discussed the prolonged aftermath of warfare, famines and epidemics, and displacement. He stated, “Looking at the situations in our land, wars, famines, and epidemics lasted for thirty years, and almost everything became collapsed and dying. Innocent people fled to the mountains and sea. How could we call them back within four to five years?”³³ As described here, the 1260s marked another period of significant demographic upheaval in Goryeo, largely attributed to the prolonged Mongol invasions and subsequent famines and disease outbreaks.

Epidemics struck the capital in the tenth month of 1262, persisting until 1264.³⁴ A poem titled “Illness Chronicles” in the diary *Travelogue of Dong'an Geosa* (動安居士行錄), authored by Yi Seunghyu 李承休 (1124-1300), provides a vivid account of an epidemic in a small village along Dutasan Mountain (頭陀山) and shows the impacts of this infection on his family in Gangwon Province from late 1262 to early 1263.

Cultivating farms to serve my mother. By the early days of the first

³³ *Goryeosa*, vol. 26, Wonjong 5 [1264]. 5.16.

³⁴ *Goryeosa*, vol. 55, Wonjong 3 [1262].10.

month of the *gyehae year* (1263), illness struck our home. My widowed mother lay on her sickbed, wheezing and barely clinging to life for another morning the next day. Some of the household servants died from the illness. I, too, was bedridden, unable to get up. There was no one to send on errands. Alone, I attended to the decoctions and medications, staying up all night till dawn, also caring for the servants. By mid-month, the illness slightly eased. Not long afterward, I fell ill again, with a fever that felt like burning flames. My widowed mother lay on her sickbed, her thoughts muddled and confused. The decoctions and medications were still hard to prepare. Where could I find the shady comfort of daylilies to calm her? Master Zeng sighed in vain, calling out helplessly to the departed souls of Chu. The servants lay stiff in the house, resembling turtles. My frail body had no rest, how could I provide for roasting and cooking? Night after night, I held the candle alone, waiting for dawn. My kins were still away, traveling on the road. Who would share in the misfortunes and disasters?³⁵

As noted, almost all his family and relatives died of this infectious disease, and he was sick as well, unable to get up. This provides clear clues of a highly lethal infection. Yi Seunghyu's account describes symptoms including fever, respiratory distress, and near-unconsciousness among afflicted individuals. While definitive identification of the pathogen is challenging based solely on these descriptions, the high mortality rate and apparent respiratory involvement suggest a severe infectious disease, possibly of respiratory origin.

While the epidemic was rampant, other natural disasters were sweeping the Korean peninsula. Reports from northeastern areas to the central court in the eighth month of 1263 indicate concurrent floods and famines, suggesting a widespread nature of the calamities across the Korean peninsula. The report documented that, "Many of the towns in the north-east suffered from floods and crops were destroyed. People were

³⁵ Yi Seunghyu 李承休, "Byeonggwasi" 病課詩, in *Dong'an geosa haengnok* 動安居士行錄.

floating or drowned with few survived but were threatened again by famines.” Provisions were thus transported there to relieve people.³⁶

Historical records also provide some figures to suggest the demographic changes caused by Mongol invasions and wartime epidemics. An elite, Kim Gu 金瑛 (1211-1278), depicted his observation of the aftermath in his diary *Jipo seonsaeng munjip* 止浦先生文集. In a record of 1263, when epidemics struck, no more than one or two of a hundred people survived and the rest of the population still had to worry about surviving the next day.³⁷ According to Goryeo ministers, there used to be 40,000 soldiers but nearly all of them died of warfare and epidemics within the last thirty years. Although there were still hundreds and thousands of households registered, this was not a reliable figure.³⁸ Overall estimates suggest that approximately 46% of the population perished by 1259 when Goryeo surrendered to Mongol rule, including the captives, deaths in the battles, and by starvation and epidemics.³⁹

In comparison, this estimated mortality rate in Goryeo is comparable to other events in world history around the same time—at least 40% mortality from epidemics during the siege of Kaifeng in 1331.⁴⁰ In 1334, this disease claimed almost 90% of the population of Hebei Province. During the Black Death of the 1350s, 30 to 60% of the population decreased in Europe.⁴¹ These statistics suggest a dramatic demographic decrease in thirteenth and fourteenth-centuries Goryeo.

³⁶ *Goryeosa*, vol. 80, Myeongjong 18 [1263]. 8.

³⁷ Kim, *Jipo seonsaeng munjip*, 1263. 4.

³⁸ *Goryeosa*, vol. 102, Yi Jangyong yeoljeon 李藏用列傳.

³⁹ Kim, “Goryeosa-dae-ui jeonjaeng,” 291; *Songshi* 宋史 recorded that there were 2.1 million residents on the Korean peninsula around the 1130s. In the early Joseon Dynasty, approximately four million residents from eight provinces were recorded in the 1461 *Sejong sillok jiriji* 世宗實錄地理志. The period from 1231 to 1281 during the Mongol invasions of Korea must have witnessed a dramatic decline in population. Excluding these years, the increasing rate of the population within the rest of 280 “peaceful” years is around 23%. However, this figure does not include people who were not registered in the household, such as young children.

⁴⁰ Hymes, “Epilogue,” 291.

⁴¹ J. N. Hays, *The Burdens of Disease: Epidemics and Human Response in Western History* (Rutgers University Press, 2009), 37.

Historical records from the Song Dynasty document an epidemic outbreak among Mongol armies in Sichuan and Hubei Provinces from the fifth to seventh month of 1259.⁴² Song general Wang Deng (?-1259) reported that his soldiers, when confronting Mongol armies right before this battle, succumbed to an illness characterized by “bleeding from the five organs.”⁴³ Robert Hymes has also noted that Chinese medical writings recorded some new symptoms of large purulent lumps or sores among those infected people during the Mongol incursions in the early to middle thirteenth century.⁴⁴ This symptomatology suggests a possible case of bubonic plague progressing to septicemia and potentially pneumonic plague, although we cannot rule out that soldiers and horses could not adapt to the climate in Sichuan, which was different from the central plains, dying from other diseases such as dysentery as numerous soldiers were reported to have contracted this disease.⁴⁵

However, “bleeding from the five organs” seems to be the symptom of bubonic plague, which later may have resulted in septicemia and worsened to a pneumonic plague or other organ damage through blood circulation. Judging from the timeline that Song soldiers died immediately after their interconnections with Mongol warriors at the warfare, these poor soldiers were highly likely to have been infected by Mongols under hard living conditions in the fields. Given the location, legality, symptoms, and simultaneous deaths of numerous horses, Cao interprets the epidemic as the bubonic plague, and Hymes provided more sources and detailed explanations to examine the hypothesis of bubonic plague in Song China.⁴⁶

⁴² *Yuanshi* 元史 (Zhonghua shuju, 1976; henceforth YS), vol.155, Shi Tianze zhuan 史天澤傳

⁴³ *Songshi* 宋史 (Zhonghua shuju, 1979), vol. 412. Wang Deng zhuan 王登傳

⁴⁴ Robert Hymes, “A Hypothesis on the East Asian Beginnings of the Yersinia Pestis Polytomy,” *The Medieval Globe* 1, nos.1-2 (2014): 285-308; Robert Hymes, “A Tale of Two Sieges: Liu Qi, Li Gao, and Epidemics in the Jin-Yuan Transition,” *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 50 (2021): 295-363; Robert Hymes, “Buboes in Thirteenth-Century China: Evidence from Chinese Medical Writings,” *The Medieval Globe* 8 (2022): 51.

⁴⁵ YS, vol.129, Niulin zhuan 紐麟傳.

⁴⁶ Cao, “Dili huanjing,” 188; Hymes, “Epilogue,” 285-308. This view of bubonic plague differs

Although Mongol invasions of Goryeo had concluded, the continued presence of Mongol troops and ongoing diplomatic communications maintained potential transmission routes, such as the abovementioned conversations between the Goryeo king and Mongol envoys in 1264. The possible respiratory symptoms observed among Goryeo patients in 1262 bore similarities to those reported in China, suggesting a possible common pathogen. Meanwhile, infectious diseases remained an important mortality cause between 1150 and 1280 in Japan, alongside warfare and other famine-related illnesses.⁴⁷ In the sixth and seventh months of 1263, Japanese records also confirmed epidemic-related deaths among the population in the capital.⁴⁸

In parallel, Đại Việt (modern-day northern Vietnam) kept intensive communications both with the Mongols in northern China and the Song state (960-1279) in the south. Vietnamese dispatched diplomatic missions to the Mongol Empire in the spring of 1263, while 2,000 people from the Song Dynasty arrived in the twelfth month, establishing potential routes for disease transmission.⁴⁹ The *Complete Annals of Vietnam* also recorded epidemics in the ninth month of that year. The bidirectional connections and epidemic outbreaks were against another background that the Mongol Empire launched four military campaigns against Vietnam in 1258, 1282-1284, 1285, and 1287-1288.⁵⁰ Despite the military defeats of the Mongols, continuous warfare weakened the health of local people. Their living conditions were further exacerbated by more climate anomalies,

from the perspective of Rashid-al-Din Hamadani (1247-1318), who attributed it to an outbreak of cholera—a disease introduced to China only after 1820.

⁴⁷ Farris, *Japan's Medieval Population*, 28.

⁴⁸ Tōkyō daigaku shiryō hensanjo 東京大学史料編纂所, ed., *Shiryō sōran* 史料綜覧 (Tokyo University Press, 1923-63), <https://clioimg.hi.u-tokyo.ac.jp/viewer/view/ldata/T38/1264/06-13/5/0049?m=all&s=0049>.

⁴⁹ *DShQ*, vol. 5, 1263. 9.

⁵⁰ James A. Anderson, “Man and Mongols: The Dali and Đại Việt Kingdoms in the Face of the Northern Invasions,” in *China's Encounters on the South and Southwest: Reforging the Fiery Frontier over Two Millennia*, edited by James A. Anderson and John K. Whitmore (Brill, 2014), 106-34.

such as the extreme rain hail weather in the second month and rainstorms in the twelfth month of 1263. All of these conditions added to the vulnerability of locals to epidemics.

In the Middle East, a severe famine and pestilence coincided with a local rebellion in late 1261 but lasted longer than that, leading to significant agricultural failure in Syria. Some scholars argue that an infestation of rodents exacerbated the resultant poor harvests and food shortage, while others also consider this outbreak as a plague and connect it with Mongol incursions there in 1258.⁵¹

Aside from Mongol invasions as the common reason for pan-East Asian epidemics in the early 1260s, recent geographical and historical studies have examined the interconnection between volcanism and global plague pandemics. These studies offer a new perspective on the complex interplay between volcanic activity, climate change, Mongol invasions, and the epidemics of the 1260s.⁵² The Samalas eruption of 1257 is hypothesized to have triggered rapid climate change in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries.⁵³ The tree ring data from the Mongol region indicates abnormally low temperatures around 1260, specifically in 1259, 1261, 1262, and early 1263.⁵⁴ Climatic reconstructions based on ice-core volcanic signals also provide a clear post-volcanic summer cooling in 1258.⁵⁵ In addition, the combined effects of the Mongol invasions and extremely low temperature caused by the massive eruption of Samalas in 1257, may have further contributed to the spread of a new strain of

⁵¹ Peter Thorau, *The Lion of Egypt: Sultan Baybars I and the Near East in the Thirteenth Century*, translated by P. M. Holt (Longman, 1992), 143; Jonathan Brack et al., "Plague and the Mongol Conquest of Baghdad (1258)?," 1-19; Nahyan Fancy and Monica H. Green, "Plague and the Fall of Baghdad (1258)," 157-77.

⁵² Henry G. Fell et al., "Volcanism and Global Plague Pandemics: Towards an Interdisciplinary Synthesis," *Journal of Historical Geography* 70 (2020): 36-46.

⁵³ Fell et al., "Volcanism and Global Plague Pandemics," 40-43.

⁵⁴ Tian Peizhong 田沛忠, "13 shiji Menggu diguo jiangyu bianhua yu qihou bianhua de guanxi yanjiu" 13世纪蒙古帝国疆域变化与气候变化的关系研究 (MA Thesis, Northeast Normal University, 2021), 41.

⁵⁵ Michael Sigl et al., "Timing and Climate Forcing of Volcanic Eruptions for the Past 2,500 Years," 545-47.

Yersinia pestis, the causative agent of plague.⁵⁶ These East Asian countries experienced similar climate anomalies and Mongol invasions, which likely contributed to parallel patterns of epidemics in the early 1260s. This pattern, nonetheless, may merely reflect a coincidence suggested by historical records rather than a definitive causal relationship.

3. Mongol Invasions of Japan and the 1281 Epidemics

In the 1270s, following negotiations between the Mongol Empire and Goryeo, the Mongol Empire demanded Goryeo's military support for an invasion of Japan. This alliance led to two major campaigns. The first attack in 1274 targeted northern Kyushu, resulting in a defeat that necessitated a Mongol retreat. A second, larger invasion was launched in the third month of 1281. The 1281 campaign was characterized by intense combat with fluctuating fortunes. A victory by the Goryeo-Mongol forces resulted in approximately 50 casualties of the Japanese soldiers and a subsequent Japanese counterattack claimed around 300 allied lives of the joint Goryeo and Mongol armies.⁵⁷ These figures highlight the brutal nature of the conflict and the significant loss of life on both sides.

Compared to the deaths in battles, a more devastating threat of epidemics emerged within the invading forces. A severe epidemic occurred among the Goryeo-Mongol armies in the sixth month of 1281, claiming over 3,000 lives of soldiers in a short period.⁵⁸ The rapid spread and high mortality rate of the epidemic suggest that crowded, unsanitary conditions were typical among large military encampments. The sudden loss of over 3,000 soldiers to disease also had a significant impact on the invasion's military effectiveness and morale. Mongols also quickly withdrew to Iki on the thirtieth day of the sixth month followed by a stale-

⁵⁶ Fell et al., "Volcanism and Global Plague Pandemics," 42.

⁵⁷ Stephen Turnbull, *The Mongol Invasions of Japan 1274 and 1281* (Osprey, 2010).

⁵⁸ *Goryeosa*, vol. 104, Chungnyeowang 7 [1281]. 7. 3.

mate at Hakata later in the eighth month of 1281.⁵⁹ This large-scale epidemic outbreak also indicated that Mongols underestimated the role of non-combat factors, particularly infectious diseases, in shaping the outcomes of historical military campaigns.

Mongol invasions of Japan, Korea, and Vietnam should be viewed within the larger framework of Mongol expansionism in the thirteenth century, which represents one of the most ambitious maritime military operations of the medieval period. It was not only warriors on horseback who swept across the lands but also the epidemic outbreaks caused a wave of devastation and grief. The epidemic outbreak during this invasion is consistent with patterns observed in other Mongol campaigns across Eurasia, where diseases often accompanied military movements.

Possible Zoonotic Stages of the Epidemics

1. Rodents and Plague

“Banners and flags illuminate the traveler’s path. The sound of drums and horns invigorates the human spirit. Field mice leap and hide among the bamboo, while startled deer flee in search of the forest.”⁶⁰

This citation from the diary of Goryeo minister Yi Gyubo 李奎報 (1168-1241) describes the massive disturbance caused by Mongol troops, particularly the unusual behaviors of rats. Although traditional rural life was always associated with rats and fleas, historical records, including these personal accounts and official Goryeo documents, contain increasingly frequent references to rodent-related damage. These accounts describe incidents such as the theft of government-stored crops from warehouses and the destruction of buildings.⁶¹ Such accounts may partially

⁵⁹ James P. Delgado, *Khubilai Khan's Lost Fleet: In Search of a Legendary Armada* (University of California Press, 2008), 93.

⁶⁰ Yi Gyubo, *Dongguk Yi sangguk jip* 東國李相國集, vol. 9, Yi pyeongjang Gyubo ha 李平章奎報下.

⁶¹ For example, see *Songdoji* 松都誌, vol. 3, Gwansa 官舍, Bunbongsangsi 分奉常寺; *Junggyeongji* 中京誌, vol. 5, Hakgyo 學校, Seonggyungwan 成均館. More rodent-related information can be

indicate an increase in rodent populations during the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries. World history has witnessed that the amplifying rats ruined cities many times. For example, in Roman history, grass rats might have played a role in sustaining or transmitting plague in the Roman and medieval world, while the black or ship rat, *Rattus rattus*, is the prime suspect in the two plague pandemics.⁶² Given that rats were important in transmitting new pathogens, it is natural to consider the possibility of zoonotic epidemics happening during the periods mentioned above. If not bubonic plague, then outbreaks during this period might have been caused by typhus, transmitted through lice.

Bubonic plague was unable to survive without vectors and hosts, and rodents were known as the carriers of plague bacillus. The rodents were the sylvatic (wild) rodents represented by marmots as well as commensal (domestic) rodents like mice and rats.⁶³ While it is difficult to distinguish the exact type of these rodents, the Mongol invasions of Korea created conditions conducive to increased rodent-human contact and thus potential disease transmission.

Similar to the case of the human population during the Mongol invasions of Korea, Mongol invasions also disrupted sylvatic rodent populations, bringing them into closer contact with human settlements. As described in historical records, warfare exposed the hiding places of rodents and forced them to relocate as “wild field rats jumping to the bamboo grove.” The rodents described here were probably sylvatic rodents thriving on grass. They were within close distance from soldiers in the wilderness, or they could come closer to the residential areas where commensal mice accumulated. Yet, either through direct contact with humans or indirect contact via domestic mice, sylvatic rodents were brought into clos-

found in *Gaegyeong gicho jaryo* 개경 기초자료, <https://db.history.go.kr/id/gk>.

⁶² McCormick, “Rats, Communications, and Plague,” 2.

⁶³ Historical records did not differentiate between rats and mice; however, this distinction is irrelevant to their classification as rodents. The documented accounts of rat sightings can be interpreted as evidence that the Goryeo people may have been exposed to plague through contacts with rodents carrying the disease.

er proximity to humans.

Commensal mice and rats typically reside near human settlements, as they rely on human dwellings and food storage for survival. During times of war, when people were forced to flee and became displaced, these mice and rats inevitably moved along with the humans they relied on, increasing their proximity to humans. Wartime disruptions to agriculture and human settlements likely altered food availability for rodents, potentially driving them even closer to human habitations. Goryeo minister Yi Gyubo captured these issues in his poetry, such as pieces titled “Craziness of Rats” (鼠狂) and “Curse on Mice” (呪鼠文), which described the problems caused by the frequent presence of rats.

Keeping a cat is not merely to slaughter your kind, but to make you fear the cat and force you into hiding. Why do you not flee and remain concealed? You have been used to tunneling through walls and crevices. Your mischief was already apparent when you roamed outside, and now, your behavior has grown increasingly reckless and chaotic. Your sibilance disturbs my sleep, and your cunning theft deprives people of their food. If a cat is present, how dare you continue? You act this way only because the cat has been lenient. Though the cat may neglect its duties, your offenses are still numerous. While the cat can be scolded and driven away, you are difficult to catch and restrain. Oh, mice, if you do not repent, I will seek out an even fiercer cat to punish your insolence.⁶⁴

The interruption caused by their rustling voices of stealing food was annoying, but they posed more threats to human life than that. The mice were rampaging through towns, not only stealing the crops but also tearing the clothing. Thus, the minister even wrote another poem to curse them.⁶⁵ Rats usually held the nocturnal habit. But, when they dared to scurry everywhere during the daytime, they must be hungry or there were

⁶⁴ Yi Gyubo, *Dongguk Yi sangguk hujip* 東國李相國後集, vol. 1, Seogwang 鼠狂.

⁶⁵ Yi, *Dongguk Yi sangguk hujip*, vol. 20, Juseomun 呪鼠文.

a large number of rats to feed. Scientific experiments prove that twenty-five grey rats could eat as much as one person does, but given that they also foul much more food, the amplifying population of rats and mice would be harmful to crop harvest especially when the Goryeo economy was based on land tax imposition.⁶⁶ Although humans tried to grab them for punishment, they would always escape because of their exceptionally sensitive hearing of human's coming.

The rodent population was expanding with rats newly joined from the wildland. In the first month of 1261, records note that “according to the locals in the north, crowds of rats crossed the river and entered our boundary.”⁶⁷ Although metaphors of mice have referred to enemies and villains, the year 1261 was not a year of attack since the Mongol invasions of Korea had ended in 1259. The record is not specific on how the rodents came to the Korean peninsula, but two earthquakes in the first month of 1261 may provide some clues regarding the cross-border migration of rodents.⁶⁸ Scholars have demonstrated that strong earthquakes can have impacts on the spread of plague as seismic activity disrupts the living environment of rodent populations, resulting in their death and dislocation.⁶⁹ The concurrence of earthquakes and rodent mobility in the northern borderland of the Korean peninsula during the first month of 1261 further suggests that the epidemic outbreaks of the early 1260s may have been precipitated by a plague and potentially linked to the displaced rodents.

The expansion of ranches and grasslands following the Mongol invasions created favorable ecological conditions for the proliferation of rodent population. The subsequent political relationship between the Mongols and Goryeo evolved into a tributary-vassalage system, formal-

⁶⁶ Data from modern Turkey suggest commensal rodents consume or damage 5 to 15 percent of grain and legumes in storage. For more, see McCormick, “Rats, Communications, and Plague,” 2.

⁶⁷ *Goryeosa*, vol. 8, Wonjong 2 [1261]. 1.

⁶⁸ *Goryeosa*, vol. 25, Wonjong 2 [1261]. 1. 9; *Goryeosa*, vol. 55, Wonjong 2 [1261]. 1.19.

⁶⁹ Slavín, “The Birth of the Black Death,” 322; Fell et al., “Volcanism and Global Plague Pandemics,” 36-46.

ized in 1270 after the conclusion of military conflicts. This period was characterized by regular diplomatic exchanges and intermarriages between the ruling families. It is conceivable that the rats, traveling with the Mongols, could have crossed the river into the peninsula by hiding in the provision carts, similar to how rats were transported to Europe and transmitted the plague.⁷⁰ Once the groups of rodents were transported to the Korean peninsula, their population must have profited from the abundance of forests, ranches, and grassland. The expanded ranches as environmental legacies of Mongol invasions of Korea provided an appropriate environment for horses and the newly coming sylvatic rodents.⁷¹ Rats are omnivores. And, feeding on luxuriant grass, they could reproduce at a fast speed. With a dramatic increase in their population, they could travel much further via land transportation. Without human assistance, the overland rats would only proceed at a rate of about 20 km per century.⁷²

There were four main potential transmission routes of the possible plague. First, increased rodent populations heightened the risk of direct human-rodent contact, particularly during activities such as hunting or in times of food scarcity when humans might consume rodents. One poem illustrated the serious drought-induced famines, which decreased the harvests of various kinds of flora and fauna in the mid-fourteenth century. People were starving for a long time as well, so they had no food but “to grab the field mice and numerous people contracted epidemics.”⁷³ Warfare, natural disasters, and famine multiplied the number of displaced people entering the forests, which were natural habitats for rodents. They rested in proximity to rodents’ burrows or searched for rodents and consumed them. People would be infected if these rodents carried the *Yersinia pestis* bacteria as they always did. Suppose that a sylvatic rodent

⁷⁰ See also McNeill, *Plagues and Peoples*, 138-39.

⁷¹ John Lee, “A State of Ranches and Forests: The Environmental Legacy of the Mongol Empire in Korea,” in *Forces of Nature: New Perspectives on Korean Environments*, edited by David Fedman, Eleana J. Kim, Albert L. Park (Cornell University Press, 2023), 60-76.

⁷² McCormick, “Rats, Communications, and Plague,” 10.

⁷³ Won Cheonseok 元天錫, *Ungok haengnok* 耘谷行錄, vol. 2, Gohan 苦旱.

carries *Yersinia pestis*, the moment when humans get close to it, no matter by fighting in battles or hunting in the wild, forms the first transmission route of direct contact because the bacteria can enter human bodies through the skin or mucous membranes.⁷⁴

Second, fleas feeding on infected rodents could transmit the disease to humans or domestic animals. Third, cats and other domestic animals could serve as intermediaries, becoming infected through contact with rodents, especially oral ingestion, and subsequently transmitting the disease to humans. If the cat owner were bitten by the infected cat, then it would be the fourth transmission route. Once introduced to human populations, the disease could easily spread through direct contact or respiratory droplets, particularly in densely populated areas. The 1261 report of rodent migration from the other side of the Yalu River to northern Korea coincides with epidemic outbreaks in the winters of 1262 and 1263, affecting various regions across the Korean peninsula.⁷⁵ The southward or nationwide progression of epidemics was likely to have followed patterns of human-to-human transmission along with rodent dispersal.⁷⁶

Historical accounts describe symptoms consistent with bubonic plague. At the beginning of bacterial infection, mammals showed the symptoms of bubonic plague with fever, headache, general weakness, and others. Without effective treatment, it further turned into a septicemic plague, of which representative characteristics were abdominal pain,

⁷⁴ For more research on royal hunting during the Goryeo Dynasty, see George Kallander, *Human-Animal Relations and the Hunt in Korea and Northeast Asia* (Edinburgh University Press, 2023). For more scientific analysis on the transmission of bubonic plague, see also Idir Bitam, Katharina Dittmar, et al., "Fleas and Flea-borne Diseases," *International Journal of Infectious Diseases* 14, no. 8 (2010): 672.

⁷⁵ Kim, *Jipo seonsaeng munjip*, vol. 2, 1263. 4.

⁷⁶ There are two main arguments regarding person-to-person dissemination. One argument is that person-to-person dissemination by droplets allows far more rapid propagation of the disease than the comparatively slow long-distance movements of rats over land and sea. See Frank M. Snowden, *Epidemics and Society: From the Black Death to the Present* (Yale University Press, 2019), 51. According to scientific research, human-to-human infection occurs mainly in the pneumonic expression of *Yersinia pestis*, but the bubonic plague does not spread as easily as historians have imagined despite its deadliness. See McCormick, "Rats, Communications, and Plague," 1.

diarrhea, bleeding, and, as noted before, “bleeding from the five organs.” Through blood circulation, the bacteria would gradually spread to the lungs and thus result in the pneumonia plague showing symptoms of breathing difficulties, chest pain, and fever, while the historical records also match these commonly seen symptoms, although the symptoms of the plague in the modern era may differ from those in the premodern period.⁷⁷ The patients can much more easily spread the epidemic via droplets as the human-to-human transmission route, which explains a large-scale infection within a family or in the capital within a few months. By comparison, the epidemic outbreaks in thirteenth-century Korea under Mongol invasion can also find some suitable explanations from the four transmission routes of the bubonic plague and different symptoms, which hints at the possibility of the plague in the history of the Goryeo Dynasty.

As definitive proof is lacking, the correlation between the increased rodent activity, Mongol invasions, and epidemic outbreaks could only suggest a possible link to bubonic plague. One hypothesis is that the new exotic rodents carried new germs, exchanged bacteria with the domestic rats, and transmitted the possible plague to the Goryeo people. This hypothesis offers a plausible explanation for some epidemic outbreaks observed in thirteenth to fourteenth-century Korea and underscores the possible interconnection between warfare, environmental changes, and zoonotic disease transmission.

The nomadic culture of the Mongols led to the inclusion of livestock in tributary practices with Goryeo, and these cross-border animals introduced another potential route for disease transmission. Aside from horses riding by Mongols to the peninsula, the Mongol Empire bestowed Goryeo 500 sheep in 1263, and ten camels as gifts in 1264.⁷⁸ Of particular interest are the Bactrian camels, which have been identified as possible plague pathogen hosts due to their susceptibility to flea infestations.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ See Snowden, *Epidemics and Society*, 51; McCormick, “Rats, Communications, and Plague,” 1.

⁷⁸ Kim, *Jipo seonsaeng munjip*, vol. 2, 1263. 4; 1264.10.18.

⁷⁹ Tsutsui, “Landscapes in the Dark Valley,” 75.

It is also important to note that a wide range of animals can be affected by plague, including rock squirrels, ground squirrels, wood rats (木鼠), prairie dogs, chipmunks (花鼠), mice (老鼠), voles (田鼠), and rabbits. Wild carnivores can become infected by consuming other smaller animals with infection. However, the relatively small number of these animals introduced to the Korean peninsula suggests this transmission route may have been limited. Further research is required to explore the role of cross-border livestock in disease transmission.

2. Lice and Typhus

The potential for typhus outbreaks during the Mongol invasion merits further investigation, particularly in light of historical accounts and contemporary understanding of disease transmission. In Yi Seunghyu's 1263 poem on illness, he also described the severe living conditions of "mosquitoes flying around the sideburns" with a sound "as loud as thunder" preceding familial illness.⁸⁰ Although this description does not suggest a direct link between the outbreak and these mosquitoes, this observation notes the harsh living environment in winter and the vulnerability of people, which provided the conditions for epidemic transmission.

Given the reported severity of the cold, which purportedly caused distress among the author's family members, the presence of mosquitoes seems incongruous. This discrepancy suggests two possible interpretations—either the winter was unexpectedly mild, facilitating mosquito activity, or the author misidentified the insects in question. The latter hypothesis is more plausible, considering the environmental conditions and the known behavior of disease vectors. Midges look similar to mosquitos, and they can bear a relatively cooler temperature than mosquitos. They usually carry infectious diseases among animals.⁸¹ Another poten-

⁸⁰ Yi Seunghyu 李承休, *Dong'an geosa haengnok* 動安居士行錄, vol. 1, Byeonggwasi 病課詩.

⁸¹ Tim W. R. Möhlmann, Matt J. Keeling, Uno Wennergren et al., "Biting Midge Dynamics and Bluetongue Transmission: A Multiscale Model Linking Catch Data with Climate and Disease Outbreaks," *Scientific Reports* 11 (2021).

tial candidate for misidentification is the flea, a known vector for bubonic plague. Fleas, while capable of jumping, do not fly, which aligns more closely with the described behavior. This observation is consistent with established epidemiological knowledge regarding the transmission of bubonic plague, which typically originates from rodent populations and spreads to humans via insect bites, rather than through direct human-to-human contact. While the role of fleas in the Black Death pandemic is well-documented, their specific involvement in Korean peninsula epidemics remains a subject of ongoing research.

Alternatively, the observed insects could have been lice, which, like fleas, are incapable of flight but can crawl and are associated with typhus epidemics. Historical records, such as those of Minister Yi Gyubo, provide evidence for the prevalence of lice even among elite households, suggesting a potential vector for typhus transmission. Yi Gyubo's writings vividly illustrate the ubiquity of lice: "Despite being a poor minister, I did not stink that much. How dare the lice come to bite my hands?"⁸² He was so delighted by the pure and clean clothes because the clothes could protect him away from the lice.⁸³

The documented presence of lice in these historical accounts merits particular attention given the unsanitary conditions of premodern rural environments, which was further exacerbated by warfare.⁸⁴ Body lice serve as vectors for multiple bacterial diseases, including typhus, relapsing fever, and trench fever. These vector-borne diseases have historically constituted significant factors in combat-associated mortality rates.

The harsh conditions during the Mongol invasions, characterized by prolonged periods of conflict and disrupted social structures, generated an environment conducive to lice infestations and, consequently, the

⁸² Yi, *Dongguk Yi sangguk hujip*, vol. 4, Munseul 摺錄.

⁸³ Yi, *Dongguk Yi sangguk hujip*, vol. 12, Goyulsi 古律詩.

⁸⁴ For more studies on lice and warfare, see also Hans Zinsser, *Rats, Lice, and History: A Chronicle of Pestilence and Plagues* (Black Dog & Leventhal Publishers, 1996), 150-65; Robert N. Wiedemann, "Lice in War and Peace," in *The Silken Thread: Five Insects and Their Impacts on Human History* (Oxford University Press, 2021), 125-40.

spread of typhus. The convergence of multiple epidemiological risk factors featured in wartime scenarios, including crowded living conditions, limited access to sanitation, and large-scale population movement, would have facilitated the rapid transmission of louse-borne diseases. While definitive evidence for typhus epidemics during the Mongol invasions remains elusive in the historical record, the confluence of historical accounts, environmental conditions, and modern epidemiological understanding of disease transmission mechanisms suggests the possibility of such outbreaks.

While it is also impossible and, in many respects, undesirable to provide a modern label for the exact type of epidemics, there is a need to understand these epidemics through the premodern perceptions of epidemics in Goryeo. Aside from the records on the symptoms of infection among Yi Seunghyu's family, the other previously provided descriptions mainly focused on massive deaths, but they cannot lead to a decisive conclusion as to whether these outbreaks were "infectious diseases" or not. According to modern epidemiology, massive sickness among soldiers who had little food could have been due to scurvy, which is not an infectious disease. Long-term exposure to the harsh wartime environment made people extremely vulnerable and any illness could be deadly. To address these unsolved myths, further interdisciplinary research, combining historical analysis with epidemiological modeling, could provide valuable insights into the potential impact of typhus and other vector-borne diseases during this tumultuous period in East Asian history.

Conclusion

Contrary to previous narratives focusing solely on Mongol military history, this analysis has underscored the complex interconnectedness between climate change, geopolitical upheaval, the environment, and the transmission of infectious diseases during the thirteenth century. Conjuring images of Mongol warriors sweeping across the plains on horseback, this study has highlighted a devastating new "weapon" wielded by the expansionist empire—epidemics. The examination of official chronicles,

personal accounts, and cross-regional comparative sources has painted a comprehensive picture of the epidemiological impacts wrought by the climate anomalies and environmental deterioration and legacies brought by Mongol invasions across East Asia.

The study has identified several key junctures where the Mongol conquests, combined with anomalous climate patterns, precipitated widespread outbreaks of disease. Examples include the pan-Asian epidemic of 1232, the prolonged crises of the 1260s, and the devastating outbreak that decimated the 1281 Goryeo-Mongol invasion forces in Japan. In each case, the movement of Mongol armies, their interactions with local populations, and the environmental stresses imposed by warfare and climatic anomalies appear to have catalyzed the emergence and transmission of epidemics.

While the precise identities of these historical disease agents remain elusive, the historical evidence points to the distinct possibility of zoonotic diseases, potentially including plague transmitted by rodent or flea vectors, or commonly seen louse-borne typhus in warfare. The Mongol conquests, with their disruption of ecosystems and forced displacement of human and animal populations, likely facilitated the transmission of microbes. However, the East Asian historical records cited in this study provide only circumstantial evidence for a direct interconnectedness of epidemics across these countries. The scarcity of surviving records prior to the Goryeo period further complicates efforts to compare the prevalence of pests and their impacts on daily life before and after the Mongol invasions of Korea. This challenge is compounded by the fact that living conditions were persistently harsh, and the devastation wrought by warfare further exacerbated these vulnerabilities. A single research discipline alone cannot fully elucidate the complicated processes underlying the transmission of epidemic pathogens or definitively identify the specific diseases that may have afflicted thirteenth-century Korea. Therefore, advancing our understanding of these issues requires more collaborative work, involving paleoepidemiology, paleoclimatology, archaeology, and history to demonstrate the dynamics of epidemics during this period.

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A Shortcut to a Dead End: Locating Joseon Korea in Toyotomi Hideyoshi's Grand Strategy

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Abstract

After a series of domestic pacification campaigns, during the fourth lunar month of 1592, Toyotomi Hideyoshi 豊臣秀吉 launched an invasion of the continent in order to realize the next stage of his grand strategy: for Japan to become the regional hegemon. Hideyoshi's grand strategy is best conceived of as a hegemonic "grand principle" that he consciously held and followed. It is clear that Hideyoshi needed to bring Joseon Korea into Japan's sphere of influence—either voluntarily or involuntarily—before tackling the current hegemon, Ming China. Hideyoshi employed an oscillating approach towards Korea. He was flexible and pragmatic concerning interim measures, as long as they did not obviate the achievement of his long-term goals. The result was a pattern of escalation and de-escalation, from negotiation via coercion to violence and back again. Hideyoshi was trying to force the Koreans to rethink their place in East Asia. Hence, Korea represented the trigger, but not the primary motivation for the war. In short, Korea was central to, but not the apex of, Hideyoshi's hegemonic grand strategy. This paper presents a fresh interpretation of Hideyoshi's international motives, goals, and actions, and in particular, Korea's position within his grand strategic vision.

Keywords

Toyotomi Hideyoshi, Grand Strategy, Joseon Korea, East Asian War of 1592-1598, Hegemony, Ming China

A Shortcut to a Dead End: Locating Joseon Korea in Toyotomi Hideyoshi's Grand Strategy

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Introduction

After a decade-long series of pacification campaigns, during the fourth lunar month of 1592, Toyotomi Hideyoshi 豊臣秀吉, *taikō* 太閤 (i.e., Retired Regent to the Emperor) of Japan, launched an invasion of the Asian mainland. The East Asian War (1592-1598), which encompassed two separate invasions and protracted intra-war peace negotiations, concluded six years later with Hideyoshi's death and the complete withdrawal of Japanese troops. Over the centuries, historians have posited a multiplicity of theories to elucidate the causes of this conflict, including psychological, (domestic) political, economic, strategic, and cultural motives. This paper will argue that the war in Korea was but the next stage in Hideyoshi's grand strategy to bring about a new hegemonic order in East Asia.

Hideyoshi desired three things above all else: to be the hegemon of a new regime, for the Toyotomi regime to be the hegemon of Japan, and for Japan to become the regional hegemon. In other words, rather than discrete events, Hideyoshi envisaged the pacification of Japan as a concomitant to the domination of Asia. Unlike previous research on this topic, this paper examines Hideyoshi's vision for East Asia by placing the war in a wider context, and, in particular, locating Joseon Korea within his hegemonic grand strategy. In doing so, the focus remains firmly on Japanese perspec-

tives, although other points of view are alluded to. This study poses four fundamental questions: what role did Hideyoshi imagine for Joseon Korea in his grand strategy? Why was Korea the target of Hideyoshi's grand strategy? Why did Hideyoshi's approach to Korea oscillate between diplomacy and war? And finally, to what extent was the invasion of Korea responsible for the failure of Hideyoshi's grand strategy?

In order to address these questions, it is first necessary to explain two contested concepts, namely, grand strategy and hegemony. Although no universally accepted definition of grand strategy exists, it is often referred to as the "highest form of statecraft."¹ This is because grand strategy must be long term in scope, embrace every sphere of government activity to meet a defined objective, and proactively attempt to shape international events rather than simply react to them.² It must also ensure that means and ends are well aligned. In broadening the strategic mindset to embrace war preparation and mobilization, securing the peace as well as war fighting, and by incorporating political, economic, and diplomatic policymaking, the concept of "grand strategy" appears especially pertinent to any study of Hideyoshi's invasion of Korea. This paper adopts political scientist Nina Silove's notion that there are three distinct conceptions of grand strategy: "grand plan" (a deliberate, detailed plan devised by individuals), "grand principle" (an organizing principle that is consciously held and used by individuals to guide their decisions), and "grand behavior" (a long-term and interrelated pattern in state behavior).³ Due mainly to a lack of detail, Hideyoshi's grand strategy is best conceived of as a hegemonic "grand principle" rather than "grand plan" and further refined through the Toyotomi regime's actions ("grand behavior").

¹ Hal Brands, *What Good is Grand Strategy? Power and Purpose in American Statecraft from Harry S. Truman to George W. Bush* (Cornell University Press, 2014), 1.

² Saki Dockrill, "Britain's Grand Strategy and Anglo-American Leadership in the War against Japan," in *British and Japanese Military Leadership in the Far Eastern War 1941-1945*, edited by Brian Bond and Kyoichi Tachikawa (Frank Cass, 2004), 7; Paul Kennedy, *Grand Strategies in War and Peace* (Yale University Press, 1991), 5.

³ Nina Silove, "Beyond the Buzzword: The Three Meanings of 'Grand Strategy,'" *Security Studies* 27, no. 1 (2018): 29, 49.

At its core, hegemony is a form of domination incorporating both material and nonmaterial aspects, a hybrid of hard and soft power.⁴ Hegemony is more broad-based and invasive than primacy, yet usually narrower in scope and more tolerant of difference than empire. A hegemon establishes norms and rules and then supervises their functioning to impose peace.⁵ Hegemony thus requires of the aspiring hegemon not only a preponderance of material resources and a sense of mission, but also a measure of international influence and self-restraint.⁶ Hegemons employ a number of mutually reinforcing methods to achieve authority over others: leadership to inspire compliance, legitimacy to justify compliance, inducements to encourage compliance, coercion to enforce compliance, and sometimes violence to impose compliance.⁷ Yet, a degree of consent from the subjugated is also necessary. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Ming China was the undisputed hegemon of the East Asian region, until Hideyoshi attempted to supplant it.

Korea's Role in Hideyoshi's Grand Strategy

Hideyoshi possessed only fragmentary knowledge of Korea, but as his domestic pacification campaigns progressed, Hideyoshi's attention increasingly turned to the continent. His first priority was to manage his relationship with Korea. Yet, in Hideyoshi's mind, Korea's status was rather low in the East Asian pecking order. He was presumably aware that, while simultaneously sending tribute to Ming China, the Koreans also provided free foodstuffs to Tsushima annually.⁸ Thus, Hideyoshi appar-

⁴ Michael Mastanduno, "Incomplete Hegemony: The United States and Security Order in Asia," in *Asian Security Order: Instrumental and Normative Features*, edited by Muthiah Alagappa (Stanford University Press, 2003), 144-46.

⁵ Robert Gilpin, *War and Changes in World Politics* (Cambridge University Press, 1981), 29-31.

⁶ Myriam Houssay-Holzschuch, "Hegemony," in *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography* 6, edited by Audrey Kobayashi (Elsevier, 2020), 357-62; Mastanduno, "Incomplete Hegemony," 145.

⁷ Rush Doshi, *The Long Game: China's Grand Strategy to Displace American Order* (Oxford University Press, 2021), 3.

⁸ Atobe Makoto 跡部信, "Toyotomi seiken no taigaikōsō to chitsujokan" 豊臣政権の対外構想と秩

ently concluded that the Sō family of Tsushima wielded some authority over Korea, and consequently would easily yield to him if threatened.⁹ In short, Hideyoshi shared the enduring Japanese supremacist attitude towards Korea. Nam-lin Hur even asserts that “Hideyoshi had always regarded Korea as a far-off part of Japan or its vassal.”¹⁰ This theory can most clearly be seen in a letter dated 1593.11.5, which Hideyoshi addressed to Kōzankoku 高山国:

...Korea has been our vassal since ancient times, however, they turned their back to us. On the day of the invasion of China, they rebelled. Thus, we ordered our generals to punish them...¹¹

Yet, before 1590, when discussing Korea, Hideyoshi invariably did so in the same breath as Ming China, which strongly suggests that he saw the Koreans as foreigners. Nevertheless, it seems that Hideyoshi also underestimated the filial bonds linking Joseon Korea and Ming China. Indeed, some scholars go so far as to claim that Korea may have helped shape the norms of the Sinocentric world order.¹² Their historical, cultural, political, and economic ties were certainly much stronger than those with Japan.

Having acknowledged the authority of the Sō over Tsushima, Hideyoshi changed tack and used them as intermediaries, thereby delegating responsibility for restoring official diplomatic relations with Korea. On 1587.6.15, Hideyoshi stressed the importance of orchestrating a

序観, *Nihonshi kenkyū* 日本史研究 585 (2011): 78; Hur Nam-lin, “Japan’s Invasions of Korea in 1592-98 and the Hideyoshi Regime,” in *The Tokugawa World*, edited by Gary P. Leupp and Devin Tao (Routledge, 2022), 41.

⁹ *Sō-ke monjo* 宗家文書, 1587.6.15, in *Toyotomi Hideyoshi Chōsen shinryaku kankei shiryō shūsei* 豊臣秀吉朝鮮侵略関係史料集成 1, edited by Kitajima Manji 北島万次 (Heibonsha, 2017): 18-19.

¹⁰ Hur Nam-lin, “Toyotomi Hideyoshi’s Effort of Retreat and the Ending of the East Asian War,” *Chinese Studies in History* 52, no. 1 (2019): 71.

¹¹ *Sonkeikaku komonjōsan* 尊経閣古文書纂, 1593.11. 5, in *Toyotomi Hideyoshi monjōshū* 豊臣秀吉文書集 6, edited by Nagoya-shi hakubutsukan 名古屋博物館 (Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 2020), 154.

¹² Choi Inho, ““Chinese” Hegemony from a Korean Shi Perspective: Aretocracy in the Early Modern East Asia,” *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 22, no. 3 (2022): 348-52.

visit by King Seonjo 宣祖 to Japan to have him swear allegiance, while threatening punishment if he refused.¹³ This “forced diplomacy” was a technique that Hideyoshi had perfected during his domestic pacification campaigns.¹⁴ Hideyoshi gave daimyo and others a chance to swear allegiance; those that refused were shown no mercy when their territory was invaded.

By the spring of 1589, Hideyoshi was losing patience. He demanded that by the summer, daimyo Sō Yoshitoshi 宗義智 personally cross to Korea and persuade King Seonjo to agree to come to Japan. Otherwise, the decision had already been made to send troops, with daimyo Konishi Yukinaga 小西行長 and Katō Kiyomasa 加藤清正 to lead the vanguard.¹⁵ Towards the end of 1589, King Seonjo and his court ultimately decided to dispatch a mission to congratulate Hideyoshi for pacifying Japan.¹⁶ Even though they arrived in Kyoto on the 21st of the seventh month of 1590, the Korean envoys did not receive an audience with Hideyoshi until the eleventh month, due to his participation in the campaign in Odawara 小田原.¹⁷ Hideyoshi chose to interpret the envoys’ presence as evidence of Korean acceptance of their status as his vassals, a declaration of fealty.¹⁸ Hideyoshi’s assessment was not entirely unreasonable. It resembled the process by which daimyo swore allegiance to Hideyoshi, and therefore he assumed that the Koreans would join him in confronting the Ming, or at least not obstruct his mission.¹⁹ Yet, the Koreans believed that they had made no such commitment, and Hideyoshi’s assumptions derived from a mixture of cultural misunderstanding and wishful think-

¹³ *Sō-ke monjo*, 1587.6.15, 18-19.

¹⁴ Nakano Hitoshi 中野等, *Hideyoshi no gunrei to tairiku shinkō* 秀吉の軍令と大陸侵攻 (Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 2006), 16, 28; Miki Seiichirō 三鬼清一郎, *Toyotomi seiken no hō to Chōsen shuppei* 豊臣政権の法と朝鮮出兵 (Seishi shuppan, 2012), 41.

¹⁵ *Shigaku* 史学 4-3, 1589.3.28, in *Toyotomi Hideyoshi monjoshū* 4, 6.

¹⁶ *Seonjo sillok* 선조실록, 23/20a.

¹⁷ Fujii Jōji 藤井譲治, *Tenkabito no jidai* 天下人の時代 (Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 2011), 101.

¹⁸ *Kōun zuihitsu* 江雲隨筆, in *Toyotomi Hideyoshi Chōsen shinryaku kankei shiryō shūsei* 1, 61-62; Atobe Makoto 跡部信, *Toyotomi seiken no kenryoku kōzō to tennō* 豊臣政権の権力構造と天皇 (Ebisu kōshō shuppan, 2016), 197.

¹⁹ Fujii, *Tenkabito*, 102.

ing or self-delusion.

Seeking to capitalize on their perceived newfound loyalty, Hideyoshi now sought to recruit Korea as a fully-committed ally. In his reply to King Seonjo, Hideyoshi emphasized his desire to:

...unite all of East Asia. I will go straight to the Ming and spread Japanese customs and manners to the four hundred provinces, and I will exert my influence over all of China. We will impose Kyoto's [Japanese] rule there forevermore. Korea, you have taken the initiative to come to Japan and sworn allegiance to me, so there is no reason to be alarmed. When we send troops to Ming you are to lead the men, which will strengthen the bonds between us.²⁰

During 1591, Sō vassal Yanagawa Shigenobu 柳川調信 and monk-diplomat Keitetsu Genso 景轍玄蘇 accompanied the Korean embassy back to Hanseong 漢城. Keitetsu informed the Koreans that the Ming had long refused Japanese tribute and Hideyoshi resented this. Thus, he claimed that Hideyoshi would like to borrow a road through Korea the following year to offer tribute to the Ming.²¹ Keitetsu reassured the Koreans of their safety if they acted as an intermediary to help resume Sino-Japanese tribute trade, but warned that refusal would invite the ravages of war to their shores. Most scholars believe that Keitetsu had altered Hideyoshi's words, but Atobe Makoto argues that Koreans serving as guides or scouts and opening a road to the Ming were not contradictory ideas, and both phrases originated with Hideyoshi.²² Yet, even if Atobe is correct, the language Keitetsu used vis-à-vis Ming China was recast from invasion to paying tribute. This implies that the Sō did not entirely embrace Hideyoshi's priorities.

Hideyoshi's diplomatic correspondence clearly reveals the hierar-

²⁰ *Konoe-ke monjo* 近衛家文書, 1590.11, in *Toyotomi Hideyoshi monjoshū* 4, 273-74.

²¹ *Seonjo sujeong sillok* 선조수정실록, 25/4a, 25/11a-11b.

²² Atobe Makoto 跡部信, "Bunroku-Keichō no eki ni okeru Hideyoshi no mokuhyō to taigai ninshiki" 文禄・慶長の役における秀吉の目標と対外認識, *Nihonshi kenkyū* 日本史研究 726 (2023): 6-7.

chical vision that he pursued internationally, with Japan at the summit of his putative regional order. This assertion was apparently based upon the existence of the Japanese emperor, the superiority of Japanese culture as the “land of the gods,” Hideyoshi as the “sun child” following the “will of the gods,” and Japan’s military prowess. Hideyoshi may have started to believe his own propaganda. Reliant on second-hand information, which inevitably meant that something was “lost in translation,” and since his trusted intermediaries also lied or constructed their own versions of the truth, this was diplomacy tainted by misinformation.

Confirmation of Hideyoshi’s perception of Korea as part of the Japanese hegemonic order came in the form of rules for troop behavior in Korea (as well as the islands of Iki and probably Tsushima) promulgated by Hideyoshi during the first month of 1592:

1. Soldiers whether of high or low in rank, committing violent acts or causing disorder.
2. Arson.
3. Giving commoners and farmers demands beyond their means.

The above mentioned articles are strictly forbidden, and anyone who does not follow these rules will be swiftly and severely punished.²³

According to Nakano Hitoshi, such documents imply that the Toyotomi regime saw the recipients as allies, who were expected to follow his orders and fulfil their role as a channel between Japan and China.²⁴ Yet, Hideyoshi still appeared unsure of the Korean stance on the forthcoming war against Ming China.²⁵ On 1592.1.18, Hideyoshi dispatched a letter to Sō Yoshitoshi declaring that he would send large numbers of troops through Korea in order to invade Ming China.²⁶ The Sō were given until

²³ *Katō monjo* 加藤文書, 1592.1, in *Toyotomi Hideyoshi Chōsen shinryaku kankei shiryō shūsei* 1, 163-64; *Matsuura monjo* 松浦文書, 1592.1, in *Toyotomi Hideyoshi monjoshū* 5, 112.

²⁴ Nakano Hitoshi 中野等, *Bunroku-Keichō no eki* 文禄・慶長の役 (Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 2008), 27.

²⁵ Atobe, “Bunroku-Keichō no eki,” 7.

²⁶ *Sō-ke monjo* 宗家文書, 1592.1.18, in *Toyotomi Hideyoshi monjoshū* 5, 106-107.

the third month to win Korean approval. If they accepted Hideyoshi's ultimatum, their safety and land would be guaranteed, but if not, then Japan would eradicate them. As late as 1592.3.13, Hideyoshi declared that:

...In the unlikely event that the Koreans object to our plans, move all of our troops to the islands near Korea and ready the boats...If this comes to pass, it goes without saying that the men of Kyushu, Shikoku, and Chūgoku will cross the sea...²⁷

Nakano concludes that Hideyoshi had not necessarily given up all hope of Korean compliance, rather his fundamental strategy still assumed the Korean king would allow Japanese troops to pass through Korea.²⁸ An eternal optimist, Hideyoshi dispatched a final mission on the eve of the invasion in the hope of cementing hegemony over Korea without a fight.²⁹ Hideyoshi might have settled for benevolent neutrality, but the Joseon court was unwilling to compromise Korean sovereignty. In this scenario, Hideyoshi's preconception was only abandoned after Konishi Yukinaga's landing during the fourth month of 1592 was met with Korean resistance. Assuming Hideyoshi understood Korea to be part of Japan's sphere of influence after 1590, by opposing Japanese landings it had become a "rebellious province," as Sajima Akiko attests.³⁰

Perhaps there was a degree of ambiguity in Hideyoshi's mind about where his domains should end and foreign land begin, or he simply may not have acknowledged any limits to future expansion. If Korea's status

²⁷ *Mōri-ke monjo* 毛利家文書, 1592.3.13, in *Dai Nihon komonjo iewake monjo* 大日本古文書家わけ文書 8, no. 3, edited by Tokyo teikoku daigaku bungakubu shiryō hensanjo 東京帝國大学文学部史料編纂所 (Tokyo teikoku daigaku, 1922), 143-48.

²⁸ Nakano Hitoshi 中野等, "Karairi (Bunroku no eki) ni okeru Katō Kiyomasa no dōkō" 唐入り(文禄の役)における加藤清正の動向, *Kyūshū bunkashi kenkyūjo kiyō* 九州文化史研究所紀要 56 (2013): 44..

²⁹ *Seisei nikki* 西征日記, 1592.3.12, 1592.4.7.

³⁰ Sajima Akiko, "Hideyoshi's View of Chosŏn Korea and Japan-Ming Negotiations," in *The East Asian War, 1592-1598: International Relations, Violence, and Memory*, edited by James Lewis (Routledge, 2015), 95.

was initially unclear, this would explain why he repeatedly sought confirmation and clarification. Furthermore, if Hideyoshi believed that Japan and Korea were now in a hegemonic relationship, would he not have expected more communication from them, perhaps even tribute missions? Yet, Hideyoshi must have realized before the invasion that the Koreans were not committed to his cause. Hence his orders to dispatch further delegations could also be interpreted cynically as attempts by Hideyoshi to intensify the pressure on the Koreans to change sides before launching the invasion.

At the same time, Korea also served as a role model in Hideyoshi's wider diplomatic efforts to establish Japanese regional hegemony. Even before Korea allegedly swore allegiance to Hideyoshi, Hideyoshi had started using this "fact" to entice others to do the same via his vassals. For example, the Shimazu 島津 of Satsuma 薩摩 drafted a letter to the Ryukyuan king, dated 1588. 8.12, stating that:

Already from Korea we have received a letter and before long they will agree to present themselves to us. There is talk that Ming China and the various countries of *nanban* will send envoy ships to Japan too. On account of this, it would be impolite if your country did not also come...³¹

Moreover, in Hideyoshi's first dispatch to Luzon, dated 1591. 9.15, he stated that:

...The distant lands of Korea and Ryukyu have decided to submit to me. Currently, I desire to conquer Ming China as this is the will of the gods. As of now, your country has yet to dispatch an envoy to Japan and thus I will send a large force to conquer you...I have not yet ordered the attack, but if the envoy is delayed I will dispatch my troops there with

³¹ Shimazu-ke monjo 島津家文書, 1588.8.12, in *Toyotomi Hideyoshi Chōsen shinryaku kankei shiryō shūsei* 1, 27.

haste...³²

Once the war in Korea had commenced, Korea became a negative example to scare others into compliance. Hideyoshi's second document to Luzon, often dated 1592.7.21, stated that:

...While advancing on China, the Koreans opposed us and thus we are now subjugating Korea. Our soldiers should already be at the border of China...if you do not keep your promise to come to Japan, even though you are far away we will punish you. Let Korea be a warning to you.³³

In short, Hideyoshi's aggressive diplomacy was not confined to Korea, and indeed it served as a prototype which set the standard for this phase of regional hegemony building.

Regardless of how he saw the Koreans, Hideyoshi still expected their obeisance. Korea was always the primary target of the international phase of Hideyoshi's grand strategy, but it was only ever a means to an end, since his ultimate goal was for Japan to replace Ming China as the hegemon of East Asia. Some historians disagree, arguing that Korea represented the full extent of his objectives, yet they struggle to explain why, between 1585 and 1597, Hideyoshi frequently discussed his desire to subjugate both China and Korea.³⁴ Furthermore, this objective was not confined to official documents sent to his vassals, or to foreign polities where diplomatic niceties might intervene, but is also found in personal

³² *Chōsen seibatsuki* 朝鮮征伐記, 1591.9.15, in *Toyotomi Hideyoshi monjoshū* 5, 81.

³³ *Nanzen kyūki* 南禪旧記, 1592, in *Toyotomi Hideyoshi monjoshū* 5, 236-37.

³⁴ Jeong Gu-bok 정구복, "Imjin waeran-ui yeoksa-jeok uimi: Imjin waeran-e daehan Han-Il yang-guk-ui yeoksa insik" 임진왜란의 역사적 의미: 임진왜란에 대한 한일 양국의 역사인식, *Han-Il yeoksa gongdong yeon'gu bogoseo* 한일역사 공동연구 보고서 2 (2005): 194-95; Hur Nam-lin, "Toyotomi Hideyoshi's Invasion of the Chosŏn Kingdom, 1592-1598," in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Asian History*, edited by David Ludden (Oxford University Press, 2020), 6; Luís Fróis Report, 1586.10.17, in *Iezusukai Nihon nenpō ge* イエズス会日本年報 下, translated by Murakami Naojirō 村上直次郎 (*Yūshōdō shoten*, 1969), 149-50; *Myōman-ji monjo* 妙満寺文書, 1587.5.29, in *Toyotomi Hideyoshi monjoshū* 3, 133-34; *Nabeshima monjo* 鍋島文書, 1587.10.13, in *Toyotomi Hideyoshi monjoshū* 3, 175-76; *Shigaku* 4-3, 1587.10.14, in *Toyotomi Hideyoshi monjoshū* 3, 178.

correspondence with his wife and adopted daughter. As Hori Shin observes, confusion over Hideyoshi's intentions has arisen because the aim of the war was the invasion of Ming China, but the actual battleground was Korea.³⁵

As early as 1587, it was apparent that Hideyoshi had drawn a clear temporal distinction between Korea (short-term target) and China (long-term goal). In other words, Hideyoshi's goals vis-à-vis Korea and Ming China were not identical. From Korea, he demanded subservience, or at least an acknowledgement of his regime's pre-eminence. In part, he may have been punishing the Koreans for their "rebellion" or refusal to submit, but he also aimed to confirm Korean loyalty. In contrast, Hideyoshi sought to weaken the Ming so that their hegemony ultimately would collapse. It could even be argued that Hideyoshi invaded Korea primarily as a means to force Ming to the negotiating table. He subsequently made unrealistic demands as part of a diplomatic strategy to achieve what he really wanted, namely, peace, order, and trade under a *Pax Nipponica*.

In essence, Hideyoshi sought two levels of recognition: he wanted the Koreans to acknowledge Japan as their hegemon, but he also desired Ming consent to recognize the Koreans as inferior to Japan. It is easy to think that the East Asian War was only about Japan acquiring higher status than Korea, but it is important to note that this does not mean that Hideyoshi was acquiescing to a secondary position beneath Ming within the East Asian hegemony.

Korea as the Target of Hideyoshi's Grand Strategy

There are ongoing debates surrounding Hideyoshi's motives for invading the continent. The most prominent theories are related to personal motives: grief and pent-up anger at the death of his son, craving international recognition, megalomania, belligerence, destiny, or merely fulfilling Oda Nobunaga's ambition. Next come domestic political motives: dis-

³⁵ Hori Shin 堀新, *Tenka tōitsu kara sakoku e* 天下統一から鎖国へ (Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 2010), 128.

tracting the daimyo, land to reward his followers, or wanting to use the prestige and glory of the invasion to impress his vassals and further cement his authority. In addition, there are economic motives, such as attempting to re-establish official trade relations with Ming China, and strategic motives, including a response to the Iberian advance into North-east Asia, or drawing inspiration from the Portuguese and Spanish, or trying to reorganize East Asia.³⁶ It is striking that none of these theories are limited or specific to Korea.

Hideyoshi prioritized Korea because of geographical, strategic, diplomatic, and logistical factors. Geographically, Korea became the chosen route because of the geological position it occupied between Japan and China. Strategically, Hideyoshi probably targeted Korea because it was a significant element in Ming regional hegemony and thus could serve the same purpose for Japan. Hideyoshi's diplomatic initiatives while not limited to Korea were primarily focused on the Koreans because he believed them to be a soft touch due to their alleged dissatisfaction with the Ming and preexisting relationship with Tsushima. Finally, Hideyoshi prioritized Korea logistically because it was close to Japan and the intervening islands—Iki and Tsushima—also facilitated access.

Yet, the choice of Korea as the initial target of Hideyoshi's overseas expansion was not inevitable; other potential alternatives for an assault on the Ming existed, either more obliquely via Ryukyu, or more directly through an assault on the Chinese coast. The southern route, targeting minor players in the region, would have been slower but possibly easier. Nevertheless, given the geographical, strategic, diplomatic, and logistical realities, the Korean route would have seemed the most sensible option at the time.

³⁶ Hirakawa Arata 平川新, "Supein to Porutogaru no Nihon seifukuron o megutte" スペインとポルトガルの日本征服論をめぐる, *Rekishi hyōron* 歴史評論 815 (2018): 86; Fukaya Katsumi 深谷克己, *Higashiajia hōbunmeiken no naka no Nihonshi* 東アジア法文明圏の中の日本史 (Iwanami shoten, 2012), 95-99.

Hideyoshi's Oscillating Approach to Korea

Rather than simply recounting the course of events during the East Asian War, this paper seeks to explain why, under Hideyoshi's leadership, Japanese policy towards Korea alternated between coercive diplomacy and extreme violence. Japanese behavior responded to certain triggers, some of which were counters to Korean actions, but underneath it is possible to discern a more coherent objective of building regional hegemony, which may be defined as a blunting strategy.

As seen above, Hideyoshi was willing to contemplate a diplomatic solution to gain allies, albeit primarily through the use of threats, bluster, and brinkmanship. This was similar to his domestic practice, only resorting to violence if his target did not submit. To be successful, an aspiring hegemon must be able to convince other states of the value of subservience; employing either coercion, consensual inducements, or assertions of legitimacy.³⁷ China was the hegemon of East Asia because Korea, Ryukyu, Vietnam, and others acknowledged the legitimacy of its authority and hence consented to Ming leadership. Domestically, Hideyoshi was able to gain legitimacy by manipulating the emperor, and coercing the consent of the daimyo, but it was a mistake to presume that he could easily transplant the same techniques to the continent in a rather different cultural context.

In theory at least, the Koreans had options. They could either have continued to adhere to what was presented as the tired old Ming order, or opted to join the vigorous and new Toyotomi hegemony. To succeed, Hideyoshi knew that he needed to drive a wedge between the Koreans and the Ming. Hideyoshi hoped that the Koreans felt oppressed by, or at least disenchanted with, the Chinese. However, the Korean court was culturally and ideologically predisposed to favor the Ming, and Hideyoshi was unable to manufacture consent because he offered few, if any, in-

³⁷ Deborah L. Haber, "The Death of Hegemony: Why 'Pax Nipponica' Is Impossible," *Asian Survey* 30, no. 9 (1990): 892, 894, 899; Doshi, *The Long Game*, 3.

duchements to tempt them to defect. Furthermore, Hideyoshi preferred to deliver ultimatums, so he must have appeared blunt and unsophisticated in the eyes of the Koreans and Chinese. Such an approach proved counterproductive. In short, having tried but failed to advance his hegemonic goal through diplomatic means, Hideyoshi lost patience and resorted to large-scale direct intervention. Nevertheless, the fact that Hideyoshi intended to spare the life of the Korean king indicates that he retained a degree of optimism in eliciting Korean consent.³⁸

Although the Japanese were able to make significant territorial advances in the first few months of the campaign, organized guerrilla bands quickly spread across Korea. Initially, the Japanese underestimated these “righteous armies,” but they remained a thorn in Japan’s side.³⁹ Fearing Ming intervention, as early as 1592.4.28, Konishi Yukinaga had attempted to initiate peace talks with the Koreans and demanded the king’s return to Hanseong in order to consummate Japanese hegemony. The Koreans briefly appeared responsive, perhaps as a delaying tactic, but once the Japanese presented an ultimatum—either fight with us against the Ming or face the consequences—the putative talks proved abortive.⁴⁰

Moreover, by the fifth month of 1592, naval forces led by the Left Naval Commander of Jeolla Province 全羅道 Yi Sun-sin 李舜臣, were wreaking havoc on Japanese supply lines in the south. This obstructed access to the west coast of Korea, which prevented the Japanese from stockpiling supplies for the assault on Ming China.⁴¹ Naval losses

³⁸ Sajima, “Hideyoshi’s View of Chosŏn Korea,” 95; *Kuroda-ke monjo* 黒田家文書, 1592.4.25, in *Toyotomi Hideyoshi monjoshū* 5, 160-61.

³⁹ Tani Tetsuya 谷徹也, “‘Toyotomi no heiwa’ to Jinshin sensō” 「豊臣の平和」と壬辰戦争, in *Nihon kinseishi o mitōsu* 1. *Retō no heiwa to tōgō: kinsei senki* 日本近世史を見通す 1. 列島の平和と統合: 近世前期, edited by Makihara Shigeyuki 牧原成征 and Mura Kazuki 村和明 (Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 2023), 54.

⁴⁰ Kim Mun-ja 金文子, “‘Toyotomi seikenki no Nichi-Min wagi kōshō to Chōsen’ 豊臣政権期の日・明和議交渉と朝鮮, *Ochanomizu shigaku* お茶の水史学 37 (1993): 27-30; *Seisei nikki*, 1592.5.14, 1592.5.16.

⁴¹ Hur, “Toyotomi Hideyoshi’s Invasion,” 5; Yi Min’ung, “The Role of the Chosŏn Navy and Major Naval Battles during the Imjin Waeran,” in *The East Asian War, 1592-1598: International Relations, Violence, and Memory*, edited by James Lewis (Routledge, 2015), 123, 126-27; James Lew-

spurred Hideyoshi to order the Japanese to avoid sea battles and concentrate their ships in coastal waters to protect key sea lanes.⁴² As the war progressed, the Japanese strategy of procuring military supplies locally became increasingly difficult; a situation worsened by their failure to capture Korea's granary belt (i.e., Chungcheong 忠淸 and Jeolla 全羅 Provinces).⁴³

By the eighth month of 1592, leading daimyo fighting in Korea gathered in Hanseong to discuss these problems, which contributed to a growing sense of foreboding.⁴⁴ Battlefield reversals and growing food shortages prompted elements within the Japanese leadership in Korea to pursue a negotiated settlement with the Ming. Financial pressures and similar logistical problems meant that the Ming were also receptive to a quick resolution. For Nam-lin Hur, apart from the lack of food, it was the "Japanese desire to save face and eliminate a threat to domestic political stability" that pushed Japan to attempt a diplomatic resolution.⁴⁵ Yet, the last straw was the order given by Song Yingchang 宋應昌 (Ming Commissioner of War) to set fire to Japanese army warehouses in Hanseong containing two months' food supplies.

Unfortunately for all concerned, the intra-war peace negotiations were to drag on for three-and-a-half years before ending inconclusively. Although the precise timing of the negotiations' breakdown is still debated, it is clear that the ceremony investing Hideyoshi as "king of Japan" went well. Thus it could not have been the reason why, as was previously

is, "International Relations and the Imjin War," in *The East Asian War, 1592-1598: International Relations, Violence, and Memory*, edited by James Lewis (Routledge, 2015), 265-67.

⁴² *Wakizaka-ke monjo shūsei* 脇坂家文書集成, 1592.7.14, in *Toyotomi Hideyoshi monjoshū* 5, 230; Yi, "The Role of the Chosŏn Navy," 126, 129.

⁴³ Nakajō Kenta 中條健太, "Hideyoshi no Chōsen shinryaku ni okeru hyōrō mai chōtatsu ni tsuite" 秀吉の朝鮮侵略における兵糧米調達について, *Historia* ヒストリア 165 (1999): 50.

⁴⁴ *Kuroda kafu Chōsen jinki* 黒田家譜朝鮮降記, in *Toyotomi Hideyoshi Chōsen shinryaku kankei shiryō shūsei* 1, 715-16.

⁴⁵ Hur Nam-lin, "Works in English on the Imjin War and the Challenge of Research," *International Journal of Korean History* 18, no. 2 (2013): 63-65; Kim Bong-hyeon 金奉鉉, *Hideyoshi no Chōsen shinryaku to gihei tōsō* 秀吉の朝鮮侵略と義兵闘争 (Sairyusha, 1995), 275.

claimed, Hideyoshi became furious and returned to war.⁴⁶ Recent Japanese scholarship instead points to a two-stage process: Hideyoshi lost his temper not once but twice.⁴⁷ First, when he learned that a Korean prince had not accompanied the Korean envoys sent to Japan, and again when he received the Ming demand for the complete withdrawal of Japanese troops from the peninsula and to destroy their remaining castles.⁴⁸ Yet, Atobe strongly maintains that the peace negotiations did not fail due to a lack of territorial gain. Indeed, he asserts that Hideyoshi may have believed peace with Ming had been achieved and it was only peace with Korea which had failed.⁴⁹ Hur agrees that Hideyoshi's anger and resentment seems to have been primarily directed against Korea.⁵⁰

The negotiations were essentially a contest over status in a hierarchical system. Hideyoshi assumed that the Ming would now regard Japan as superior to Korea, but the Chinese still sided with the Koreans and demanded more concessions from Hideyoshi. Still, the symbolic importance and emotional turmoil of the negotiating process should not be exaggerated. Obviously, status mattered, and as Atobe emphasizes, land for his followers was basically window-dressing; ultimately this was a zero-sum competition for economic, political, and strategic hegemony over

⁴⁶ *Liangchao pingranglu* 兩朝平壤錄, 1596.9.3, in *Toyotomi Hideyoshi Chōsen shinryaku kankei shiryō shūsei* 3, 272; Yonetani Hitoshi 米谷均, “Yaburi suterareta? Sakuhō bunsho” 破り捨てられた? 冊封文書, in *Hideyoshi no kyozō to jitsuzō* 秀吉の虚像と実像, edited by Hori Shin 堀新 and Inoue Yasushi 井上泰至 (Kasamashoin, 2016), 280-82; Luís Fróis Report, 1596.12.28, in *Jūroku shichiseiki Iezusukai Nihonhōkokushū* 十六・七世紀イエズス会日本報告集 1, no. 2, translated by Matsuda Kiichi 松田毅一 (Dōhōsha shuppan, 1987), 316-26.

⁴⁷ Yonetani Hitoshi 米谷均, “Toyotomi Hideyoshi no ‘Nihon kokuō’ sakuhō no igi” 豊臣秀吉の「日本国王」冊封の意義, in *Toyotomi seiken no shōtai* 豊臣政権の正体, edited by Yamamoto Hirofumi 山本博文, Sone Yuji 曾根勇二, Hori Shin 堀新 (Kashiwa shobō, 2014), 284; Sajima, “Hideyoshi's view of Chosŏn Korea,” 104-105; Kitajima Manji 北島万次, *Toyotomi Hideyoshi Chōsen shinryaku kankei shiryō shūsei* 豊臣秀吉朝鮮侵略関係史料集成 3 (Heibonsha, 2017), 271; Nakano, *Bunroku-Keichō no eki*, 181-85.

⁴⁸ Hwang Shin 黄慎, *Ilbon wanghwan ilgi* 日本往還日記, in *Nihon shomin seikatsu shiryō shūsei dai 27 kan* 日本庶民生活史料集成第27卷 (Sanpin shobō, 1981), 122, 124.

⁴⁹ Atobe, “Bunroku-Keichō no eki,” 15-17.

⁵⁰ *Shimazu-ke monjo* 島津家文書, 1596.9.7, in *Toyotomi Hideyoshi Chōsen shinryaku kankei shiryō shūsei* 3, 281-82; Hur, “Toyotomi Hideyoshi's Effort,” 62.

the Korean peninsula. In sum, the peace talks represented a return to the diplomatic approach, and an attempt to bring about Japanese hegemony over Korea as a step towards achieving hegemony in the region. Hideyoshi did not demand that Korea surrender its sovereignty, but merely acknowledge Japan's hegemonic status.

Although plagued by misunderstanding, insincerity, and complexity, the Japanese, from their perspective, had made significant concessions to keep the peace talks on track: voluntarily repatriating the Korean princes and progressively abandoning most of the territory that they had occupied. In return, the Ming merely invested Hideyoshi as a vassal king; a title which meant nothing to him without the associated trading privileges. By refusing to grant these rights to Japan, the Ming surrendered significant leverage over Hideyoshi, which they might conceivably have used to forestall the second invasion. Ming intransigence left Hideyoshi with only extreme alternatives: unilateral withdrawal or escalation via a renewed invasion. Given Hideyoshi's predilection for risk-taking, it should have come as no surprise that he chose the second course.

Thus on 1596.9.7, Hideyoshi declared the peace negotiations over and ordered preparations for a second invasion. Yet, despite his bravado, Hideyoshi appeared reluctant to launch military operations, given the weariness of Japanese forces and perhaps the risk that they might rebel.⁵¹ Thus, even after the negotiations with the Ming had collapsed, the Japanese fumbled for peace with Korea for another ten months. Hideyoshi's diplomatic initiatives during this period reveal that he was willing to withdraw completely from Korea, in return for tributary gifts or a princely visit, which would imply recognition of Japanese hegemony, but Joseon did not comply.⁵²

Many historians believe that the second invasion was either driven

⁵¹ Hur, "Toyotomi Hideyoshi's Effort," 59.

⁵² *Yoshihiro kōgo fuchū* 義弘公御譜中, in *Kagoshima-ken shiryō: kyūki zatsuroku kōhen* 鹿児島県史料: 旧記雑録後編 3, edited by Kagoshima-ken ishin shiryō hensanjo 鹿児島県維新史料編さん所 (Kagoshimaken, 1983), 108-109.

by a desire to punish Korea, an attempt to annex its four southern provinces, to salve Hideyoshi's wounded pride, to recoup the sunk costs, or to minimize potential domestic political repercussions.⁵³ Perhaps fearing that the tide had turned on the battlefield, the brutality of the second invasion was certainly designed to intimidate the enemy, but it was also an attempt to regain the initiative after the frustration of the protracted and inconclusive peace talks. Hideyoshi realized that he could not impose hegemony over Ming at this time, given his lack of leverage to coerce their consent. This does not necessarily mean that he had abandoned his grand strategic principles, but rather that he had been forced to narrow his focus. Hideyoshi was trying to finesse a weakening hand to strengthen Japan's relative position. In other words, he was again using the threat and reality of violence in Korea to press the Koreans into accepting Japanese hegemony. It was Hideyoshi's methods, not motives, which had altered.

The second invasion almost completely failed to advance Hideyoshi's hegemonic agenda. Despite enjoying some initial successes, the Japanese offensive lasted a mere six months and did not manage to advance beyond the southern part of the Korean peninsula. Food and other essential resources were in short supply, and as the Japanese will to fight waned, the daimyo risked losing control over their men.⁵⁴

Contrary to popular belief, Kenneth Swope argues that the decision to withdraw from Korea was actually made by Hideyoshi personally and not posthumously by the *Go-bugyō* 五奉行 (the Five Commissioners) and

⁵³ Hur, "Toyotomi Hideyoshi's Effort," 61; Kenneth Swope, *A Dragon's Head and a Serpent's Tail: Ming China and the First Great East Asian War, 1592-1598* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2009), 223; Atobe, "Toyotomi seiken no taigaikōzō," 72; Kim Mun-ja 김문자, "Imjin waeran yeon'gu-ui je munje: Imjin Jeong'yu jaeran balbal weon'in-e daehan jaegeomto" 임진왜란 연구의 제 문제: 임진·정유재란 발발 원인에 대한 재검토, *Han-Il gwangyesa yeon'gu* 한일관계사연구 67 (2020): 175; Nakano, *Bunroku-Keichō no eki*, 191; Kitajima Manji, "The Imjin Waeran: Contrasting the First and Second Invasions of Korea," in *The East Asian War, 1592-1598: International Relations, Violence, and Memory*, edited by James Lewis (Routledge, 2015), 88.

⁵⁴ *Nabeshima-ke monjo* 鍋島家文書, 1598.5.22, in *Saga-ken shiryō shūsei* 佐賀県史料集成 3, edited by Saga kenritsu toshokan 佐賀県立図書館 (Saga kenritsu toshokan, 1958), 369-70; Swope, *A Dragon's Head*, 266-67; Hur, "Toyotomi Hideyoshi's Invasion," 18; Nakano, *Hideyoshi no gunrei*, 347-48.

the *Go-tairō* 五大老 (the Council of Five Elders). The Japanese had commenced a large-scale retreat from the peninsula by the fifth month of 1598.⁵⁵ Yet, there is some indirect evidence to suggest that Hideyoshi was contemplating a possible third invasion.⁵⁶ Tsuno Tomoaki and others argue that since Hideyoshi had ordered the construction of 250 ships, he was planning a large-scale re-deployment of troops to the continent the following year (1599).⁵⁷ This would suggest that even while critically ill, Hideyoshi had not forsaken his grand strategy. Maintaining even a toe-hold on the mainland might have served as a symbol of Japanese hegemonic claims or as a bridgehead for future military campaigns. Nonetheless, by the sixth month of 1598, Hideyoshi appeared ready to suspend his quest for hegemony over East Asia, at least for the time being, as he seemed willing to settle for a written apology from Korea.⁵⁸ Aware that his time was limited, Hideyoshi's focus returned to his first priority: ensuring the longevity of his regime and the succession of his son Toyotomi Hideyori 豊臣秀頼.

Hideyoshi died at Fushimi Castle on the eighteenth day of the eighth month of 1598. His death was concealed from all but a few people, although this could not prevent the Toyotomi regime from entering a slow-motion collapse.⁵⁹ The Japanese still tried to negotiate a peaceful resolution to guarantee their troops' safe evacuation from Korea, yet

⁵⁵ Yi Chin-hui, "Korean Envoys and Japan: Korean-Japanese Relations in the 17th to 19th Centuries," *Korea Journal* 25, no. 12 (1985): 26; Mary Elizabeth Berry, *Hideyoshi* (Harvard University Press, 1982), 233.

⁵⁶ *Tachibana-ke monjo* 立花家文書, 1598.3.13, in *Toyotomi Hideyoshi monjoshū* 7, 264-65; *Nabeshima-ke monjo* 鍋島家文書, 1598.5.22, in *Saga-ken shiryō shūsei* 3, 369-70; *Shimazu-ke monjo*, 1598.5.26, in *Dai Nihon komonjo iewake monjo* 16, no. 2, 264-67.

⁵⁷ *Kobayakawa-ke monjo* 小早川家文書, 1591.4.13, in *Dai Nihon komonjo iewake monjo* 11, no.1, 365. Tsuno believes this source is from 1598.4.13. Tsuno Tomoaki 津野倫明, "Chōsen shuppeiki ni okeru zōsen ni kanseuru ichi shiron" 朝鮮出兵期における造船に関する一試論, *Sengokushi kenkyū* 戦国史研究 58(2009): 5, 9; Nakano, *Bunroku-Keichō no eki*, 240.

⁵⁸ *Saishō oshō bunan* 西笑和尚文案, 1598.6.27, in *Toyotomi Hideyoshi Chōsen shinryaku kankei shiryō shūsei* 3, 942-43; Hur, "Toyotomi Hideyoshi's Effort," 66-67.

⁵⁹ *Nabeshima-ke monjo* 鍋島家文書, 1598.8.25, in *Saga-ken shiryō shūsei* 3, 402-403; Nakano, *Bunroku-Keichō no eki*, 242; Hori, *Tenka tōitsu*, 128.

Ming and Korean forces continued to besiege them.⁶⁰ The last Japanese were repatriated to Hakata at the end of 1598, without having accomplished anything in the negotiations.⁶¹ Following Hideyoshi's death, his envisaged third invasion evaporated, and the Japanese relinquished any thoughts of invading East Asia for several centuries.

Hideyoshi's oscillating approach towards Korea makes most sense when viewed as part of a hegemonic blunting strategy, that is, as a means to reduce the influence of the existing hegemon without confronting it directly.⁶² Hideyoshi was flexible and pragmatic when it came to interim measures, as long as they did not obviate the achievement of his long-term goals. The result was a pattern of escalation and de-escalation, from negotiation via coercion to violence and back again, in an attempt to wrestle Korea away from the Sinocentric order and into Japan's orbit. War was therefore just one mode of pursuing hegemony, even if it was the most important because of the resources it consumed and the risks involved. Hideyoshi's blunting strategy was consistently pursued, but the regime's behavior adapted to changing circumstances, usually in response to the failure of the preceding approach. Hence, Korea represented the trigger for the war but not the primary motivation. It was seen as the first domino, a target but not the end goal.

⁶⁰ Kitajima Manji 北島万次, *Toyotomi Hideyoshi no Chōsen shinryaku* 豊臣秀吉の朝鮮侵略 (Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1995), 243-44.

⁶¹ Nakano, *Hideyoshi no gunrei*, 382; Kitajima, *Toyotomi Hideyoshi no Chōsen shinryaku*, 258.

⁶² David Kang, *East Asia before the West: Five Centuries of Trade and Tribute* (Columbia University Press, 2010), 21; Doshi, *The Long Game*, 3.

The East Asian War's Part in the Failure of Hideyoshi's Grand Strategy

According to Hur, "Hideyoshi was very successful when fighting within Japan, but in international wars he lacked knowledge, power, experience, and foresight," and the primary reason for his regime's failure was Hideyoshi's flawed perception of Korea.⁶³ While accurate in most respects, this diagnosis overlooks the fact that domestically, Hideyoshi did not need to overcome a rival hegemon, whereas internationally he did.

Hideyoshi's original intention was to use Koreans as his vanguard, or at least to assimilate them before moving on to China. If either the Koreans had allied with Hideyoshi—a rather improbable assumption, but one which the Chinese also initially made—or had they only offered token resistance, then Hideyoshi could presumably have added Korean military, naval, and economic power to his own. This would have made an invasion of Ming China more plausible. In retrospect, it all appears rather fanciful, but Genghis Khan, Alexander the Great, and many other successful leaders pursued a similar snowball strategy. They acquired resources as their armies advanced, a rolling plan of imperial expansion in which the last people to be conquered became allies for the next invasion. Moreover, Hideyoshi had successfully employed this strategy during his domestic pacification campaigns, but it proved untransferable to Korea.

Hideyoshi had only launched the invasion of Korea once he felt his regime was secure, and hence believed he was not pursuing domestic and regional hegemony simultaneously. However, it could be argued that Hideyoshi's strategic miscalculation was not only due to his underestimating of Korean or Chinese strength, or overestimation of Japanese power projection capabilities, but because he thought that he could extend his domestic hegemony temporally while expanding regional hegemony geographically.

⁶³ Hur, "Toyotomi Hideyoshi's Effort," 71.

Ironically, early Japanese victories on the Korean peninsula increased the risk of failure because it made changing tack harder. Rather than reinforcing success by deploying the 100,000 troops held in reserve at Hizen Nagoya to exploit initial triumphs, and then consolidating battlefield gains in the intra-war peace negotiations, Hideyoshi chose to reinforce failure by launching the second invasion.⁶⁴ Strategically, it might have been wiser instead to target Ryukyu or Taiwan to boost Japanese morale and disconcert the Ming.

At the operational level, both sides faced enormous logistical challenges, but the Ming enjoyed shorter and more reliable supply lines. War-torn Korea lacked the resources to feed its own people, let alone two foreign armies. The Japanese supply train was unable to deliver sufficient food, especially when interdicted by the Korean navy. Its victories at sea were compensating for losses on land.⁶⁵ Yet, Hideyoshi had never planned to fight the Koreans at sea. Otherwise, he might have demanded better-designed ships. Furthermore, the Korean “righteous armies” remained a thorn in Japan’s side throughout the war. Nukii Masayuki credits them with being “one of the most important factors frustrating the Toyotomi regime’s ambition to subjugate Ming China and extend domination over Korea.”⁶⁶

Missed opportunities abound. In changing his mind about crossing the sea to take personal command of Japanese forces in Korea, Hideyoshi not only lost his best chance to discover the state of affairs at first hand, but also precluded a major boost to military coordination, morale, and resources. Moreover, in not taking direct charge of the situation in Korea, Hideyoshi revealed the limitations of delegating responsibility when confronting the challenge of coordinating a coalition army with the commu-

⁶⁴ This included such powerful daimyos as Tokugawa Ieyasu 徳川家康 and Maeda Toshiie 前田利家. Nakano Hitoshi believes that Hideyoshi originally meant for these *daimyos* to join the invading force in Korea. For details, see Nakano, *Hideyoshi no gunrei*, 2.

⁶⁵ Yi Min’ung, “The Role of the Chosŏn Navy,” 126.

⁶⁶ Nukii Masayuki, “Righteous Army Activity in the Imjin War,” in *The East Asian War, 1592-1598: International Relations, Violence, and Memory*, edited by James Lewis (Routledge, 2015), 160-61.

nications technology of the time. It seems that there were shortcomings in conception, execution, and perhaps even commitment to the strategy. In sum, Korea was partially responsible for Hideyoshi's hegemonic grand strategy reaching a dead end, since its failure was inextricably linked to the disastrous East Asian War, yet other factors also played a part, particularly those related to Hideyoshi's personality.

Conclusion

Fundamentally, the argument presented here is that Hideyoshi invaded Korea in order to pursue his hegemonic grand strategy. Hideyoshi always knew that he needed to pacify the Koreans—either voluntarily or involuntarily—before tackling the Ming. From the start, in order to establish regional hegemony, it was vital for Hideyoshi to bring Korea into Japan's sphere of influence, regardless of whether he ultimately succeeded in conquering the Ming. In short, Korea was central to, but not the apex of Hideyoshi's grand strategy.

Hideyoshi's military preparations reveal a degree of uncertainty over whether or not he expected to have to fight the Koreans. However, it is notable that Hideyoshi was unwilling to deploy all of the military and economic strength at his disposal. Perhaps the fact that he maintained a large army at Hizen Nagoya implies either that he anticipated a short campaign or even counted on Korean forces swelling Japanese ranks in the forthcoming confrontation with the Ming. In other words, Japan fought a limited war for limited objectives in Korea, while for Korea it was a total war of survival. Hideyoshi gambled on a quick and easy victory and did not prepare for a prolonged war of attrition because he assumed that the approaches which had worked at home would work equally well in Korea. Had Hideyoshi been fully prepared from the outset to overwhelm Korea, postponing the invasion of China to a later date, the war might have turned out rather differently.

Yet, there was also a strong cultural prejudice operating in East Asia that Hideyoshi was unable to quell, despite propagating the "sun child" myth and various attempts to institutionalize consent through pro-

posed royal visits and dynastic marriage. Hideyoshi failed to anticipate the likely and actual reactions of other polities to his grand strategy. Hideyoshi underestimated the importance of Korea's role in the East Asian order, and overestimated Korean pliability, but it was his insufficient understanding of Ming China which led him to launch the invasion.

Hideyoshi must have eventually realized that he lacked the means to subdue the Ming, so he sought to lay sound foundations in Korea for subsequent campaigns. However, the peace negotiations failed to produce a platform upon which Japan could develop a new regional hegemony. Thus, it would be easy to argue that there was some attenuation in Hideyoshi's regional ambitions between the first and second invasions. Yet, the fact that the second invasion happened at all confirms that Hideyoshi had not abandoned his hegemonic "grand principle."

The Toyotomi regime's policies and behavior continued to evolve throughout the war and the grand strategy appears to have undergone some superficial tactical or temporary changes. Perhaps Hideyoshi's vision was already shifting towards a more modest Tokugawa-style hegemony, parallel to, or overlapping with, rather than supplanting, that of the Ming.⁶⁷ Hideyoshi's policy changed from Japan becoming the hegemon of the region to wanting a Japanese hegemony within the region; in other words, to transform the regional order from a unipolar into a bipolar structure. Even if Hideyoshi appeared willing to share hegemony over the peninsula, this revised approach still required Korean submission. Hideyoshi was trying to force the Koreans to rethink their place in East Asia. As his health and the situation on the battlefield deteriorated, Hideyoshi was eventually forced to shift his focus again, from maximizing power overseas to extending the Toyotomi regime's longevity. At the

⁶⁷ Tashiro Kazui and Susan Downing Videen, "Foreign Relations during the Edo Period: Sakoku Reexamined," *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 8, no. 2 (1982): 287-88; Arano Yasunori, "The Formation of a Japanocentric World Order," *International Journal of Asian Studies* 2, no. 2 (2005): 208-12; Shogo Suzuki, *Civilization and Empire: China and Japan's Encounter with European International Society* (Routledge, 2009), 47-49, 54; Kang, *East Asia before the West*, 77-81, 97-98, 123-125; Yuan Jiadong, "Satsuma's Invasion of the Ryukyu Kingdom and Changes in the Geopolitical Structure of East Asia," *Social Sciences in China* 34, no. 4 (2013): 133.

operational level, means and ends became less closely aligned, but the “grand principle” endured. Hideyoshi’s horizons may have contracted, but while he lived, extending his regime’s hegemony over the region remained his ultimate animus.

Hideyoshi’s failure colors his legacy because he did not survive to chronicle the history of his era. This vacuum results in a somewhat distorted view of Hideyoshi, not only from the viewpoint of Korea and China—which is entirely understandable—but also from the Japanese perspective. This reflects the Tokugawa regime’s need to legitimize its rule by overwriting the Toyotomi legacy. With the benefit of hindsight, being its end point, the East Asian War is regarded as the totality or climax of Hideyoshi’s grand strategy, but had he survived and managed to subdue the Koreans, the invasion may have been seen as merely a stepping stone to further expansion.

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The Making of a Frontline Laboratory: The United States Naval Medical Research Unit No. 2 and Wartime Colonial Medicine

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동북아역사재단
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Abstract

This paper examines the establishment and significance of the United States Naval Medical Research Unit No. 2, today called the Naval Medical Research Unit INDO PACIFIC. During the Pacific War, the unit was located close to the frontlines as an experimental medical research institution. Headquartered in Guam, with a short-lived branch in Okinawa, the unit's innovative establishment marked the US Navy's first attempt at medical research near overseas combat zones. After the war, the Navy expanded medical research to establish four more NAMRUs worldwide, serving as a key institution for medical intelligence. This paper argues that NAMRU-2 was a significant element of American interests in the Pacific, exemplifying the intersection of wartime strategy, military medicine, and colonial medicine. By investigating the unit's establishment, operation, and postwar legacy, this paper highlights NAMRU-2's role in consolidating US medical influences in the Pacific and advancing medical knowledge under wartime conditions.

Keywords

NAMRU-2, Medical Research, Military Medicine, Animal Research, Okinawa, Guam

The Making of a Frontline Laboratory: The United States Naval Medical Research Unit No. 2 and Wartime Colonial Medicine

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Introduction

Safeguarding service personnel requires more than the treatment of injuries. In 2024, Sidney Hinds of the United States Naval Medical Research Command noted that it includes predicting potential illnesses and creating countermeasures. The Naval Medical Research Unit INDO PACIFIC (previously No. 2), he argued, was at the center of navigating the evolving disease landscape of the world.¹ In other words, responding to battlefield injuries was only part of the unit's contribution to American military strength. Instead, it also carried out research on medical environments, prevented diseases, and developed treatments. Such a holistic approach to military medicine, spanning preventive, curative, and research fields dates back to the Pacific War, when it became more prominent as

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¹ Sidney Hinds, "NAMRU INDO PACIFIC Monitors Infectious Disease for Public Health and Military Readiness," accessed September 27, 2024, <https://www.pacom.mil/Media/News/News-Article-View/Article/3859046/namru-indo-pacific-monitors-infectious-disease-for-public-health-and-military-r/>

the US military institutionalized medical research. The first exemplary case in the US Navy was the Naval Medical Research Unit No. 2 (NAMRU-2).

NAMRU-2 was formally set up in January 1944 by the US Navy to study diseases of significant interest to the military in the Pacific region. The main unit was based in Guam, with a short-lived branch in Okinawa.² The unit primarily engaged in preventive medicine and animal research, having research laboratories at the core of the unit. The unit facilities were in superb condition with excellent staff members. While NAMRU-2 moved its location around the Pacific over the years, its pioneering work in Guam led to the establishment of five more medical research units around the globe on each continent.

Despite its significance, the historiography directly concerning the history of NAMRU-2 and other overseas Naval Medical Research Units is thin, mostly concerning the period after the 1950s. Meng-Chih Lee wrote about NAMRU-2's influence on Taiwan's public health in a short article focusing on the period when the unit's headquarters were in Taipei from 1955 to 1979.³ Frank L. Smith III examined the presence of NAMRU-2 in Indonesia, where it had a detachment from 1970 and then its headquarters between 1991 and 2010. Smith focused on the political backfire surrounding East Timor, showcasing the unit as a site of contention and cooperation in science diplomacy.⁴ Scholars such as Jiyoung Park have recently examined medical entomology in Korea and the supporting role that NAMRU-2 in Taiwan played on it.⁵ Other works, such as Sophan Ear's paper on medical surveillance, are about the contempo-

² C. C. Shaw, "Biomedical Research Renders Its Mite to Naval Might," *Military Surgeon* 111, no. 1 (1952): 5-6.

³ Lee Meng-Chih 李孟智, "Meiguo haijun di'er yanjiusuo yu Taiwan gonggong weisheng" 美國海軍第二研究所與台灣公共衛生, *Taiwan weizhi* 台灣衛誌 32, no. 1 (2013): 1-5.

⁴ Frank L. Smith III, "Advancing Science Diplomacy: Indonesia and the US Naval Medical Research Unit," *Social Studies of Science* 44, no. 6 (2014): 825-47.

⁵ Park Jiyoung 박지영, "Bogeonhakja Ju Inho-ui gamyeombyeong maegae gonchung yeongu-wa Migun-ui jiwon, 1945-1969" 보건학자 주인호의 감염병 매개 곤충 연구와 미군의 지원, 1945-1969, *Uiryo sahoesa yeongu* 의료사회사연구 12 (2023): 5-39.

rary medical activities of NAMRU-2.⁶

These existing works only briefly mention, if at all, the origins of the Navy's overseas medical research unit. Most of them acknowledge NAMRU-2's connections with the Rockefeller Foundation, but there are varying accounts of who funded, directed, and managed the daily operations of the unit. This leaves a significant gap in the literature about US military medicine in the Pacific War and the immediate postwar years. This paper, therefore, contributes to the historiography of military medicine in the Pacific War by exploring some basic but essential questions about the history of NAMRU-2 during the war. Why did the US Navy launch a medical research program in the Pacific in the middle of a war? How did the institution operate? What kind of research did it carry out?

This paper contends that, as an institution, NAMRU-2—despite its humanitarian and scientific functions—essentially served to extend the imperial strength of the US. It frames the US as an imperial power, which turned the Pacific Basin into an “American lake” following the Pacific War.⁷ This approach builds upon the existing literature on US military medicine and tropical conditions in the Pacific. Anne Perez Hattori offers the most extensive medical history of Guam under the US Naval Government, from colonization³ in 1898 until the Japanese occupation of the island during the Pacific War in 1941. While many authors tend to treat the military's public health efforts as an exemplary case of modernization, Hattori explores the tensions and ambivalence surrounding public health programs between the Chamorro people and the American authorities.⁸ Similarly, Warwick Anderson's book analyzed the intersection of military medicine, tropical medicine, and the Rockefeller Foundation's

⁶ Sophal Ear, “Towards Effective Emerging Infectious Disease Surveillance: Cambodia, Indonesia, and NAMRU-2” (2011), Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=1984963> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1984963>.

⁷ Ham M. Friedman, *Creating an American Lake: United States Imperialism and Strategic Security in the Pacific Basin, 1945-1947* (Greenwood Press, 2000).

⁸ Anne Perez Hattori, *Colonial Dis-Ease: US Navy Health Policies and the Chamorros of Guam, 1898-1941* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2004).

works in the Philippines. He demonstrates how the US Army's medical programs racialized and colonized Filipino bodies from the Spanish-American War in 1898 to the outbreak of the Pacific War.⁹ Following Hattori and Anderson's framing of the US military medicine in occupied territories, this paper thus positions the US Navy's medical activities in Guam as a form of colonial medicine.

Planning a Medical Research Unit for the Pacific

The central figure in institutionalizing medical research in the Navy was Thomas Milton Rivers, today known as the father of modern virology.¹⁰ Having served in the First World War, Rivers foresaw a medical need within the military as the Japanese Empire expanded in the Pacific. Even before the US officially joined the Second World War in the Pacific, or the Pacific War, Rivers joined the Naval Reserve. At the time, Rivers was the Director of the Rockefeller Institute's affiliated hospital, the Rockefeller Hospital. According to Rivers, he persuaded members of the hospital and laboratories to join the Naval Reserve with him, organizing a Rockefeller Hospital Naval Research Unit in 1940. The Rockefeller Hospital consequently started accepting patients from the US Navy. The deal was that the Navy would benefit from the medical service of the hospital at the cost of "a dollar a year," and the hospital would conduct research on diseases of interest.¹¹ Service for the nation and the desire for research met the Navy's need for hospitalization.

The Americans considered the tropical island environment of the Pacific a novel and hazardous zone for its troops to operate in. Following the Pearl Harbor attack, the US entered the war and sent military units to

⁹ Warwick Anderson, *Colonial Pathologies: American Tropical Medicine, Race, and Hygiene in the Philippines* (Duke University Press, 2006).

¹⁰ David M. Oshinsky, *Polio: An American Story* (Oxford University Press, 2005), 23.

¹¹ Thomas M. Rivers and Saul Benison, *Tom Rivers: Reflections on a Life in Medicine and Science, An Oral History Memoir* (MIT Press, 1967), 320-21.

the Pacific. While the British controlled the Asian front lines, the US oversaw the South Pacific Area and the Southwest Pacific Area. The successful campaigns on Midway and the Solomon Islands led the US to adopt an “island-hopping” strategy until it reached Japan.¹² It was during this part of the war that most US troops were first exposed to the environment of tropical islands. Here, US Forces encountered alarming diseases, such as malaria, which caused five times more casualties than in combat. From the perspective of the Americans, tropical islands were dangerous, and their indigenous peoples were carriers of disease. As Judith Bennett noted, such a dominant idea of a diseased environment in the Pacific led the US military to manipulate the ecological landscape.¹³

The US directed various research programs to better understand and manage the risks of operating in the tropical conditions of the Pacific. One of the most significant works was the anti-malarial program, which was a biomedical research project that involved institutions such as the National Research Council or the Rockefeller Foundation.¹⁴ In 1942, the US Navy commissioned the Naval Medical Research Institute, which became its largest biomedical research facility at the Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland.¹⁵ Similarly, the US Army set up a Medical Research and Development Board under the Surgeon General to direct all medical research concerning the Army during the war. The board worked with the National Research Council and other agencies, and one of its other main concerns was the threat of biological warfare

¹² Sandra Wilson, Michael Sturma, Subrahmanyam Arjun, Dean Aszkielowicz, J. Charles Schencking, *The U.S. and the War in the Pacific, 1941-45* (Routledge, 2022), 40-41.

¹³ Judith A. Bennett, *Natives and Exotics: World War II and Environment in the Southern Pacific* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2009), 49-72.

¹⁴ Leo B. Slater, “Malaria Chemotherapy and the ‘Kaleidoscopic’ Organisation of Biomedical Research during World War II,” *Ambix* 51, no. 2 (2004): 107-34.

¹⁵ David E. Goldman, ed., *The Naval Medical Research Institute, 1942-1962* (Naval Medical Research Institute, 1966), 1; Cdr. Dominic J. Deriso and Robert de Gast, “The Naval Medical Research Institute (Pictorial),” accessed September 27, 2024, <https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/1965/june/naval-medical-research-institute-pictorial>.

with Japan.¹⁶

As the war expanded and the military set up research facilities, US troops in the South Pacific started facing medical problems. The idea for NAMRU-2 began as an effort to deal with these problems. Ross McIntire, the Surgeon General of the US Navy, invited Rivers to a committee in July 1943 to discuss two diseases that concerned the Navy: scrub typhus and infectious hepatitis. The committee despatched Rivers to the South Pacific to assess the feasibility of establishing a medical research unit close to the frontlines to study these diseases. Rivers speculated that McIntire may have felt that the Navy should promote medical research further when the US Army's medical research was receiving great publicity.¹⁷ This was around the time when the US was fighting in the Solomon Islands and New Guinea, about a year since the Guadalcanal landing in August 1942.¹⁸ The re-occupation of the Solomon Islands and New Guinea by the Allies was considered a "turning point" in the war.¹⁹

Rivers made his first trip to the South Pacific to search for an ideal site for the research laboratory. There were two main conditions for the location. One was the closeness to the battlefield, and the other one was the proximity to large hospitals to have enough patients to study. The research laboratory was envisioned to be fully equipped for "very thorough" research and to be mobile enough to respond to changes in front-line conditions.²⁰ When Rivers inspected the South Pacific, it was al-

¹⁶ USAMRMC: *50 Years of Dedication to the Warfighter, 1958-2008* (Online Source, 2008), 1-13.

¹⁷ Rivers and Benison, *Tom Rivers*, 329-30.

¹⁸ Annie Kwai, *Solomon Islanders in World War II: An Indigenous Perspective* (ANU Press, 2017); Martin Gibbs, Brad Duncan, Lawrence Kiko, Stephen Manebosa, "World War II in the Solomon Islands: Conflict and Aftermath," in *Multivocal Archaeologies of the Pacific War, 1941-45*, edited by Ben Raffield, Yu Hirasawa, Neil Price (Routledge, 2023), 45-48.

¹⁹ "Solomons Campaign May Be Turning Point in Pacific War," *The Washington Post*, November 8, 1942; "Increased Threat to Rabaul: Turning Point in Pacific War," *The Times of India*, August 18, 1943.

²⁰ Captain Thomas M. Rivers, (MC)-V(S), USNR to the Commander South Pacific, Mobile Naval Medical Research Laboratory in the South Pacific Area, November 22, 1943, RU, Vice President, Thomas Milton Rivers, Series 2 FA 221 B3 F3, Rockefeller Archive Center (RAC).

ready decided that the laboratory would be an integral establishment with specialized personnel.²¹ For the search, Rivers left New York in October 1943 for San Francisco, where he boarded the ship to Pearl Harbor in Hawai'i. From Pearl Harbor, he passed through Palmyra, Canton (Anglo-American Condominium), Wallis (French Territory), Suva (Fiji), Noumea (New Caledonia), Efate (New Hebrides, today's Vanuatu), Espiritu Santo (New Hebrides), Tulagi (Solomon Islands), Lunga (on Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands), and Banika (of Russell Islands, Solomon Islands). He returned to New York in December 1943.²²

During this lengthy trip, Rivers also paid attention to the medical problems in each place he passed through. In San Francisco, Rivers met with medical officers to discuss problems such as malaria and filariasis. At Pearl Harbor, he met with medical officers to discuss dysentery in Canton islands, typhus and plague in Maui, dengue in Honolulu, and the possibility of mongoose as an "animal reservoir" of typhus. Upon arrival at Wallis Island, a French territory, Rivers was shocked to witness some US troops "fraternizing with the natives after dark." He noted that many of the Indigenous islanders were infected with filariasis and that many US troops had contracted filariasis on Wallis.²³ Passing through Suva, Rivers arrived at Noumea, New Caledonia. He visited the US Naval Mobile Hospitals and studied the construction style and materials of the hospital buildings. Rivers was then given orders to move up north to Espiritu Santo, New Hebrides, where he visited the Base Hospitals and the malaria control unit.²⁴

²¹ From the Commander South Pacific to the Chief of Naval Operations, Mobile Naval Medical Research Laboratory for South Pacific Area, undated, RU, Vice President, Thomas Milton Rivers, Series 2 FA 221 B3 F3, RAC.

²² Thomas M. Rivers, Report on Trip to South Pacific in Connection with the Establishment of a Research Laboratory in that Area, Rockefeller University Records (RU), Vice President, Thomas Milton Rivers, Series 2 FA 221 B3 F3, RAC. 1-2.

²³ Thomas M. Rivers, Report on Trip to South Pacific in Connection with the Establishment of a Research Laboratory in that Area, 2-5.

²⁴ Thomas M. Rivers, Report on Trip to South Pacific in Connection with the Establishment of a Research Laboratory in that Area, 5-6.

From New Hebrides, Rivers proceeded to the Solomon Islands, a British Protectorate, which the Allied Forces recovered from the Japanese during the campaign from 1942 to 1943.²⁵ His first destination was Tulagi, the Protectorate government's capital, which had been an important base for the US Navy since the first landings.²⁶ Rivers traveled on board the ambulance ship, USS Rixey, where he learned about the activities of hospital ships. Rivers toured around Guadalcanal, visiting military hospitals and malaria control units.²⁷ His last destination in the Solomons was Banika Island in the Russell Group. After surveying the conditions of the island and meeting malaria control unit officers, the Base Medical Officer suggested Rivers Lingatu peninsula would be a good place for the laboratory, which was near Mobile Hospital No. 10. With the enthusiastic support of the Commanding Officer of Banika, Rivers came to agree that Lingatu was the best potential location for the research laboratory.²⁸

In addition to searching for a laboratory location, Rivers looked for his staff and diseases of concern. He was very impressed by the work done by the malaria control units, especially with Commander J. J. Saperro. Saperro was headquartered in Espiritu Santo with about 65 officers and 350 enlisted men to direct the malarial control program with the support of about 4,000 men fighting to suppress mosquitos in the region. Rivers argued that malaria was “the number one problem” in the South Pacific, making the region a great place for malaria research. He eventually concluded that the problems in the South Pacific were best addressed locally. Other diseases he considered important to the US troops to require research include bacillary dysentery, which caused problems “each

²⁵ Clive Moore, *Tulagi: Pacific Outpost of British Empire* (ANU Press, 2019), 373-413.

²⁶ *Solomon Islands Campaign I: The Landing in the Solomons, 7-8 August 1942* (Publications Branch Office of Naval Intelligence, United States Navy, 1943) [published online 2017], 1.

²⁷ Thomas M. Rivers, Report on Trip to South Pacific in Connection with the Establishment of a Research Laboratory in that Area, 7-8.

²⁸ Thomas M. Rivers, Report on Trip to South Pacific in Connection with the Establishment of a Research Laboratory in that Area, 8-9.

time a push is made on a new island” in the region. Infective hepatitis and filariasis were problematic “everywhere” he went. Scrub typhus was a potential threat. The inability to diagnose these infectious diseases in a laboratory complicated disease problems in the Pacific. This reinforced Rivers’ view that it was of vital importance for the US to develop accurate laboratory diagnostic capabilities in the region.²⁹

Rivers reported that everyone he met on the South Pacific tour was “without exception” enthusiastic. It was agreed that malaria research should be included in the research unit and that Saperro should be part of the unit. All materials for construction, research, and equipment were to be sourced from the US, not locally. On his way back, Rivers met with Admiral Halsey in Noumea. They agreed that a “Mobile Naval Research Laboratory” would be established in Banika and that this laboratory should follow the frontline whenever it moves. Halsey even supported “experimentation on human volunteers.” When Rivers met Admiral Nimitz during his stop over at Pearl Harbor, Nimitz discussed the problem of the disposal of dead bodies. Nimitz, who had just returned from Tarawa, Gilbert Islands (today’s Kiribati), was so “deeply engrossed” with the Battle of Tarawa that he asked Rivers to talk to McIntire, the Surgeon General of the US Navy, about the problem of disposing of large numbers of dead bodies on very small islands.³⁰ The battle was one of the bloodiest fought by the US Marines, claiming more than a thousand American lives.³¹ With Nimitz’s support, the establishment of NAM-RU-2 was approved by the Secretary of the Navy in January 1944.³²

In April 1944, the Chief of Naval Operations decided that NAM-RU-2 would be dispatched in June 1944. Whereas Rivers suggested Lingatu on Banika, Solomon Islands, the decision was made for the NAM-

²⁹ Thomas M. Rivers, Report on Trip to South Pacific in Connection with the Establishment of a Research Laboratory in that Area, 9-15.

³⁰ Thomas M. Rivers, Report on Trip to South Pacific in Connection with the Establishment of a Research Laboratory in that Area, 16-19.

³¹ Ira Wolfert, W. Richardson, *The Epic of Tarawa* (Odhams Press, 1945), 86.

³² Rivers and Benison, *Tom Rivers*, 334-35.

RU-2 to go to Noumea, New Caledonia, where a large US base was. By the time NAMRU-2 was ready to be despatched, the frontline of the war had moved. Authorities agreed that the maximum effect of medical research would only be gained when research was placed as close to the fighting front as possible.³³ On June 23, 1944, NAMRU-2 was commissioned at the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research with its administrative office at the Institute.³⁴ This made sense as Rivers, the Commanding Officer who organized the unit, was still the Director of the Rockefeller Institute Hospital. At this stage, the unit's purpose was to study all diseases that might be of potential threat to the military in the Pacific.³⁵

NAMRU-2 was very well-supported by the Navy from the beginning. Rivers testified that McIntire wrote a hand-written letter to the Commander of the Naval Supply Base to "Give Rivers whatever he wants." This allowed Rivers to acquire everything that he wanted for NAMRU-2. He chose the same equipment he used at the Rockefeller Hospital, which he knew was of the top quality by experience. According to Rivers, it was a privilege that no one in the Navy enjoyed before. As a result, Rivers had "some of the most beautiful laboratories" anyone had seen. Rivers was also given the authority to choose his own staff. Going through the Navy's personnel files, Rivers chose a group of medical officers "as topnotch a group of investigators and physicians as anyone could find."³⁶ The Navy had an understanding with the Rockefeller Hospital for staffing NAMRU-2 that many of the staff were directly drawn

³³ Mildred R. Lewis, A History of US Naval Medical Research Unit No. 2 Guam, Marianas Islands, RG52 Entry No. A1 1015 Research and Historical Files, 1941-1983 Box 228 History of NAMRU-2 Guam, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland (NACP), 4-5.

³⁴ History of US Naval Medical Research Unit No. 2, December 31, 1945, RG52 Entry No. A1 1015 Research and Historical Files, 1941-1983 Box 228 History of NAMRU-2 Guam, NACP. 11.

³⁵ Mildred R. Lewis, A History of US Naval Medical Research Unit No. 2, Guam, Marianas Islands, RG52 Entry No. A1 1015 Research and Historical Files, 1941-1983, Box 228 History of NAMRU-2 Guam, NACP. 1.

³⁶ Rivers and Benison, *Tom Rivers*, 336-37.

from the Rockefeller Hospital.³⁷ Sapero joined NAMRU-2 and interviewed some laboratory technicians at the Naval Medical Center with Rivers. Before moving to its final destination, Guam, NAMRU-2 officers and enlisted personnel received training at the Rockefeller Institute and the Naval Medical Center in Bethesda.³⁸

Setting Up in Guam

By the end of 1944, NAMRU-2 was eventually based in Guam, the largest of the Mariana Islands. Guam had been under the US Navy's control since 1898 when the American insular empire was acquired through the Spanish-American War. The island had a relatively large population of about 22,290 in 1940 and an existing infrastructure set up by the Naval Government. Based on the occupation history, strategic location, climate, and infrastructure, Guam was set to be the "focal point for central administration of all Central Pacific islands" when it was recovered in 1944.³⁹ Guam was also "a focal point of American relations with Japan." Before the Pacific War, the US had agreed to disarm the western Pacific in return for Japan respecting China's territorial integrity. However, the treaty was broken, and Japan expanded its empire to the Caroline and Marshall Islands.⁴⁰

Under these circumstances, Franklin D. Roosevelt proposed to fortify Guam in 1939, but the House of Representatives rejected the fortifi-

³⁷ Letter to Homer F. Swift, September 7, 1945, RU, Vice President, Thomas Milton Rivers, Series 2 FA 221 B3 F2, RAC.

³⁸ History of US Naval Medical Research Unit No. 2, December 31, 1945, RG52 Entry No. A1 1015 Research and Historical Files, 1941-1983 Box 228 History of NAMRU-2 Guam, NACP. 19-20.

³⁹ Attachment to the Memorandum to Captain Bingham, September 27, 1944, RG313 Entry No. P31 General Administrative Files, ca. 1944-1951, Box 9 EG54-1 Guam April 15, 1944 through December 31, 1944 (1 of 3), NACP.

⁴⁰ Walter Lippmann, "Today and Tomorrow: Guam as a Diplomatic Instrument," *New York Tribune*, January 19, 1939, OF 18g Department of the Navy, Guam 1933-45, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library (FDR).

cation plan.⁴¹ The US did not strongly fortify Guam despite the view that it was of strategic significance.⁴² Indeed, A. G. Hopkins explained how Guam was put under the Navy's control along with American Samoa, not the Interior Department like Puerto Rico, for financial reasons, not defence. The Naval Government maintained an "indirect rule" policy that prevented local institutions from change and assimilation.⁴³ As a result, the island fell under Japanese occupation in December 1941, shortly after the Pearl Harbor attack. The recovery of Guam in August 1944 subsequently bore a symbolic importance as "the liberation of the first American territory to fall to Japanese aggression."⁴⁴ The decision to place NAMRU-2 in Guam was made soon after the Navy reoccupied Guam.

The process of setting up the unit in Guam involved a significant amount of animal research and support from the Rockefeller Foundation in various ways. Before the main unit of NAMRU-2 at the Rockefeller Institute relocated, advance echelons were first sent to the South Pacific to assist the Navy's tropical disease control. Advance Echelon No. 1 passed through the Solomon Islands to introduce DDT in the region before proceeding to Guam to set up the unit.⁴⁵ On Guadalcanal, the advance echelon studied insect control and helped the First Marine Division's "indoctrination" of DDT. Their main research was on aeroplane spraying techniques in tropical conditions. Experiments with different planes led the NAMRU-2 to devise a method using larger and faster aircraft, the torpedo bombers. As the First Marine Division departed for the Peleliu campaign in September 1944, Advance Echelon No. 1 helped

⁴¹ "Guam and the Budget," OF 18g Department of the Navy, Guam 1933-45, FDR; "Guam Action Means Strength, Not Weakness," March 2, 1939, OF 18g Department of the Navy, Guam 1933-45, FDR.

⁴² Memorandum on Guam, December 8, 1941, OF 18g Department of the Navy, Guam 1933-45, FDR.

⁴³ A. G. Hopkins, *American Empire: A Global History* (Princeton University Press, 2018), 503-4.

⁴⁴ From Franklin D. Roosevelt to King George VI, August 16, 1944, OF 18g Department of the Navy, Guam 1933-45, FDR.

⁴⁵ History of US Naval Medical Research Unit No. 2, December 31, 1945, RG52 Entry No. A1 1015 Research and Historical Files, 1941-1983 Box 228 History of NAMRU-2 Guam, NACP. 39.

prepare DDT spraying planes. The Peleliu campaign was reportedly the first time DDT was used under combat conditions.⁴⁶ It was around this time that the British Army started air-spraying DDT at the Burma front as well.⁴⁷ The Navy used the same air-spraying technique during the Okinawa campaign, which proved to be highly successful in killing mosquitos. It was on the DDT dispersal plane that NAMRU-2 had its only fatal casualty, Lieutenant Maple, when the plane crashed on April 11, 1945.⁴⁸

Malaria and mosquitos were major subjects of study because the advanced echelons sent to the Solomon Islands were all engaged in mosquito research. Advance Echelon No. 2 discovered the “most significant” new species of mosquitoes as they passed through the Solomons, New Guinea, and the Philippines, although they did some research on scrub typhus in Papua New Guinea as well.⁴⁹ Advance Echelon No. 3 conducted field trials of mobile aerosol ground generators for DDT in Guadalcanal and Florida Group of the Solomon Islands between November 1944 and April 1945 until they joined the main unit in Guam.⁵⁰

The main unit of NAMRU-2 finally departed the US in December 1944 and set up in Guam with 44 officers and 251 enlisted men. Officers specialized in research areas of virology, bacteriology, parasitology, pathology, entomology, mammalogy, biochemistry, malacology, aquatic ecology, acarology, and statistics. Many of the officers were reportedly “leaders” in their respective fields. The construction of the unit’s build-

⁴⁶ Mildred R. Lewis, A History of US Naval Medical Research Unit No. 2 Guam, Marianas Islands, RG52 Entry No. A1 1015 Research and Historical Files, 1941-1983 Box 228 History of NAMRU-2 Guam, NACP. 3.

⁴⁷ Mark Harrison, *Medicine and Victory: British Military Medicine in the Second World War* (Oxford University Press, 2004), 219.

⁴⁸ Letter to the Surgeon, HUSAFPOA, Report on Tests with DDT Aerosol Bombs, May 21, 1945, RU, Vice President, Thomas Milton Rivers, Series 2 FA 221 B3 F4, RAC.

⁴⁹ Mildred R. Lewis, A History of US Naval Medical Research Unit No. 2 Guam, Marianas Islands, RG52 Entry No. A1 1015 Research and Historical Files, 1941-1983 Box 228 History of NAMRU-2 Guam, NACP, 1-3.

⁵⁰ History of US Naval Medical Research Unit No. 2, December 31, 1945, RG52 Entry No. A1 1015 Research and Historical Files, 1941-1983 Box 228 History of NAMRU-2 Guam, NACP. 6.

ings took nearly four months, and NAMRU-2 was fully functioning by May 1945.⁵¹ The construction took longer than expected because of heavy casualties during the Iwo Jima campaign when all available Seabees (the nickname for the Naval Construction Battalion) were engaged in constructing Fleet Hospitals in Guam.⁵² The final chosen site for NAMRU-2 had 24 acres of land with the sea on the west, the Fleet Hospital 111 on the east, and Fleet Hospital 103 on the north. As expected, it was placed near the Fleet Hospitals so that the unit would have easy access to the hospitals to draw clinical materials.⁵³ NAMRU-2 had 62 buildings, 12 fully equipped laboratories, special wards, and facilities for water, sewage, electricity, and enjoyed the luxury of air conditioning.⁵⁴

Animals were at the center of NAMRU-2's activities. From the first South Pacific tour, Rivers noted the significance of animal research. For example, mammals, birds, ticks, mites, and more were required just to study scrub typhus. Rivers expected the research of diseases in the Pacific would require a "large number of fertile eggs and experimental animals," which would be difficult to source from the Pacific Islands and impossible without air-conditioned buildings.⁵⁵ When NAMRU-2 was moving to Guam, all the initial colonies of experimental animals were brought from the US.

The care for animals was taken very seriously. NAMRU-2 personnel experienced an extended layover at Pearl Harbor. This meant that the ship carrying NAMRU-2's animals, equipment, construction materials,

⁵¹ Mildred R. Lewis, A History of US Naval Medical Research Unit No. 2 Guam, Marianas Islands, RG52 Entry No. A1 1015 Research and Historical Files, 1941-1983 Box 228 History of NAMRU-2 Guam, NACP, 7-8.

⁵² From Thomas M. Rivers to Frank L. Horsfall Jr., March 12, 1945, RU, Vice President, Thomas Milton Rivers, Series 2 FA 221 B3 F3, RAC.

⁵³ Richard E. Shope to the Medical Officer in Command, US Naval Medical Research Unit Number Two, Report on Activities of First Echelon of NAMRU #2, January 27, 1945, RU, Vice President, Thomas Milton Rivers, Series 2 FA 221 B3 F5, RAC, 1-11.

⁵⁴ Rivers and Benison, *Tom Rivers*, 340.

⁵⁵ Thomas M. Rivers, Report on Trip to South Pacific in Connection with the Establishment of a Research Laboratory in that Area, 15-17.

and provisions would arrive in Guam before the personnel did. With only four personnel keeping the animals, moving the animals ashore became a big concern. Rivers sent a small number of staff from Pearl Harbor by air transport to manage the situation in Guam. Still, the animals arrived before the staff did. This was because the animals were transferred to a ship that left for Guam earlier than planned out of fear that the animals might be affected by heat during an extended layover at Eniwetok. Although the journey lost two hens and 28 mice, the decision to transfer ships saved many lives of the precious animals. As soon as the ship arrived in Guam, the first thing they did was to build hen houses and sheep pens before unloading the animals. Securing the animals was so important that the personnel stayed on board the ship until all animals were safely ashore.⁵⁶ After setting up in Guam, hamsters were delivered frequently, and guinea pigs reproduced at a record pace.⁵⁷

Animals proved to be useful not only in research but also as a powerful tool for negotiations. NAMRU-2 had fresh eggs produced by the chickens they had. Fresh eggs were given to the Seabees as a token of appreciation for constructing animal houses and laboratories and clearing the jungle. Even when NAMRU-2 negotiated to borrow a jeep from the Medical Supply Depot, “two dozen fresh eggs figured in the background of the transaction.”⁵⁸ This is another case of Americans craving fresh eggs during the war, as Phillip Rutherford discussed in his article about the “egg mania” among US troops in the Pacific Islands.⁵⁹ Such an interesting story underscores the resourcefulness of a research laboratory on the front lines.

⁵⁶ Richard E. Shope to the Medical Officer in Command, US Naval Medical Research Unit Number Two, Report on Activities of First Echelon of NAMRU #2, January 27, 1945, RU, Vice President, Thomas Milton Rivers, Series 2 FA 221 B3 F5, RAC, 1-11.

⁵⁷ From Thomas M. Rivers to Richard E. Shope, May 22, 1945, RU, Vice President, Thomas Milton Rivers, Series 2 FA 221 B3 F4, RAC.

⁵⁸ Richard E. Shope to the Medical Officer in Command, US Naval Medical Research Unit Number Two, Report on Activities of First Echelon of NAMRU #2, January 27, 1945, 1-11.

⁵⁹ Phillip T. Rutherford, “On Arms and Eggs: GI Egg Mania on the Battlefields of World War II,” *Food and Foodways* 25, no. 2 (2017): 123-41.

In addition to working with the experimental animals, NAMRU-2 collected specimens and animal knowledge in the Pacific. Entomologists searched for insects that carried parasites or transmitted diseases. For example, there was a typhus outbreak in Guam. However, no fleas were found in the rats, and the potential threat of an endemic flea-borne typhus was ruled out. This meant that the first reported typhus fever in Guam was likely an epidemic of louse-borne typhus. Investigations suggested that the patient was probably infected through body lice on the clothing of a Japanese that the patient killed in a cave.⁶⁰ Other examples of animal research include snail studies on specimens collected by NAMRU-2's branch on Okinawa, filaria worms acquired from autopsies of local people, and rabbits with coccidiosis.⁶¹

NAMRU-2's nucleus colony of animals at the setting-up stage consisted of mice, hamsters, guinea pigs, rabbits, sheep, and chickens. The cost of supplying these laboratory animals was covered by a grant from the International Health Division of the Rockefeller Foundation.⁶² Indeed, the Rockefeller connection was very important to the operation of NAMRU-2. The unit's scientific library was also obtained with the grant awarded by the Rockefeller Foundation. Journals and periodicals of interest were posted on a weekly basis from the US.⁶³ Other materials, such as antigens, were also sent to Guam upon request.⁶⁴ While the sources indicate that the unit was commissioned at the Rockefeller Foundation, the official website of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery of the US Navy

⁶⁰ Report of Investigation of Case of Typhus Fever, March 17, 1945, RU, Vice President, Thomas Milton Rivers, Series 2 FA 221 B3 F3, RAC.

⁶¹ From Thomas M. Rivers to Richard E Shope, May 22, 1945, RU, Vice President, Thomas Milton Rivers, Series 2 FA 221 B3 F4, RAC.

⁶² History of US Naval Medical Research Unit No. 2, December 31, 1945, RG52 Entry No. A1 1015 Research and Historical Files, 1941-1983 Box 228 History of NAMRU-2 Guam, NACP, 29-30.

⁶³ Mildred R. Lewis, A History of US Naval Medical Research Unit No.2 Guam, Marianas Islands, RG52 Entry No. A1 1015 Research and Historical Files, 1941-1983 Box 228 History of NAMRU-2 Guam, NACP, 8.

⁶⁴ From Thomas M. Rivers to Frank L. Horsfall Jr., 12 March 1945, RU, Vice President, Thomas Milton Rivers, Series 2 FA 221 B3 F3, RAC.

recognizes that NAMRU-2 was established “under the Rockefeller Foundation.”⁶⁵ Not to mention, Rivers was the director of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research and the affiliated Rockefeller Hospital, and half of the staff of NAMRU-2 were drawn from either the Rockefeller Institute or the Rockefeller Foundation.⁶⁶

Another Rockefeller connection was made through Winthrop Rockefeller, the son of John D. Rockefeller Jr., the founder of the Rockefeller Foundation, who was hospitalized in Guam in April 1945. He was injured during a Japanese kamikaze attack on the ship he was on for the Okinawa landing. Rivers personally inspected Winthrop Rockefeller’s conditions and wrote to John D. Rockefeller Jr. immediately.⁶⁷ Although NAMRU-2 was a separate unit, Rivers recognized Winthrop Rockefeller on the casualty list and was with him within two hours after his landing on Guam.⁶⁸ In the correspondence following Winthrop Rockefeller’s hospitalization, John D. Rockefeller Jr. noted that Guam was the best place to set up the research laboratory, adding that the value of the research done at NAMRU-2 would be too great to estimate.⁶⁹ In a letter to Rivers, he also praised the unit for what it would do “not only for the wounded men, but for the future control of some of these tropical diseases,” which “fires the imagination and warms the heart with gratitude that the institute is so ably represented in so promising an endeavor.”⁷⁰ Although Winthrop Rockefeller’s hospitalisation in Guam was not directly at

⁶⁵ Navy Medicine, “Naval Medical Research Unit INDO PACIFIC,” accessed September 27, 2024, <https://www.med.navy.mil/Naval-Medical-Research-Command/R-D-Commands/Naval-Medical-Research-Unit-INDO-PACIFIC/>.

⁶⁶ From Thomas M. Rivers to John D. Rockefeller Jr., April 10, 1945, RU, Vice President, Thomas Milton Rivers, Series 2 FA 221 B3 F4, RAC.

⁶⁷ From Thomas M. Rivers to John D. Rockefeller Jr., April 10, 1945.

⁶⁸ John Kirk, *Winthrop Rockefeller: From New Yorker to Arkansawyer, 1912-1956* (University of Arkansas Press, 2022), 142-46.

⁶⁹ From John D. Rockefeller to Thomas M. Rivers, April 18, 1945, RU, Vice President, Thomas Milton Rivers, Series 2 FA 221 B3 F4, RAC.

⁷⁰ From John D. Rockefeller Jr. to Thomas M. Rivers, May 15, 1945, RU, Vice President, Thomas Milton Rivers, Series 2 FA 221 B3 F4, RAC.

NAMRU-2, the correspondence shows that NAMRU-2 received full support both from the Navy and the Rockefeller family.

Frontline Activities

The history of NAMRU-2 in Guam is an account of colonialism and military control. As Anne Perez Hattori argued, healthcare, especially for the Indigenous people, was more than a benevolent act but that of military intervention and an exercise of power.⁷¹ The Naval authorities framed American “colonialism” in Guam as an act of benevolence—a duty to provide adequate healthcare to the people of their occupied territories.⁷² The idea that Guamanians were “very loyal to the United States” justified civilian healthcare activities.⁷³ NAMRU-2’s activities, too, should be understood as part of the Naval Government’s attempts to gain colonial knowledge and control occupied territories. As Guam’s rehabilitation plan clearly notes, civilian healthcare was made to facilitate military operations and kept at a minimal level.⁷⁴

Being a naval unit, NAMRU-2 served duties in civilian care in addition to medical research, especially during the early period when laboratories were under construction. This was both for humanitarian purposes and to collect research data beneficial to American troops. According to the Naval Government, Indigenous health conditions when the US recovered Guam were so poor that “a tremendous amount” of care was needed. The military conducted 30,825 surgeries and 100,035 medical

⁷¹ Hattori, *Colonial Dis-Ease*, 10-11.

⁷² Anne Perez Hattori, “The Cry of the Little People of Guam: American Colonialism, Medical Philanthropy, and the Susana Hospital for Chamorro Women, 1898-1941,” *Health and History* 8, no. 1 (2006): 7.

⁷³ D. J. Callaghan, Memorandum for Miss LeHand, September 24, 1940, OF 18g Department of the Navy, Guam, 1933-45, FDR.

⁷⁴ Operational Directive Number 7 for Military Government of the Commanding General Tenth Army, January 21, 1945, RG313 Entry No. P31 General Administration Files, ca.1944-1951, Box22 QA Army 1945, NACP.

treatments between August and November 1944.⁷⁵ One of the unit members, Lieutenant Commander H. M. Zimmerman, performed all autopsies at the Civilian Hospital of Guam even after the opening of his own laboratory attached to NAMRU-2. He performed 248 autopsies on Guamanians and signed all death certificates of the deceased. This work allowed NAMRU-2 to learn about the health conditions in Guam.⁷⁶ These autopsies were performed by the military authority on the local population with the specific purpose of research. Such autopsies and public health works in the context of wartime territorial occupation may be regarded as a process of “colonizing the body” of Guamanians, to use David Arnold’s expression.⁷⁷

It was around this time that extensive work on hookworm and intestinal parasites was done on both military personnel and the indigenous population. Historically, hookworm campaigns were one of the Rockefeller Foundation’s main public health programs.⁷⁸ NAMRU-2 staff, mostly experienced in the Rockefeller circles, likely possessed significant expertise in hookworm infections. On the day NAMRU-2 landed on Guam, Rivers received a report that at least 75-100 babies less than one year old were in critical condition due to hookworm. Rivers recalled how difficult it was to believe that infants were so critically infected. Until that point, it was believed that hookworm infection was caused by walking barefoot on infested soil. Babies did not walk. Then, some naval personnel were found with hookworm eggs in their stools. The type of the hookworm indicated that they were infected in Guam. Noting that the in-

⁷⁵ Rehabilitation of Guam, March 6, 1945, RG313 Entry No. P31 Box 9 EG54-(1) January 1, 1945 through June 30, 1945, NACP.

⁷⁶ Mildred R. Lewis, A History of US Naval Medical Research Unit No. 2 Guam, Marianas Islands, RG52 Entry No. A1 1015 Research and Historical Files, 1941-1983 Box 228 History of NAMRU-2 Guam, NACP, 9.

⁷⁷ David Arnold, *Colonizing the Body: State Medicine and Epidemic Disease in Nineteenth-Century India* (University of California Press, 1993), 1-10.

⁷⁸ For Rockefeller Foundation activities, see John Farley, *To Cast Out Disease: A History of the International Health Division of the Rockefeller Foundation, 1913-1951* (Oxford University Press, 2004).

fectured personnel's duties were washing soiled blankets and the clothes of hospital patients, NAMRU-2 started an experiment. The result was that the blanket an infected baby slept in for 24 hours kept moist for five days returned 20,000 infected larvae. This was the first case of finding a fomites-borne infection of hookworm that was not known before, "the first important contribution" of the unit. He added that Guamanians were "intensely clean people" and the wartime conditions in refugee camps created the situation.⁷⁹

NAMRU-2 was interested in the diseases prevalent among the civilian population because civilian diseases could be dangerous to the US troops. There were no human cases of filariasis in Guam, so the filariasis survey was done on the Japanese prisoners of war on the island. The infected prisoners of war were separated from contact with the Indigenous Guamanians.⁸⁰ Tuberculosis was the main cause of death in Guam. The Indigenous population suffered from "a tremendous amount of hookworm," bacillary dysentery, and amoebic dysentery. Encephalitis was not serious, and ascaris pneumonia was probably over-diagnosed. Rivers also noted that the civilian medical problems in Guam were quite similar to those in Tinian in early 1945.⁸¹

The management of the civilian population in Guam was informed by the US military's experience in Tinian in early 1945. In the civilian camp on Tinian, Camp Churo, there were 8,572 Japanese and 2,295 Koreans, including 4,981 children under the age of fifteen. The majority of the Japanese were reportedly from Okinawa. The Koreans were brought to Tinian by the Japanese South Seas Development Company as laborers. During the early period of US occupation in 1944, the Tinian people had problems with dysentery, malnutrition, pneumonia, tetanus, beriberi, and,

⁷⁹ Rivers and Benison, *Tom Rivers*, 341-42.

⁸⁰ Mildred R. Lewis, A History of US Naval Medical Research Unit No. 2 Guam, Marianas Islands, RG52 Entry No. A1 1015 Research and Historical Files, 1941-1983 Box 228 History of NAMRU-2 Guam, NACP, 13.

⁸¹ From Thomas M. Rivers to Commander James J. Sapero (MC), USN, February 11, 1945, RU, Vice President, Thomas Milton Rivers, Series 2 FA 221 B3 F3, RAC.

importantly, intestinal parasites. Epidemiology Unit No. 105's survey showed that about 30-50% of the civilians in Camp Harbor were infected with intestinal parasites. To tackle the problem, the Navy in Tinian planned to roll out a mass treatment program for hookworm and ascaris, noting the "high incidence of death from ascaris pneumonia and encephalitis" in Guam.⁸² These disease conditions were probably why there was an overdiagnosis of ascaris pneumonia in Guam.

Living conditions were dire in the Japanese-occupied islands in the Pacific, according to US sources. Even near the end of the Pacific War in August 1945, the Japanese held 40% of the islands. The US only controlled 13% of the major islands in the Central Pacific. In the islands still held by the Japanese troops, garrisons were starving. Most Japanese garrisons would rather choose death, either by disease or starvation, rather than surrender to the US. The US forces noted that the fate of the Korean laborers in the Japanese-controlled islands, who had "no means to escape," would be similar. There was a high chance that they would die before surrendering.⁸³ Perhaps this is the reason why the US propaganda towards Japan included a promise of care for children and sick people.⁸⁴

The expectation was similar when the US offense moved into the northern Pacific Islands and Japan. Preparing for the potentially life-threatening conditions in Japan, NAMRU-2 set up a "baby brother" branch to proceed to Okinawa.⁸⁵ Although it was set up too late to participate in the Iwo Jima campaign, NAMRU-2 was in time for the Okinawa campaign. Known to be one of the fiercest battles in the Pacific War, Okinawa was "second to Guadalcanal" regarding difficulties for the medical units. In Okinawa, the medical team supported the combat units

⁸² P. A. Surg. (R) Thomas S. Hershey, USPHS, Medical Problems in a Civilian Camp, RU, Vice President, Thomas Milton Rivers, Series 2 FA 221 B3 F3, RAC.

⁸³ Guide to the Status of Central Pacific Islands, August 6, 1945, RG313 Entry No. P31 General Administrative Files, ca.1944-1951, Box 9 EG Pacific Islands-General (Confidential, 1945), NACP.

⁸⁴ Translation: A Message from the President of the US to the People of Japan, Ross T. McIntire Papers, Box 6 Japan Memorabilia, FDR.

⁸⁵ Thomas M. Rivers to Richard E. Shope, May 22, 1945, RU, Vice President, Thomas Milton Rivers, Series 2 FA 221 B3 F4, RAC.

closely, sometimes even in caves, to stay within 500 yards of the battle-front.⁸⁶

The military intelligence on Okinawa reported that the island was a “pest hole.” Going into the “pest hole,” NAMRU-2 had Commander Richard E. Shope lead ten officers and 20 enlisted men to form the Okinawa branch. The Okinawa branch went ashore on April 13, 1945 and set up laboratories near Nago. Just like in Guam, one of the officers, Lieutenant Commander E. L. Benjamin, conducted 200 autopsies on Okinawan civilians at the Civilian Hospital at Koza to investigate disease conditions the US troops would encounter.⁸⁷ The unit specifically tried to carry out “as many autopsies as possible on native infections” in Okinawa.⁸⁸ Similar to Guam, medical care for the Okinawan civilians was provided only “to the extent necessary to safeguard occupying troops from communicable diseases, to prevent chaos, and to meet minimum humanitarian standards” as a military government.⁸⁹

In addition to civilian healthcare and autopsies, frontline activities involved a lot of animal research, just as the main unit did in Guam. A lot of the research focused on disease-vector animals. Officers not engaged in civilian work started activities with the Island Command of Okinawa on controlling mosquitoes and flies. The research found little malaria among the Okinawans and 4-6 new mosquito species. Instead, there was a considerable amount of filariasis. The unit collected birds, mammals, and ectoparasites on the islands and found no mites capable of transmitting scrub typhus and snails carrying schistosomiasis. An intestinal para-

⁸⁶ From Don to Ross T. McIntire, June 5, 1945, Ross T. McIntire Papers, Box 6 Japan Memorabilia, FDR.

⁸⁷ Mildred R. Lewis, A History of US Naval Medical Research Unit No. 2 Guam, Marianas Islands, RG52 Entry No. A1 1015 Research and Historical Files, 1941-1983 Box 228 History of NAMRU-2 Guam, NACP, 9-10.

⁸⁸ History of US Naval Medical Research Unit No. 2, December 31, 1945, RG52 Entry No. A1 1015 Research and Historical Files, 1941-1983 Box 228 History of NAMRU-2 Guam, NACP, 55-56.

⁸⁹ Headquarters Tenth Army Office of the Commanding General APO 357, February 5, 1945, RG313 Entry No. P31 General Administration Files, ca. 1944-1951, Box 22 QA Army 1945, NACP.

site survey was done on “healthy civilians” and on the bodies subject to autopsies. Contrary to the initial expectation, Okinawa turned out to be relatively healthy. The Okinawa branch returned to Guam in July 1945.⁹⁰

Reports from other islands indicate that the US authorities expected most Pacific Islands to be “pest holes.” The Iwo Jima campaign reported a concern that local mites would transmit scrub typhus. However, several surveys showed otherwise: the mites in Iwo Jima could not transmit scrub typhus in Iwo Jima, the snails on Saipan and Tinian could not transmit schistosomiasis, and the mosquitoes on Rota were not malarial. Along with Okinawa, most of the northern Pacific Islands were not as medically threatening as expected. Still, NAMRU-2 continued research on various diseases in the main unit in Guam and another small branch in Leyte, Philippines, that was despatched in May 1945. Investigations include penicillin-resistant bacteria, influenza B outbreak, infectious hepatitis, outer ear infections, fungal diseases, dysentery, blood clotting, and various types of tropical skin conditions.⁹¹

There were still a couple of diseases that became problematic in Okinawa. One was the so-called “Okinawan fever” outbreak which happened during the Battle of Okinawa. Medical authorities initially feared that the “Okinawan fever” might be scrub typhus.⁹² The fever was more threatening as all cases were infected in Okinawa by vaccinated personnel. Those who contracted the “Okinawan fever” returned to Guam for treatment, where NAMRU-2 quickly diagnosed the disease and rolled out medicine. Of the 24 cases, 21 turned out to be paratyphoid-A, and three were typhoid fever.⁹³ The fact that the northern Pacific region was seen as a “pest hole” and that the outbreak given the name “Okinawan fever” reflects the orientalizing perspectives of the military authorities, framing the Pacific Islands as reservoirs of disease. As Warwick Ander-

⁹⁰ Lewis, A History of US Naval Medical Research Unit No. 2 Guam, Marianas Islands, 9-10.

⁹¹ Lewis, A History of US Naval Medical Research Unit No. 2 Guam, Marianas Islands, 10-13.

⁹² Shaw, “Biomedical Research Renders Its Mite to Naval Might,” 6.

⁹³ Lewis, A History of US Naval Medical Research Unit No.2 Guam, Marianas Islands, 11.

son argued, the US colonial authorities actively cleansed the environment and bodies of their Oriental territories.⁹⁴

The other disease, a bigger trouble to NAMRU-2, was the mosquito-borne Japanese B encephalitis.⁹⁵ An outbreak happened at the Okinawa military government hospital and nearby islands of Heanza and Hamahika after NAMRU-2's Okinawa branch returned to Guam. Between July and September 1945, there were 79 civilian cases in Okinawa, 35 civilian cases on Heanza and Hamahika, and 38 cases among the troops.⁹⁶ At the beginning of the outbreak in Heanza, the military government “immediately killed all domestic animals” and disinfected all houses with DDT at least twice each. The entire island was frequently doused in DDT by plane, and all potential mosquito breeding places were regularly oiled. This process was called the “clean up.”⁹⁷ The occupying military took it imperative to “take all precautions for protection of troops against possible outbreak” of the disease.⁹⁸

Controlling the disease necessitated studying and experimenting on its animal vectors. Consequently, NAMRU-2 staff visited Okinawa to collect live mosquitoes from Hentona, Okuma, Chizuka, Ogimi, and Shana Wan for research.⁹⁹ Back in Guam, the research on the disease's epi-

⁹⁴ Anderson, *Colonial Pathologies*, 1.

⁹⁵ Letter to Sven Gard, August 9, 1945, RU, Vice President, Thomas Milton Rivers, Series 2 FA 221 B3 F4, RAC.

⁹⁶ Enclosure D, Evaluation of Mosquito Control Measures during Outbreak of Japanese B Encephalitis on Okinawa, October 8, 1945, RG52 Entry No. A1 1015 Research and Historical Files, 1941-1983 Box 228 History of NAMRU-2 Guam, NACP.

⁹⁷ Enclosure T, From A. B. Hardcastle to T. M. Rivers, Report of Activities from July 22 to August 5, 1945, RG52 Entry No. A1 1015 Research and Historical Files, 1941-1983 Box 228 History of NAMRU-2 Guam, NACP.

⁹⁸ Incoming Message, US Naval Communication Service CINCPAC and CINCPAC, Originator ISCOM Okinawa, Crypto Group 183-C, CBO DUNN, Grp. Ct. 193, Circ. No. PM 4454, July 17, 1945, RG313 Entry No. P31 General Administrative Files, ca. 1944-1951, Box 22 S37-Medicine (1944-1946, confidential) (1 of 2), NACP.

⁹⁹ Enclosure F, R. M. Bohart, Report of Activities on Okinawa, August 19 to September 28, 1945, RG52 Entry No. A1 1015 Research and Historical Files, 1941-1983 Box 228 History of NAMRU-2 Guam, NACP.

demology required a lot of mice. As the amount NAMRU-2 required exceeded the capacity of the breeding stock they had, Rivers requested the George Williams Hooper Foundation at the University of California to send over about 2,000 mice.¹⁰⁰ The disease outbreak continued into 1946 when Rivers had to visit himself to investigate the situation.¹⁰¹ The unit's research discovered that most Okinawan horses had sera antibodies as well as some goats, chickens, ducks, and crows on the island.¹⁰² Afterwards, the NAMRU-2 team managed to transmit Japanese B encephalitis to mice through mosquito bites.¹⁰³ Although American colonial medicine during the Pacific War chiefly concerned safeguarding human lives, its practice invariably involved conducting studies on animals, insects, and their habitats.

Even in the postwar era, Okinawa and Guam remained strategically important bases for the US in the Pacific, located at a convenient reach from Northeast Asia. US troops continued to reside in Okinawa, functioning as a check to countries such as China and North Korea. The connection between Okinawa and Guam is represented by the recent relocation of US Marines stationed in Okinawa to Guam, which started on December 14, 2024.¹⁰⁴ Guam increasingly Americanized in the postwar years, with Nimitz advocating for Guamanians' citizenship in order to

¹⁰⁰ From Thomas M. Rivers to Karl F. Meyer, August 23, 1945, RU, Vice President, Thomas Milton Rivers, Series 2 FA 221 B3 F4, RAC.

¹⁰¹ From H. W. Smith to W. J. C. Agnew, October 2, 1946, RG52 Entry No. A1 1012 Correspondence of the Medical Corps Branch, Box 59 Naval District and Intercenters 1946 US Naval Medical Centers, Guam, 1946, NACP.

¹⁰² Enclosure A, Lewis Thomas, John L. Peck, Horace L. Hodes, Progress Report on Antibodies for Japanese B Encephalitis Virus in Animals of Okinawa, RG52 Entry No. A1 1015 Research and Historical Files, 1941-1983 Box 228 History of NAMRU-2 Guam, NACP.

¹⁰³ Enclosure C, H. L. Hodes, H. S. Hurlbut, Experimental Transmission of Japanese B Encephalitis to Mice by Bite of Mosquitoes in Contact with Virus during Larval Stage of Their Life Cycle, RG52 Entry No. A1 1015 Research and Historical Files, 1941-1983 Box 228 History of NAMRU-2 Guam, NACP.

¹⁰⁴ Emma Chanlett-Avery, Christopher T. Mann, Joshua A. Williams, "US Military Presence on Okinawa and Realignment to Guam (IF 10672)," *Congressional Research Service*, accessed April 9, 2019, <https://www.marinecorpstimes.com/news/your-marine-corps/2024/12/16/us-marines-start-partial-transfer-from-okinawa-to-guam/>

safeguard the Navy's interests.¹⁰⁵ It was indeed the Navy's attempt to strengthen the Naval base in Guam and to keep peace with the Guamanians after over half of the land was taken by the military for exclusive use.¹⁰⁶ The military still occupies 29% of the land in Guam and receives threats from North Korea and China as the "tip of the spear" of the US.¹⁰⁷ In addition to military interests, Guam also serves a crucial position in US capitalist strategy in Asia, as noted by Alfred Peredo Flores.¹⁰⁸ In this way, Guam continued to be at the center of US colonialism in the Pacific, and NAMRU-2, in the early years, served to consolidate US influences in the region by collecting colonial knowledge through medical research.

The Afterlife of NAMRU-2

After the Pacific War ended, NAMRU gradually evolved into an institution with an extended range of responsibilities around the world, moving beyond the Pacific. In September 1945, NAMRU-2 still had 432 staff in Guam and nineteen at overseas duties.¹⁰⁹ Unit members ultimately published about 140 papers in virology, microbiology, entomology, and pa-

¹⁰⁵ Anne Perez Hattori, "Teaching History through Service Learning at the University of Guam," *The Journal of Pacific History* 46, no. 2 (2011): 222; From Op 22 to Op 02, Island Government Matters Discussed at Recent Conference with Cincpac and Governor Guam, October 2, 1946, RG313 Entry No. P31 General Administrative Files, ca.1944-1951, Box10 EG54-1 Guam July 1, 1946 to December 1946, NACP.

¹⁰⁶ Ross Dardani, "Popular Constitutionalism in the US Empire: The Legal History of US Citizenship in Guam," *Law & Social Inquiry* 49, no. 2 (2023): 1097-98.

¹⁰⁷ Kevin K. W. Ho, "Guam," in *The Routledge Handbook of Comparative Territorial Autonomies*, edited by Brian C. H. Fong and Atsuko Ichijo (Routledge, 2022), 179; Elise Hu, "Trump's Rhetoric Renews Debate in Guam: Is Being 'Tip of the Spear' Worth It?" accessed September 27, 2024, <https://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2017/08/12/542998601/trumps-rhetoric-renews-debate-in-guam-is-being-tip-of-the-spear-worth-it>.

¹⁰⁸ Alfred Peredo Flores, *Tip of the Spear: Land, Labor, and US Settler Militarism in Guåhan, 1944-1962* (Cornell University Press, 2023), 2.

¹⁰⁹ Report for Island Command War Diary for the Period from September 1, 1945 to October 1, 1945, RG52 Entry No. A1 1015 Research and Historical Files, 1941-1983 Box 228 NMRU-2 Guam War Diary, NACP.

thology through the research done while at NAMRU-2.¹¹⁰ Following the achievements of NAMRU-2, the Navy expanded medical research in various forms. NAMRU-3 was established in Cairo, and NAMRU-4 was in Georgia, both in 1946.¹¹¹ NAMRU-2 did not remain the same. Guam's medical units were restructured after the war. The Island Command established a Medical Center as an umbrella institution that directed the Naval Hospital, which was in charge of service personnel and US citizens and the Public Health Administration, which managed Indigenous health.¹¹² NAMRU-2 changed into an integral part of the Naval Medical Center with a redesignated name of the US Naval Institute of Tropical Medicine and the School of Tropical Medicine. The new institute would extend the functions beyond research to include teaching.¹¹³

The Naval Medical Center served as a training ground for future Naval Medical Officers. Those graduating from the Naval Administration course at Stanford University were assigned to serve in the Pacific. A six-week course on tropical medicine was part of the training.¹¹⁴ Officers then proceeded to their assigned commands in the US territories in the Pacific, including Yap, Ponape, Palau, Majuro, Kwajalein, Truk, Saipan, and American Samoa.¹¹⁵ The first cohort started this training program in

¹¹⁰ Rivers and Benison, *Tom Rivers*, 335.

¹¹¹ Shaw, "Biomedical Research Renders Its Mite to Naval Might," 6-8.

¹¹² From Planning Division to the Personnel Division, Chart, November 29, 1945, RG52 Entry No. A1 1012 Correspondence of the Medical Corps Branch, Box 59 Naval District and Intercenters 1946 US Naval Medical Centers, Guam, 1946, NACP.

¹¹³ From the Chief of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery to the Secretary of the Navy via the Chief of Naval Operations, RG52 Entry No. A1 1012 Correspondence of the Medical Corps Branch, Box 59 Naval District and Intercenters 1946 US Naval Medical Centers, Guam, 1946, NACP.

¹¹⁴ From Robert V. Schultz to M. D. Willcuttes, June 25, 1946, RG52 Entry No. A1 1012 Correspondence of the Medical Corps Branch, Box 59 Naval District and Intercenters 1946 US Naval Medical Centers, Guam, 1946, NACP.

¹¹⁵ Attachment: Graduates of the School of Naval Administration, Stanford University, California, From the Chief of Naval Operations to the Chief of Naval Personnel, August 1, 1946, RG52 Entry No. A1 1012 Correspondence of the Medical Corps Branch, Box 59 Naval District and Intercenters 1946 US Naval Medical Centers, Guam, 1946, NACP.

October 1946.¹¹⁶ The school's first group of instructors includes Saperro, who led NAMRU-2's malaria research, and Victor G. Heiser, who was from the International Health Board of the Rockefeller Foundation.¹¹⁷ The opening of the school was, according to the Surgeon General, a showcase of the "general development in progress and of the large aims."¹¹⁸ By the end of 1946, most officers retired from the military, and the Institute of Tropical Medicine significantly lacked staff to carry out research duties.¹¹⁹

The records indicate that NAMRU-2 was decommissioned in 1946. However, "the scientific impetus of NAMRU-2" carried on in the Navy, which continued to conduct tropical medicine research in the Pacific after 1946. The Navy cooperated with Johns Hopkins University to conduct a controlled study of filariasis among the American Samoan population. Civilian medical programs in Tinian continued with a leprosarium. USS Whidbey, a field laboratory ship, carried out medical surveys among the Pacific Islanders. The Epidemic Disease Control Unit continued operations through USS LSIL 1091 in the Korean War, which happened between 1950 and 1953.¹²⁰ Later, NAMRU-2 was recommissioned in 1955 in Taipei, moved to Manila in 1979, then to Jakarta in 1991, and is now operating in Singapore under the name of NAMRU INDO PACIFIC.¹²¹

¹¹⁶ From Wilbur E. Kellum to Ross McIntire, October 4, 1946, RG52 Entry No. A1 1012 Correspondence of the Medical Corps Branch, Box 59 Naval District and Intercenters 1946 US Naval Medical Centers, Guam, 1946, NACP.

¹¹⁷ From J. J. Saperro to the Chief, Personnel Division, August 29, 1946, RG52 Entry No. A1 1012 Correspondence of the Medical Corps Branch, Box 59 Naval District and Intercenters 1946 US Naval Medical Centers, Guam, 1946, NACP.

¹¹⁸ From H. W. Smith to Thomas M. Rivers, August 1946, RG52 Entry No. A1 1012 Correspondence of the Medical Corps Branch, Box 59 Naval District and Intercenters 1946 US Naval Medical Centers, Guam, 1946, NACP.

¹¹⁹ From L. B. Marshall to M. D. Willcutts, December 10, 1946, RG52 Entry No. A1 1012 Correspondence of the Medical Corps Branch, Box 59 Naval District and Intercenters 1946 US Naval Medical Centers, Guam, 1946, NACP.

¹²⁰ Shaw, "Biomedical Research Renders Its Mite to Naval Might," 6.

¹²¹ Navy Medicine, "Naval Medical Research Unit INDO PACIFIC," accessed September 27,

In his reflections on NAMRU-2, Rivers remarked that the unit was “quite a gamble” to the Navy, as it had no precedent of operating a research unit close to the frontlines. No one knew whether doctors and scientists could conduct scientific research under military conditions. Neither could anyone predict whether the results of such research would be useful enough to justify the unit’s existence. According to Rivers, NAMRU-2’s establishment ultimately depended on Nimitz’s approval, who was deeply saddened about the immense loss of life at the Battle of Tarawa.¹²² The lessons learnt from Tarawa led the Marines to make improvements in every aspect of amphibious warfare, especially those on gunfire support.¹²³ This paper demonstrates that this improvement also included medical support. The gamble on medical research on the frontline and Nimitz’s empathy reflect the “medical consciousness” among the Navy commanders, using Mark Harrison’s expression to describe how the close relationship between medical and combat units helped the Allies to develop an advantage over the Axis powers.¹²⁴ Similarly, this paper contends that the US Navy’s “medical consciousness” helped the US to understand and respond to the tropical island environments through NAMRU-2.

Since its first overseas unit was established in Guam, NAMRU units have become “the largest overseas military medical research facility in the world.” The NAMRU network has now become an important institution in supporting the public health infrastructure of developing countries, extending the diplomatic power of the US.¹²⁵ As the first of the overseas units, NAMRU-2 was central in institutionalizing the medical

2024, <https://www.med.navy.mil/Naval-Medical-Research-Command/R-D-Commands/Naval-Medical-Research-Unit-INDO-PACIFIC/>.

¹²² Rivers and Benison, *Tom Rivers*, 334-35.

¹²³ Jeter Allen Isely, Philip A. Crowl, *The U.S. Marines and Amphibious War: Its Theory and Its Practice in the Pacific* (Princeton University Press, 1951), 192.

¹²⁴ Harrison, *Medicine and Victory*, 283.

¹²⁵ May Meliegy, “Navy Labs Play Public Health Role,” *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* 85, no. 3 (2007): 165-66.

research tradition of the US Navy. As discussed in this paper, NAMRU served the dual role of meeting military and civilian needs from its inception. Moreover, NAMRU-2 allowed biomedical scientists to practice tropical medicine, conduct animal research, and “colonize” Indigenous bodies during wartime.

The activities of NAMRU-2 were essentially a form of colonial medicine. It directly supported military operations, racialized indigenous peoples, and collected scientific knowledge to aid American expansionism in the Pacific. It is also worth noting that NAMRU-2 had roots in the Rockefeller Institute with the generous support of the Rockefeller Foundation, which was also an “imperialistic” institution.¹²⁶ The conduct of NAMRU-2 reveals how military medical research was a vital component in the machinery of colonial and military power. Since renamed the Naval Medical Research Unit INDO PACIFIC, this institution continues to serve American interests in the broader Pacific region.

¹²⁶ E. Richard Brown, *Rockefeller Medicine Men: Medicine and Capitalism in America* (University of California Press, 1979).

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Article



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The Xianbei Language after Emperor Xiaowen's Ban**

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Abstract

This paper demonstrates that despite Emperor Xiaowen's ban on speaking the Xianbei language, many non-Chinese and some Chinese people continued to use the language during the Northern Wei period in Luoyang. Xiaowen's policy had two key loopholes: first, the prohibition was applied only within the court, *chaoting* 朝廷 in Chinese, and second, the ban on the Xianbei language was limited to officials under the age of thirty. In other words, the ban was specifically defined as a prohibition on using non-Chinese languages in court or government by Xianbei officials under the age of thirty. As a result, the ban had a limited scope, meaning that a significant portion of Xianbei people could still speak their native language in practice. Many Xianbei people, including Emperor Xiaoming, the grandson of Emperor Xiaowen, as well as some Chinese officials, spoke Xianbei and other languages of nomads. This indicates that Emperor Xiaowen's ban on speaking the Xianbei language was unsuccessful in achieving its goal.

Keywords

Emperor Xiaowen's ban on speaking the Xianbei language, Emperor Xiaowen's campaign against the Southern Qi, Emperor Xiaowen, Emperor Xiaoming, The Xianbei Language

The Death of a Language? The Xianbei Language after Emperor Xiaowen's Ban

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Introduction

Chinese researchers have argued that the Xianbei people must have been Sinicized following Emperor Xiaowen's (孝文帝) series of so-called Sinicization policies implemented in the latter half of the Northern Wei dynasty. The theory of Sinicization, which posits the assimilation of the Xianbei people into Chinese culture, has circulated widely among Chinese historians. Specifically, it has been argued that the Xianbei people were assimilated and began speaking Chinese following Emperor Xiaowen's edict prohibiting the use of *huyu* 胡語, or the Xianbei language.¹ Some scholars, however, have opposed this Sinicization theory. For ex-

¹ It is not certain exactly what language the Northern Wei rulers spoke due to the shortage of historical and linguistic sources. Peter A. Boodberg argued that Tuoba 拓跋 rulers must have spoken Turkish. For details, see Peter A. Boodberg, "The Language of the T'o-Pa Wei," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 1-2 (1936): 170, 167-85. On the contrary, some researchers regarded the Xianbei language as Mongolic or proto-Mongolic. For instance, Shiratori Kurakichi 白鳥庫吉, "Tōko minzoku kō" 東胡民族考, *Shigaku zasshi* 史學雜誌 24 (1913): 17-45; Zhu Xueyuan 朱學淵, "Xianbei minzu ji qi yuyan (shang)" 鮮卑民族及其語言 (上), *Manyu yanjiu* 滿語研究 30 (2000); Wuqilatu 烏其拉圖, "Nanqishu zhong bufen Tuoba Xianbeiyu mingci de fuyuan kaoshi" 南齊書中部分拓跋鮮卑語名詞的復原考釋, *Neimenggu shehui kexue (hanwenban)* 內蒙古社會科學 (漢文版) 23-6 (2002); Luo Xin 羅新, *Zhongguo beizu minghao yanjiu* 中古北族名號研究 (Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2009).

ample, the Japanese researcher Akimine Koga argued that Emperor Xiaoming (孝明帝)—the grandson of Emperor Xiaowen—as well as officials, guards, eunuchs, and court ladies in the imperial palace in Luoyang—the capital of the Northern Wei dynasty—continued to speak Xianbei. According to Koga, the Xianbei language remained the official language at least within the imperial palace.² Some Chinese scholars acknowledged that Emperor Xiaowen’s edict prohibiting the use of the Xianbei language was not effectively implemented due to the emperor’s death just four years later and the loopholes in the regulation, which allowed Xianbei individuals over the age of thirty to continue speaking their native language. As a result, both the Xianbei and Chinese languages were spoken concurrently in Luoyang.³ Hanje Park, a Korean historian, also argued that there were bilingual Xianbei speakers in Luoyang.⁴

This article argues that two exception clauses in Emperor Xiaowen’s edict prohibiting speaking the Xianbei language allowed the Xianbei people to continue to use their mother tongue freely. Consequently, Xianbei and Chinese civil officials both spoke the Xianbei language in Luoyang and the northern frontier regions of the Northern Wei. This research also demonstrates that many Xianbei and a few Chinese people continued to speak the Xianbei language even after Emperor Xiaowen’s ban. Some Chinese historians, who champion the theory of Sinicization of the Xianbei people, would disagree with the arguments of this article. Yet, some researchers outside the Chinese academia, whom I met at academic conferences, agreed with my perspective. Encouraged by their agreement, I hope this paper could contribute to a productive debate on the actual enforcement of Emperor Xiaowen’s ban and the process of Xianbei’s Sinicization.

² Koga Akimine 古賀昭岑, “Hokugi no buzoku kaisan ni tsuite” 北魏の部族解散について, *Tōhōgaku* 東方學 59 (1980): 64-65.

³ Zhu Dawei 朱大渭 et al. eds., *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shehui shenghuoshi* 魏晉南北朝社會生活史 (Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1998), 550.

⁴ Park Hanje 박한제, “Dongwi-Bukje sidae-ui hohancheje-ui jeongae: Hohangal deung-gwa ijung gujo” 東魏-北齊時代の胡漢體制的 전개: 胡漢葛藤과二重構造, in *Bunyeol-gwa tonghap: Jungguk jungse-ui jesang* 分裂과 統合: 中國 中世의 諸相, edited by Seoul daehakgyo dongyangsahak yeongusil 서울大學校 東洋史學研究室 (Jisik saneopsa, 1998), 140.

Analysis of the Ban on Speaking the Xianbei Language

There are two historical records regarding the ban on speaking the Xianbei language. One is Emperor Xiaowen's prohibition edict issued on July 9, 495, and the other is the biography of Prince of Xianyang (咸陽王) in *Weishu* 魏書, the official dynastic history of the Northern Wei.

A. You must not speak the northerners' language in the court (朝廷). *I will dismiss all the officials who violate the edict prohibiting the use of the Xianbei language.*⁵ (emphasis added by the author)

B. Gaozu (the temple name of Emperor Xiaowen) said to courtiers, "How can we practice *li* (禮, meaning ritual propriety) without *zheng-ming* (正名, rectification of names) according to the ancient traditions and all the Chinese classics? I must prohibit my subjects from speaking the language of northern people and ensure that Xianbei people speak *zhengyin* (正音, righteous sound). Xianbei individuals over the age of thirty will not be required to change the language they speak. Thus, they do not need to be forced to speak Chinese. However, officials under the age of thirty *in the court* (朝廷) will not be permitted to speak the Xianbei language. If they violate the ban and speak Xianbei, they will be dismissed, and their rank and titles will be revoked."⁶

In passage A, "the northerners' language" refers to the Xianbei language, which was presumably similar to the ancient Mongolian or Turkic language. During the period of the Sixteen States and the Northern Wei dynasty, non-Chinese rulers instructed their Chinese subjects not to use the terms *hu* (胡, meaning barbarians) and *Xianbei*. Instead, the Chinese were to utilize such terms as *beiren* (北人, northerners) and *beiyu* (北語, northern languages) in official documents when referring to the Xianbei

⁵ *Weishu* 魏書 (Zhonghua shuju, 1974; hereafter *WS*), 7 xia/177.

⁶ *WS*, 21 shang/536.

people and their language.⁷

Passage B is a record of a conversation between Emperor Xiaowen and several high-ranking officials, including Yuan Xi 元禧—Prince of Xianyang—and Li Chong 李冲. According to this passage, the emperor permitted Xianbei individuals over the age of thirty to continue speaking the Xianbei language, ordering that only Xianbei individuals under thirty years old must speak Chinese.⁸ Changru Tang, a renowned Chinese scholar specializing in the history of the Wei, Jin, and Nanbeichao periods, commented: “Individuals over the age of thirty were not required to switch their language to Chinese and were not punished for defying the ban. Yet, Xianbei individuals under thirty who did not transition from speaking Xianbei to Chinese would face demotion in their official titles and ranks.”⁹ Other Chinese historians concur with Tang’s view.¹⁰

As detailed in the quoted passages, Emperor Xiaowen’s edict prohibited speaking the Xianbei language. However, there were several loopholes in the decree. First, the prohibition was effective only inside the court (朝廷), meaning that only officials who spoke Xianbei within the court would be punished and dismissed.

Moreover, the Chinese term *chaoting* 朝廷 means an imperial court, while the word *chaotang* 朝堂 refers to a central government in medieval Chinese contexts. Sun Tongxun, a Taiwanese historian, and Kenichi Matsushita argued that the Chinese term *chaotang* should be construed as a specific government building within the court. According to their interpretation, Xiaowen’s ban meant that Xianbei officials were prohibited from speaking Xianbei only within a particular building of the central

⁷ Kawamoto Yoshiaki 川本芳昭, “Hokugi ni okeru mibunsei ni tsuite” 北魏における身分制について, in *Gishin ‘nanbokuchō jidai no minzoku mondai* 魏晉南北朝時代の民族問題 (Kumiko shoin, 1998), 345-52.

⁸ Choi Jin Yeoul 최진열, “Bukwi hugi ho’eo geumji jaeron” 北魏後期 胡語 금지 再論, *Yeoksa-wa gyooyuk* 역사와 교육 19 (2014): 209.

⁹ Tang Changru 唐長孺, “Tuobazu de hanzhua guocheng” 拓跋族的漢化過程, in *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi luncong xubian* 魏晉南北朝史論叢續編 (Sanlian shudian, 1959), 145.

¹⁰ Zhu et al. eds., *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shehui shenghuoshi*, 550.

government.¹¹ According to a map that shows locations of court buildings in Luoyang,¹² the *chaotang* was located in a building of the Department of State Affairs (尚書省) and was to the southeast of *Taiji Dian* 太極殿, where Northern Wei emperors held audiences.¹³ Thus, Emperor Xiaowen's ban effectively meant that most Xianbei and a few Chinese officials could still speak the Xianbei language, given that the prohibition of the Xianbei language was applied only within a specific building, likely within that of the Department of State Affairs. As a result, the ban had a limited impact on the use of the Xianbei language among the Xianbei people.¹⁴

If the term *chaotang* refers to the central government in general, then the ban would mean that officials working in the court and government buildings in Luoyang were prohibited from speaking the Xianbei language. In any case, many Xianbei individuals who did not attend the court could continue to speak their native language in Luoyang and other regions within the Northern Wei territory. Only a few Xianbei officials were required to speak Chinese in one or several government buildings in Luoyang.

Second, according to passage B, Xianbei officials over the age of thirty were permitted to speak the Xianbei language while working in the court or government buildings in Luoyang. Many Chinese scholars argued that Xianbei officials over the age of thirty must have been required to speak Chinese, despite the exception clause allowing them to use the Xianbei language.¹⁵ Yet, the Xianbei and Chinese languages differed sig-

¹¹ Sun Tongxun 孫同勛, *Tuobashi de hanhua ji qita* 拓跋氏的漢化及其他 (Daoxiang chubanshe, 2006), 125-26.

¹² Sagawa Eiji 佐川英治, "Kan Gi Rakuyōjō" 漢魏洛陽城, in *Kan Gi Shin Nanbokuchō tojō fukugenzu no kenkyū* 漢魏晉南北朝都城復元圖の研究 (Heisei 22-Heisei 25 nendo kagaku kenkyūhi hojokin kiban kenkyū (B) kenkyū seika hōkokusho 平成22~平成25年度科學研究費補助金基盤研究(B)研究成果報告書), edited by Sagawa Eiji et al. (2014), 69.

¹³ Qian Guoxiang 錢國祥, "Wei Jin Luoyang ducheng dui Dongjin Nanchao de yingxiang" 魏晉洛陽都城對東晉南朝的影響, *Kaoguxue jikan* 考古學集刊 18 (2010): 394; Sagawa, "Kan Gi Rakuyōjō," 69.

¹⁴ Choi, "Bukwi hugi ho'eo geumji jaeron," 202-3.

¹⁵ For example, see Ma Xiaoli 馬曉麗, Cui Mingde 崔明德, "Dui Tuoba Xianbei ji Beichao hanhua

nificantly in terms of vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure, making it difficult for Xianbei individuals to learn and speak Chinese. Therefore, if Xianbei officials over the age of thirty were not forced to learn and speak Chinese, then there was no reason for them to do so.

Third, penalties for violating the ban were dismissal or demotion in rank, rather than imprisonment, banishment, or the death penalty. In other words, the punishment was relatively light, and thus Xianbei individuals—especially officials over the age of thirty or commoners without official titles—would not have been overly concerned about speaking their native language despite the ban. Also, the government had limited means to enforce the ban, as the penalties were applied only to officials, not the majority of Xianbei commoners without official titles.

To sum up, Emperor Xiaowen's prohibition on speaking the Xianbei language was specifically applied and limited to Xianbei officials under the age of thirty serving in the court (*chaoting*), namely in one or several government buildings in Luoyang. The Xianbei individuals who had to adhere to Xiaowen's ban included officials within the nine-rank official system, known as *pin'guan* 品官 or *liuneiguan* 流內官, court ladies or female officials with government posts,¹⁶ eunuchs, royal guards in the palace, and soldiers in the capital city.¹⁷ In other words, the phrase “ban on the speaking of non-Chinese languages at court by officials under the age of thirty”¹⁸ accurately reflects the scope of the prohibition. Thus, the Xianbei officials were permitted to speak Xianbei in their homes and other private places outside the official buildings where they worked.¹⁹ As opposed to the myth of the Sinicization of the Xianbei, Emperor Xiaow-

wenti de zongti kaocha” 對拓跋鮮卑及北朝漢化問題的總體考察, *Zhongguo bianjiang shidi yanjiu* 中國邊疆史地研究 22-1 (2012): 9, 14.

¹⁶ During the Northern Wei period, women of the ruling class were appointed to various government positions, such as female palace attendants. Court ladies were also appointed to official posts with the nine ranks (九品).

¹⁷ Choi Jin Yeoul, “Bukwi hugi ho'eo sayong hyeonsang-gwa geu baekyeong” 北魏後期 胡語 사용 현상과 그 배경, *Jungguk gojungsese yeongu* 中國古中世史研究 23 (2010): 199.

¹⁸ David A. Graff, *Medieval Chinese Warfare, 300-900* (Routledge, 2001), 98.

¹⁹ Choi, “Bukwi hugi ho'eo geumji jaeron,” 204.

en's ban did not pursue a complete prohibition of the Xianbei language among the Xianbei people. The following section will provide examples of Xianbei individuals speaking the Xianbei language.

Cases of Speaking the Xianbei Language after Emperor Xiaowen's Prohibition Edict

1. Cases of Xianbei and a few Chinese People

Advocates of the Sinicization theory might argue that Emperor Xiaowen's ban was effective, and thus all the Xianbei people must have spoken Chinese without considering the existence of the two loopholes. To rebut the Sinicization theory, this section will provide examples of Xianbei individuals and Chinese officials speaking the Xianbei language.

The first example is Yu Jin 于謹 (493-568), who was likely born in Luoyang and later became a distinguished member of the Eight Generals of State Pillar (八柱國) families during the Western Wei and Northern Zhou dynasties.²⁰ His family, known as the Wuniuyu 勿忸于 clan, was a prominent meritorious lineage that contributed to the foundation of the Northern Wei dynasty, ranking among the top class only second to the imperial house. He became a staff member of the Prince of Guangyang (廣陽王) and participated in the campaign to suppress the Six Garrisons Rebellion. He was skilled in speaking many non-Chinese languages, and thus he was able to go to the rebel military camp and persuade them in the Xianbei or other non-Chinese languages.²¹ The languages Yu Jin could speak included Xianbei and other languages that nomads such as Xianbei, Xiongnu, and Gaoche 高車 spoke, and these were most likely proto-Mongolic or proto-Turkic languages. If Emperor Xiaowen's ban on speaking the Xianbei language had been fully enforced since 495 when Yu Jin was barely three years old, Yu would not have been able to learn

²⁰ Zhoushu 周書 (Zhonghua shuju, 1971; hereafter ZS), 15/234.

²¹ ZS, 15/244.

and speak the non-Chinese languages. Yet, he was fluent in several non-Chinese languages, including Xianbei. His grandfather and father were local officials and likely served in central government offices as well. Thus, while they were required to speak Chinese in public, they spoke their native language, not Chinese, at home and in private settings; hence, their son or grandson spoke Xianbei fluently.²² Yu Jin likely spent his childhood and youth speaking his native language, surrounded by Xianbei speakers. Despite this, he also learned and studied the Five Classics (五經), Chinese historical texts, and *Sunzi Bingfa* 孫子兵法, becoming fluent in Chinese and proficient in reading Chinese literature. This demonstrates his multilingual abilities.²³

The second example is Yuan Wenyao 元文遙, who served as an official in the periods of the Northern Wei, Eastern Wei, and Northern Qi dynasties. He sent administrative and military orders of Gao Yang 高洋—the first emperor of the Northern Qi dynasty—to officials after hearing Gao Yang's Xianbei speech.²⁴ Thus, Yuan Wenyao was presumably able to speak the Xianbei language.²⁵ His birth and death dates are unknown, but according to records, he resigned from his official post and retreated to Mount Linlü (林慮山) after an uprising.²⁶ This uprising likely occurred during the internal disturbance between 524 and 528 following the Six Garrisons Rebellion. As a member of the Northern Wei imperial family, he probably began working in government offices at around the age of twenty, which suggests he was born in around 500. Thus, he would have

²² According to the biography of Yu Jin in *Zhoushu*, Yu Jin's ancestors—from his great-grandfather down to his father—were appointed as governors of Huaihuang 懷荒, Gaoliang 高涼, Gaoping 高平, and Longxi 隴西, where the Xianbei, Gaoche, Di 氐, and Qiang 羌 peoples lived. This shows that the Yu family were appointed as governors of the regions where the Xianbei people lived speaking the Xianbei language. Therefore, Yu Jin could easily learn the Xianbei language from his family.

²³ Choi, "Bukwi hugi ho'eo sayong hyeonsang-gwa geu backyeong," 210-11.

²⁴ *Beiqishu* 北齊書 (Zhonghua shuju, 1972; hereafter *BQS*), 38/503.

²⁵ Zheng Qinren 鄭欽仁, "Yiren yu guanliao jigou" 驛人與官僚機構, in *Beiwei guanliao jigou yanjiu xupian* 北魏官僚機構研究續篇 (Daohe chubanshe, 1995), 236.

²⁶ *BQS*, 38/503.

spent his childhood and youth after Emperor Xiaowen's ban in 495. Yuan Wen Yao's case indicates that the Xianbei elite was likely to continue to speak Xianbei with their families, relatives, friends, and neighbors even after Emperor Xiaowen prohibited the language.²⁷

Changsun Jian 長孫儉 was also born in Luoyang, and his family was one of the ten branches of the imperial clan (帝室十姓) of the Northern Wei dynasty. He was appointed as Extra Gentleman of Cavalier Attendant (員外散騎侍郎), a lower-ranking official of the Department of Court Advisers (集書省), holding the seventh official rank. He participated in suppressing the rebellion in the Guanlong 關隴 region under the command of Erzhu Tianguang 爾朱天光 and later became an aide to Yuwen Tai 宇文泰, the founder of the Western Wei and Northern Zhou dynasties, serving as his adviser.²⁸ He spoke the Xianbei language,²⁹ which he likely learned in Luoyang. He communicated with his family, relatives, friends, and neighbors in his native language, just as Yu Jin and Yuan Wen Yao did. He used his native language, even when he met an envoy from the Liang dynasty (梁) in South China. When Changsun Jian served as a prefect in the Western Wei dynasty, he received an envoy from the Liang. On this occasion, he made his subordinate interpret his Xianbei words into Chinese for the Chinese emissary.³⁰ This example indicates that he was not proficient in Chinese but fluent in Xianbei. Furthermore, many other Xianbei officials working in government buildings in Luoyang continued to speak their native language even after Emperor Xiaowen's ban in 495.³¹

In summary, the families of Yu Jin, Yuan Wen Yao, and Changsun Jian were Xianbei elites whose ancestors moved from Pingcheng 平城—the former capital of the Northern Wei dynasty—to Luoyang—the new

²⁷ Choi, "Bukwi hugi ho'eo sayong hyeonsang-gwa geu baekyeong," 211-12.

²⁸ ZS, 26/427.

²⁹ ZS, 26/428.

³⁰ ZS, 26/428.

³¹ Choi, "Bukwi hugi ho'eo sayong hyeonsang-gwa geu baekyeong," 212-13.

capital. Their families had served as officials in the Luoyang government for generations. The Yuan family was part of the imperial clan of the Northern Wei dynasty, while the Changsun family was one of the ten branches of the imperial clan. The Yu clan was also one of the eight first-ranking non-imperial Xianbei clans, known as *Xunchen Baxing* 勳臣八姓. They spoke Xianbei fluently, indicating that they and their families never forgot their native language and continued to use it at home and in private situations, despite Emperor Xiaowen's ban.³²

In addition to high-ranking Xianbei elites, Chinese officials were also proficient in the Xianbei language and spoke it fluently. This was especially true for those born in Luoyang and its surrounding areas, including the regions along the Yellow River. For example, Meng Wei 孟威, an ethnic Chinese, was born and lived in Luoyang in the Governor District of Henan (河南尹).³³ According to *Weishu*, he was accustomed to the manners and customs of non-Chinese people and was proficient in the Xianbei language. He was sent to the Gaoche people living in the four garrison towns (四鎮高車) to persuade them not to betray the Northern Wei and submit to the Rouran 柔然, the nomadic empire on the Mongolian Plateau during the fourth to sixth centuries.³⁴ When Anagui 阿那瓌 Qaghan of the Rouran Empire sought refuge in the Northern Wei after being defeated in a succession conflict with his brothers in 520, Meng Wei was sent to the northern frontier region to escort the Qaghan to Luoyang. When Anagui returned to his homeland, Meng also escorted the Qaghan and his subjects. Also, his command of the Xianbei language allowed him to effectively manage and control the Xianbei, Gaoche, and Chinese-speaking populations as the garrison commander at the Woye Frontier Town (沃野鎮). He was a notable example of a few multilingual Chinese officials who learned and spoke non-Chinese languages such as Xianbei, Gaoche, and Rouran. His skills highlighted the administrative

³² Choi, "Bukwi hugi ho'eo sayong hyeonsang-gwa geu backyeong," 213.

³³ *WS*, 44/1005. The Governor District of Henan is the name of the administrative unit in and around Luoyang, the capital city of the Northern Wei dynasty.

³⁴ *WS*, 44/1005-6.

demand for multilingual abilities to manage non-Chinese subjects within the realm and to handle diplomatic affairs.

Sun Qian 孫纂 was also fluent in Xianbei. Born in Le'an District (樂安郡) in Qingzhou 青州, he was appointed as Additional Censor (檢校御史)—an aide in the Directorate of Education (國子助教)—and an official in charge of writing history (修國史) between 522 and 523.³⁵ These roles primarily involved dealing with Chinese characters, so learning and speaking Xianbei was not necessarily required. Surprisingly, he worked as one of the secretaries and later became a favored retainer of Gao Huan 高歡, the supreme power of the Eastern Wei and the de facto founder of the Northern Qi dynasty. Gao Huan was an ethnic Chinese who spoke the Xianbei language. Sun Qian effectively communicated Gao Huan's orders and messages to Gao's subordinates,³⁶ demonstrating his proficiency in the Xianbei language. Given his age and ability to learn the Xianbei language, it is likely that he began to study Xianbei in his twenties or thirties during the 520s. Sun Qian's command of the Xianbei language would have been useful to develop his career considering that the two powerful regents then vying for the imperial throne—Erzhu Rong 爾朱榮 and Gao Huan—spoke the languages of Qihu 契胡 and Xianbei respectively.³⁷

Although Meng Wei and Sun Qian were born in Luoyang and Le'an respectively, both south of the Yellow River, they served as high-ranking officials due to their fluency in the Xianbei language. The Northern Wei, which controlled a diverse range of ethnic groups including the Xianbei, Xiongnu, Gaoche, Rouran, and Qihu, as well as the Chinese, Di, and Qiang within China Proper, needed many officials who were fluent in the Xianbei and other non-Chinese languages to effectively manage administrative tasks. Under these circumstances, both Chinese officials—like Meng Wei and Sun Qian—and Xianbei officials—such as Yu Jin,

³⁵ BQS, 24/341.

³⁶ BQS, 24/341.

³⁷ Choi, "Bukwi hugi ho'eo sayong hyeonsang-gwa geu baekyeong," 213-15.

Yuan Wen Yao, and Changsun Jian—needed to speak non-Chinese languages.³⁸ According to *Suishu* 隋書, there were thirteen books on the Xianbei language, including *Guoyu* 國語, *Xianbeiyu* 鮮卑語, *Guoyu Wuming* 國語物名, *Guoyu Huling* 國語號令, *Xianbei Huling* 鮮卑號令, and others.³⁹ Presumably, Chinese officials learned the Xianbei language using these books.⁴⁰

The Xianbei and Chinese residents in the Six Frontier Towns (六鎮), located on the northern borderlands with the Rouran, spoke the Xianbei and other non-Chinese languages.⁴¹ Some Chinese people born and living in Pingcheng in North China spoke the Xianbei and other non-Chinese languages as well. For example, Chang Cuan 張篡, born in Pingcheng, and Zhang Huayuan 張華原, born in Dai District (代郡), learned Xianbei to build relationships with non-Chinese people or to serve as officials managing non-Chinese affairs. Like Chang Cuan and Zhang Huayuan, many Chinese people spoke Xianbei in their daily lives.⁴²

Erzhu Rong 尔朱榮—the Qihu 契胡 chieftain living in Xiurong District (秀容郡) and Sizhou 肆州, south of Pingcheng and Hengzhou 恒州, in what is now northern and central Shanxi Province—engaged in livestock herding and hunting. He spoke both the Xianbei and his native languages:

Despite his power and reputation, Erzhu Rong was frivolous, enjoying horseback riding and archery. He neglected national affairs and spent most of his time indulging in these activities. Whenever Erzhu Rong

³⁸ Choi, “Bukwi hugi ho’eo sayong hyeonsang-gwa geu baekyeong,” 215.

³⁹ *Suishu* 隋書 (Zhonghua shuju, 1973; hereafter *SS*), 32/945.

⁴⁰ Choi, “Bukwi hugi ho’eo geumji jaeron,” 212-13.

⁴¹ Choi, “Bukwi hugi ho’eo sayong hyeonsang-gwa geu baekyeong,” 215-16; Choi Jin Yeoul, “Bukwi hugi bukbyeon hoin-ui hosok yuji-wa geu yeonghyang: Ansin-gwa Nakyang hosok-ui gwangye-reul jungsimeuro” 北魏後期 北邊 胡人の 胡俗 유지와 그 영향: 雁臣과 洛陽 胡俗의 관계를 중심으로, *Inmunhak yeongu* 人文學研究 22 (2014): 148-52.

⁴² Choi, “Bukwi hugi ho’eo sayong hyeonsang-gwa geu baekyeong,” 216-17.

hosted cheerful feasts at Xilinyuan 西林園 and enjoyed archery, he invited the empress to observe. He also had princes, imperial concubines, and princesses gather in the pavilion inside Xilinyuan to watch. Whenever the emperor (i.e., Emperor Xiaozhuang 孝莊帝) hit his target with arrows, Erzhu Rong stood up and cheered loudly. ... (1) Whenever he was drunk, he sat down and sang barbarian songs, especially the song of Shulipuli 樹梨普梨. (2) He saw Yuan Yu 元彧, Prince of Linhuai (臨淮王), sitting silently and modestly. Impressed by the prince's appearance and qualities, he compelled Yuan Yu to perform the dance of Chile 敕勒. After the banquet ended at sunset, he sang the music of Huibo 迴波 to the guests in attendance and then left.⁴³

This passage shows that Erzhu Rong and the Northern Wei imperial family enjoyed nomadic leisure activities, such as horseback riding, archery, and singing songs of steppe culture. The non-Chinese songs sung by Erzhu Rong were probably transmitted from the steppe regions of North Asia and Central Asia. “The music of Huibo” was a martial song, beginning with the four-syllable phrase “Huibo’ershi” 迴波爾時. It involved dance and music, with no strict boundaries between the singers and the audience. The Chinese researcher Yifei Lü argued that Erzhu Rong must have sung the music of Huibo in the Xianbei language.⁴⁴

According to the quoted passage, Erzhu Rong ordered Yuan Yu to perform the dance of Chile, which was likely a traditional dance of the Chile people. Here, we can see that Yuan Yu was skilled in the Turkic dance (i.e., the dance of Chile) and familiar with the Xianbei and other nomadic cultures. Presumably, Yuan Yu and other participants at the banquet performed the dance of Chile to the rhythm of Chile music. Erzhu Rong, along with Yuan Yu and other members of the Northern Wei imperial family, understood and enjoyed songs and dances of Xianbei and

⁴³ BS, 48/1762.

⁴⁴ Lü Yifei 呂一飛, *Huzu xisu yu Sui Tang fengyun: Wei Jin Beichao beifang shaoshu minzu shehui fengsu ji qi dui Sui Tang de yingxiang* 胡族習俗與隋唐風韻: 魏晉北朝北方少數民族社會風俗及其對隋唐的影響 (Shumu wenxian chubanshe, 1994), 180-82.

Central Asian origins, including those performed in the Xianbei language. In short, Erzhu Rong and his Qihu people were proficient in both the Xianbei and Qihu languages. Other non-Chinese residents in Xiurong District and Sizhou likely spoke both the Xianbei and their native languages, which may have been similar to the former.⁴⁵

Additionally, many Northern Wei soldiers likely spoke the Xianbei language, as noted in the *Treatise on Classics and Books* (經籍志) in *Suishu*:

After the Later Wei (後魏) conquered the Central Plains (中原), they issued all military orders in the barbarian language. (1) Later, influenced by Chinese culture, most military orders could no longer be issued in the barbarian language. (2) Thus, the government recorded the language and made people teach and learn it from each other. They call the language *Guoyu* 國語.⁴⁶

As mentioned above, when the Later Wei (i.e., the Northern Wei) conquered the Central Plains (namely, North China), the Northern Wei forces sent messages in the barbarian language. This barbarian language was Xianbei, so they communicated in the Xianbei language. In the excerpt, Part (1) suggests that the use of the Xianbei language significantly decreased among Northern Wei soldiers because of the increasing influence of Chinese culture. According to Part (2), however, knowledge of the Xianbei language was still necessary for the Northern Wei military; hence, the Northern Wei government recorded the language using Chinese characters and made Northern Wei soldiers with limited command of the Xianbei language study Xianbei. This case indicates that not only did Northern Wei soldiers of Xianbei origin continue to use their native language in sending and receiving military orders, but Chinese soldiers also somehow needed to know the language. Consequently, Chinese sol-

⁴⁵ Choi, "Bukwi hugi ho'eo sayong hyeonsang-gwa geu baekyeong," 219.

⁴⁶ SS, 32/947.

diers had to learn this non-Chinese language.

Moreover, the anecdote of Gao Huan speaking Xianbei in the military camp suggests that Northern Wei soldiers continued to speak Xianbei during the latter part of the Northern Wei period in Luoyang, as well as in the early Eastern Wei dynasty.⁴⁷

In summary, members of the Xianbei ruling class in Luoyang, a few Chinese born in Luoyang and the Yellow River regions, nearly all non-Chinese peoples (e.g., Xianbei, Gaoche, Qihu, and Jihu 稽胡) within the Northern Wei realms, and many Chinese people in the Six Frontier Towns, Hengzhou 恒州, Shuozhou 朔州, Yanzhou 燕州, Fenzhou 汾州, and Sizhou 肆州 continued to utilize the Xianbei language for various reasons even well after Emperor Xiaowen's ban of the language.⁴⁸ In other words, most non-Chinese peoples, including Xianbei, continued to speak their native languages in the various regions under Northern Wei rule.

2. Cases of Emperor Xiaoming

The Japanese researcher Akimine Koga argued that Emperor Xiaoming—the eighth emperor of the Northern Wei dynasty—as well as court officials, court ladies, and eunuchs must have spoken Xianbei.⁴⁹ The present author agrees with Koga's view. This chapter will attempt to reinforce Koga's argument with more details.

Before analyzing Emperor Xiaoming's use of Xianbei, let us first examine his father Emperor Xuanwu's (宣武帝) multilingual ability. Emperor Xuanwu was not the first crown prince of the Northern Wei during Emperor Xiaowen's reign. In 496, Yuan Xun 元恂—Emperor Xuanwu's

⁴⁷ BQS, 21/295; Choi, "Bukwi hugi ho'eo geumji jaeron," 213-14. According to records, Gao Huan spoke and gave orders to his soldiers in the Xianbei language when Gao Aocao 高敖曹 was absent. In the presence of Gao Aocao, however, he spoke in Chinese.

⁴⁸ Hengzhou, Shuozhou, Yanzhou, Fenzhou, and Sizhou were located in the extensive region from the northwest of today's Hebei Province all the way to the western and northern areas of Shaanxi Province.

⁴⁹ Koga, "Hokugi no buzoku kaisan ni tsuite," 64.

elder brother and heir apparent—participated in Mu Tai’s 穆泰 rebellion but was soon arrested. Emperor Xiaowen—Yuan Xun’s father—was so enraged that he beat his rebellious son almost to death and ultimately compelled Yuan Xun to commit suicide by poison. Subsequently, Emperor Xiaowen selected Yuan Ge 元恪—future Emperor Xuanwu—as the new heir apparent. This decision might have been influenced by the belief that the new crown prince, Yuan Ge, would adhere to the ban on speaking the Xianbei language and support other Sinicization policies. Emperor Xuanwu was a multilingual figure who could read Chinese classics and historical texts. He also participated in the study of Buddhist teachings until late at night.⁵⁰ In 508, he took the initiative in the translation of the Buddhist scripture known as the *Shidijinglun* 十地經論 into Chinese.⁵¹ It is not certain to what extent he was involved in the actual translation process. Yet, it is possible to assume that he might have also been fluent in Indian languages such as Sanskrit and Pali or some Central Asian languages, given the fact that the *Shidijinglun* had been translated into Central Asian languages as well. Moreover, he engaged in conversations with Yuan Pi 元丕, a prominent elder Xianbei official from the royal family, who opposed Emperor Xiaowen’s Sinicization policies. He also had conversations with Yu Lie 于烈 and Yu Zhong 于忠, who were granted permission to speak their native language due to their Xianbei heritage and age over thirty. Therefore, it is highly likely that Emperor Xuanwu continued to speak Xianbei fluently. In sum, Emperor Xuanwu was proficient in both Chinese and Xianbei, with the possibility of having significant knowledge of Indian and some Central Asian languages.⁵²

Emperor Xiaoming was the son of his multilingual father. Emperor Xiaoming was educated at the National School (國子堂),⁵³ where he studied Confucian classics, such as the *Classic of Filial Piety* (孝經) and the

⁵⁰ WS, 8/215, 69/1528, 114/3042.

⁵¹ Li Shuji 李書吉, *Beichao lizhi faxi yanjiu* 北朝禮制法系研究 (Renmin chubanshe, 2002), 133.

⁵² Choi, “Bukwi hugi ho’eo sayong hyeonsang-gwa geu baekyeong,” 220-22.

⁵³ WS, 36/835.

Du-Tradition Commentaries of the Spring and Autumn Annals (杜氏春秋). His instructors included Chinese scholar-officials like Cui Guang 崔光, Wang Zunye 王遵業, Wang Yanye 王延業, Jia Sibō 賈思伯, and Feng Yuanxing 馮元興.⁵⁴ Additionally, he also engaged in conversations with Chinese officials, such as Xin Xiong 辛雄, Dong Zhao 董昭, and Xu He 徐紇.⁵⁵ If he learned from or conversed with such Chinese scholar-officials without interpreters, this fact would indicate that he was fluent in Chinese.⁵⁶ According to *Weishu*, he was so fluent in Chinese that he even composed a seven-character poem (七言詩) in Chinese in response to his mother's poem during a banquet at Hualin Yuan 華林園.⁵⁷ Emperor Xiaoming was born in 510, sixteen years after his grandfather's ban on speaking the Xianbei language. Based on these facts, some scholars could assume that Emperor Xiaoming was Sinicized completely and only spoke Chinese.⁵⁸ The reality, however, was quite the opposite. According to *Weishu*, Emperor Xiaoming indeed spoke the Xianbei language.

Empress Dowager Hu (胡太后) misbehaved herself and thus was afraid of being disliked by the imperial family. Therefore, she gathered her political partners, prevented her son from meeting his confidants, and killed close aides of his favorites. A Mithra monk called Miduo Daoren 蜜多道人 who was fluent in *huyu* 胡語 supported Emperor Xiaoming. Fearing that the monk might reveal her scandalous behavior to her son, Empress Dowager Hu had him killed on a street in the southern section of Luoyang on the third day of the third lunar month in 528.⁵⁹ She pre-

⁵⁴ *WS*, 38/879, 72/1615, 79/1760.

⁵⁵ *WS*, 77/1694, 79/1759.

⁵⁶ Choi Jin Yeoul, *Hyomunje-ui 'hanhwa' jeongchaek-gwa Nakyang hoin sahoe: Bukwi hugi hosok yuji hyeonsang-gwa geu baekyeong* 효문제의 '한화' 정책과 낙양 호인사회: 북위 후기 호족 유지 현상과 그 배경 (Hanwul Academy, 2016), 39.

⁵⁷ *BS*, 13/504.

⁵⁸ It has been common wisdom in academia that Emperor Xiaoming was Sinicized because he learned Confucian classics and was proficient in Chinese.

⁵⁹ A similar passage is also found in *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑 (Zhonghua shuju, 1974; henceforth *ZZTJ*), 152/4737.

tended to search for the assassins by offering a bounty for their capture and killed Gu Hui 谷會, Commander of Imperial Guards (領左右) and Deputy Minister of Tributaries (鴻臚少卿), Gu Shaoda 谷紹達, and all of Emperor Xiaoming's close aides.⁶⁰

Empress Dowager Hu regained absolute power as regent in 525, having previously held the position of regent from 515 to 520. During both periods, she had sexual relationships with several officials and prevented his son from receiving unfavorable information about her misbehavior.⁶¹ Akimine Koga argued that Empress Dowager Hu feared the Mithra monk might inform the emperor of her misdeeds in Xianbei; hence, she had the monk assassinated.⁶² At this point, let us examine this argument further.

First, the term *daoren* 道人 in the excerpt can refer to a monk or priest in both Buddhism and Daoism. However, the word *miduo* in *Miduo Daoren* is not a Buddhist name but rather a translation of “Mithra” that corresponds to “Mihr” in ancient Iranian languages, indicating that he was a Mithraic or Zoroastrian.⁶³

Second, what language was *huyu*? In *Weishu*, the terms Tuoba 拓跋 and Xianbei were not transcribed as *hu* or *xianbei* in Chinese characters but transcribed as *beiren* 北人 or *jiuren* 舊人.⁶⁴ The Chinese character *hu* referred to Central Asian people during the Tang dynasty.⁶⁵ Thus, the

⁶⁰ BS, 13/505; WS, 13/339-40.

⁶¹ Choi Jin Yeoul, “Hotaehu-ui imjochingje-wa gwonryeok giban: Munmu gwanryo jipdan-gwa cheukgeun jipdan-ui bunseok-eul jungsimeuro” 胡太后的 臨朝稱制와 권력기반:文武 官僚集團과 측근집단의 분석을 중심으로, *Daedong munhwa yeongu* 대동문화연구 99 (2017): 175-80; Choi Jin Yeoul, “Bukwi Nakyang sidae Hotaehu-ui hohwa-wa geu baekyeong” 北魏洛陽時代 胡太后的 胡化와 그 배경, *Inmunhak yeongu* 人文學研究 25 (2016): 146-53.

⁶² Koga, “Hokugi no buzoku kaisan ni tsuite,” 64.

⁶³ Liu Cunren 柳存仁, “Tangdai yiqian Baihuojiao Manijiao zai Zhongguo zhi yihen” 唐代以前拜火教摩尼教在中國之遺痕, in *Hefengtang wenji (shang)* 和風堂文集 (上) (Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1991), 495-554; Shi Anchang 施安昌, “Beiwei Fengyongqi yuanshi muzhi wenshi kao” 北魏馮邕妻元氏墓誌紋飾考, *Gugong bowuyuan yuankan* 故宮博物院院刊 1997-2 (1997): 75.

⁶⁴ Kawamoto, “Hokugi ni okeru mibunsei ni tsuite,” 345-52.

⁶⁵ See Moriyasu Takao 모리야스 다카오, “Dangdae bulkyojeok sekyejiri-wa ‘ho’-ui siltae” 당대 불교적 세계지리와 ‘호’의 실태, in *Silk Road-ui sam-gwa jongkyo* 실크로드의 삶과 종교, edited by Jun-

term *huyu* could likely mean the languages spoken by Central Asian people during the Tang and Song dynasties.

The truth is, however, quite different. Emperor Xiaowen issued an imperial edict on January 13, 459, ordering to change the clothing style (*yifuzhizhi* 衣服之制).⁶⁶ Regarding this edict, *Weishu* never used such words as barbarian clothes. Yet, the author of the *Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government* (資治通鑑) changed the phrase from “*yifuzhizhi* 衣服之制” to “*hufu* 胡服,” which means barbarian garments. Therefore, according to the *Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government*, Emperor Xiaowen prohibited the ruling class and his subjects from wearing barbarian garments.⁶⁷ Given the context of the Northern Wei dynasty, the term *hufu* in the *Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government* refers to Xianbei-style clothing. Considering this aspect, the Chinese character *hu* could mean Xianbei in the Northern Wei dynasty. Thus, the *huyu*, the barbarian language spoken by the Mithraic or Zoroastrian monk *Miduo Daoren*, was probably Xianbei. The monk would have had to learn Xianbei in order to engage effectively in Mithraic or Zoroastrian missionary work targeting the emperor, the imperial family, and the ruling class of the Northern Wei. In other words, Emperor Xiaoming likely spoke Xianbei in private situations with Mithraic or Zoroastrian monks and his favorites, including the Gu Hui and Gu Shaoda brothers.⁶⁸

In short, Emperor Xiaoming indeed spoke the Xianbei language, even though he was a grandson of Emperor Xiaowen who issued the edict of the ban on speaking the Xianbei language. This fact clearly shows that Emperor Xiaowen's prohibition of the Xianbei language was unsuccessful after all.

gang asia hakhoe (Sakyejeol, 2006).

⁶⁶ *WS*, 7 xia/176.

⁶⁷ *ZZTJ*, 139/4370.

⁶⁸ Choi, *Hyomunje-ui hanhwa jeongchaek-gwa Nakyang hoin sahoe*, 37-38.

Conclusion

Emperor Xiaowen's ban on speaking the Xianbei language included two important loopholes: first, the prohibition was applied only within the palace, and second, it only affected Xianbei officials under the age of thirty. Thus, the ban was effectively a restriction on the use of non-Chinese languages in court or within the central government by Xianbei officials under the age of thirty. This means that the impact of the ban was limited. A significant portion of the Xianbei population could still speak their native language.

Many scholars have misinterpreted Emperor Xiaowen's ban as a complete prohibition of speaking the Xianbei language. Despite the ban, however, many Xianbei elites—such as Yu Jin, Yuan Wenyao, and Changsun Jian—and Chinese officials—for example, Zhang Huayuan, Meng Wei, and Sun Qian—continued to speak Xianbei from the latter half of the Northern Wei dynasty onward. Emperor Xiaoming also spoke the Xianbei language that his grandfather, Emperor Xiaowen, had banned. These cases indicate that Emperor Xiaowen's ban of the Xianbei language was not so successful that the use of the language was still widespread among the Northern Wei ruling elite. While a few Xianbei officials could read and write official documents written in Chinese characters, most Xianbei officials, military officers, and soldiers could not. A letter that Cui Liang 崔亮 sent to his maternal cousin Liu Jing'an 劉景安 reveals the Xianbei people's general illiteracy and poor proficiency in reading and writing Chinese.⁶⁹

This paper demonstrates that most Xianbei and some Chinese people continued to speak the Xianbei language even after Emperor Xiaowen's edict banning its use. Despite the official prohibition, why did most Xianbei and a few Chinese people continue to speak the Xianbei language? Several reasons could be pointed out. First, the exception clauses in the ban allowed Xianbei officials over the age of thirty, as well as their

⁶⁹ Choi, "Bukwi hugi ho'eo geumji jaeron," 221-22.

families, friends, and colleagues, to continue to learn and speak the Xianbei language. Since Xianbei individuals over thirty conversed with others and Chinese people in Xianbei, the Chinese people also had to understand and speak the same language. This would encourage many people to speak Xianbei in the court, government, military camps, and marketplaces.⁷⁰ Next, even though Xianbei individuals under the age of thirty spoke Chinese, they never forgot their native language. This was especially true in light of the examples of Emperor Xuanwu—son of Emperor Xiaowen—and Yuan Xi.

Moreover, Emperor Xiaowen issued the edict that prohibited the Xianbei people from speaking the Xianbei language just sixteen days after his first expedition to the Southern Qi dynasty (南齊).⁷¹ The military campaigns against the Southern Qi and frequent imperial tours by the emperor did not allow enough time to enforce the ban on speaking the Xianbei language. The Xianbei and other non-Chinese soldiers who participated in the prolonged war against the Southern Qi had little time to learn Chinese, as they were busy completing combat training and moving to the southern frontier regions until Emperor Xiaowen's death.⁷² These Northern Wei forces were called Warriors of the Feathered Forest (羽林軍) and Warriors Swift as Tigers (虎賁軍). Approximately 150,000 Xianbei men moved from Pingcheng to Luoyang, and most of them likely participated in the war against the Southern Qi.⁷³ They spent 534 days fighting against Southern Qi soldiers during the second and third campaigns from 497 to 499, allowing them only a little time and opportunity to learn Chinese. The Xianbei language, one of the proto-Mongolic languages, significantly differed from Chinese in terms of grammar and sentence structure. Therefore, it was difficult for the Xianbei people to learn and speak Chinese within a year before the second campaign against the

⁷⁰ Choi, "Bukwi hugi ho'eo geumji jaeron," 204-10.

⁷¹ *WS*, 7 xia/178-79.

⁷² Choi Jin Yeoul, *Bukwi hwangje sunhaeng-gwa hohan sahoe* 북위황제 순행과 호한사회 (Seoul National University Press, 2011), 447.

⁷³ Choi, *Bukwi hwangje sunhaeng-gwa hohan sahoe*, 449.

Southern Qi.⁷⁴ Most of the Xianbei soldiers had little time to learn Chinese, except for a few who remained in Luoyang.

Lastly, according to some linguists, it takes about three generations, or ninety years, for a people to forget their native language. The Northern Wei, however, collapsed only in about forty years after Emperor Xiaowen's ban. Forty years were too short a time for all the Xianbei people to forget their native language and fully adopt Chinese as their new language. Therefore, the Xianbei people could continue to speak their own language even during the periods of the Northern Qi and Northern Zhou, which were established after the fall of the Northern Wei.

⁷⁴ Choi, *Bukwi hwangje sunhaeng-gwa hohan sahoe*, 449-50.

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The Industrial Policies in Xing'an Province and Manchukuo's Control over Manchuria and Mongolia Borderland (1931–1945)

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Abstract

This study explores the industrial policies of Manchukuo in Xing'an Province (1931-1945), focusing on their strategic importance in Japan's broader Manchuria-Mongolia policies. Xing'an Province, located in the eastern Inner Mongolia region, held significant geopolitical and economic value due to its abundant natural resources, including timber and livestock. The Japanese Kwantung Army and the Manchukuo government implemented industrial policies that sought to exploit these resources while promoting nominal "autonomy" for the region's Mongolian population. However, these policies often masked underlying colonial control, aligning with Japan's military and economic expansionist objectives.

The establishment of Xing'an Province was driven by Japan's strategic need to secure its northern frontier and counter Soviet influence. Initially, policies emphasized harmony and autonomy, incorporating traditional Mongolian administrative systems. However, as Japan entered a wartime economy in the late 1930s, resource management became more centralized. Industrial policies, including strict regulations on forestry and livestock, were implemented to secure vital war supplies. These efforts significantly diminished Mongolian autonomy and integrated the region's economy into the Japanese wartime system.

Forestry and livestock management were central to Manchukuo's industrial strategy in Xing'an. The Greater Khingan region's vast forests supplied critical timber for construction and war production, while the livestock industry provided essential resources such as wool, leather, and meat. Japan introduced modern management systems but also intensified resource extraction and imposed stringent controls over local industries. These policies disrupted traditional Mongolian livelihoods, leading to the socioeconomic decline of nomadic communities.

Ultimately, Manchukuo's industrial policies in Xing'an Province reveal the duality of Japan's colonial approach: leveraging the rhetoric of development and autonomy while enforcing strict control to serve imperialist goals. These policies contributed to the transformation of Xing'an into a logistical and colonial hub for Japan's war efforts, underscoring the limits of the "harmony of five races" ideology. This study highlights the complexities of border governance and the interplay between resource exploitation and political control in a strategically significant region during a tumultuous period.

Keywords

Manchukuo, Xing'an Province, Inner Mongolia, Japanese Imperialism, Industrial Policies, Manchuria-Mongolia Policy

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Introduction

Manchukuo was a state established in the Manchuria region from 1932 to 1945. Since it was founded by the Japanese Kwantung Army, there are diverse evaluations regarding its nature. Manchukuo is often defined as a puppet state of Japan, and in China, it is referred to as the “puppet state of Manchukuo” (偽滿洲國), emphasizing its illegitimacy. Recently, scholars like Prasenjit Duara have reexamined Manchukuo, highlighting its modern state system, fascist mobilization system, planned economy, and the pluralistic governance system advocating the harmony of five races.¹ Additionally, Korean academia has been conducting research to ascertain various and significant impacts of Manchukuo's state systems on post-1945 Korean history.²

¹ Prasenjit Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity: Manchukuo and the East Asian Modern* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2003). Additionally, Korean scholar Yoon Hwi-tak has noted the pluralistic ethnic composition of Manchukuo and defined it as a ‘multi-ethnic state.’ For details, see Yoon Hwi-tak 윤휘탁, *Manjuguk: shikminjijeok sangsang-i ingtaehan ‘bokhapminjokgukka’* 滿洲國: 植民地の 想像이 잉태한 ‘複合民族國家’ (Hye'an, 2013).

² Related studies include those by Kang Sang-jung and Han Seok-jung. Kang Sang-jung pointed out that the post-war regimes of Kishi Nobusuke and Park Chung-hee had their origins in Manchukuo. Kang Sang-jung 강상중, Hyeon Muam 현무암, *Kishi Nobusuke-wa Park Chung-hee:*

Manchukuo, though subject to various evaluations concerning its characteristic, was a diverse and complex state that encompassed multiple ethnic groups within the Manchurian region. The slogan “Harmony of the Five Races” (五族協和), which highlights the cooperation among the Japanese, Koreans, Mongols, Manchurians, and Han Chinese, epitomizes this diversity. Furthermore, Manchuria, the region where Manchukuo was established, was itself a borderland inhabited by a variety of ethnic groups and cultures. To govern this multifaceted area, Manchukuo adopted a pluralistic administrative structure.

Every nation possesses both central and peripheral regions. Manchukuo was no exception, and one of its peripheral areas was the eastern Inner Mongolia region around the Xing'an Range, which straddles the border between Manchuria and Mongolia. Even before the establishment of Manchukuo, Japan pursued a “Manchuria-Mongolia Policy” (滿蒙政策) to expand into Manchuria and eastern Inner Mongolia. After the founding of Manchukuo, this eastern Inner Mongolia region was incorporated as Xing'an Province (興安省) within Manchukuo. Given its position bordering Outer Mongolia, the Soviet Union, and China, the Xing'an region was a critical frontier for Manchukuo's defense and expansion efforts. Leveraging Xing'an Province as a base, Manchukuo and Japan advanced into Inner Mongolia, extending their sphere of influence southward to the Rehe Province, north of Beijing.

Despite the significance of Manchukuo's control over the Xing'an region, only recently has it received academic attention. Notable studies include those by Suzuki Nirei, Qi Baishun, and Yoshida Junichi. Suzuki Nirei's research detailed the establishment of Xing'an Province and Japan's Inner Mongolia policies within the context of the Manchuria-Mongolia Policy.³ Yoshida Junichi's research holds significant historiographi-

Takaki Masao, Park Jeong-hee-ege Manjuguk iran mueotiotneunga 기사 노부스케와 박정희: 다카키 마사오, 박정희에게 만주국이란 무엇이었는가 (Chaekgwa hamkke, 2012). Similarly, Han Seok-jung highlighted that the economic development model of Korea in the 1960s and 1970s originated in Manchukuo. Han Seok-jung 한석정, *Manju modeon* 만주모던 (Munhak-gwa jiseongsa, 2016).

³ Suzuki Nirei 鈴木仁麗, *Manshūkoku to uchi Mongoru: Manmō seisaku kara Kōanshō tōchi e* 満洲

cal value, which compiled and introduced historical materials related to Japan's and Manchukuo's Inner Mongolia policies before 1945.⁴ Qi Bais-hun's research, closely related to the topic of this paper, examines Manchukuo's economic control over Inner Mongolia through its financial, transportation, communication, and industrial policies.⁵ Additionally, there is ongoing research on Manchukuo's educational policies for Mongolians,⁶ land reclamation policies,⁷ and colonial policies.

Building on these previous studies, this paper examines an aspect of Manchukuo's frontier control through its industrial policies in Xing'an Province. In the formation of modern states, control over frontier areas and acquisition of resources are inseparable tasks. The process of securing stable control over frontier regions necessitated the control of various resources such as mines, forests, livestock, and fisheries. Existing studies on Xing'an Province in Manchukuo have been detailed in individual aspects but lack a comprehensive approach. In particular, Qi's research thoroughly examines the policies of economic control of Xing'an Province during the Manchukuo period but pays little attention to the close correlation between these policies of economic control and Manchukuo's border governance. Therefore, this paper seeks to understand how Manchukuo attempted to strengthen its control system over the eastern Inner

国と内モンゴル: 満蒙政策から興安省統治へ (Akashi shoten, 2012).

⁴ Yoshida Junichi 吉田順一, *Senzenki no uchi Mogoru tōbu to Nihon* 戦前期の内モンゴル東部と日本 (Kazama shobō, 2021).

⁵ Qi Baishun 齊百順, *Riben qinzhān shiqi Xing'an sheng jingji tongzhi zhengce yanjiu* 日本侵佔時期興安省經濟統制政策研究 (Liaoning minzu chubanshe, 2016).

⁶ Wei Jingyi 魏靜怡, "Qingmo zhi Riwei shiqi Xing'anmeng diqu tudi he jiaoyu zhuangkuang de bianqian" 清末至日偽時期興安盟地區土地和教育狀況的變遷 (Master's Thesis, Inner Mongolia University, 2014); Cao Yuanyuan 曹園園, "Kangzhan shiqi Riben zai Weimanzhouguo Xing'an sheng de zhimin jiaoyu tanxi" 抗戰時期日本在偽滿洲國興安省的殖民教育探析, *Xibu xuekan* 西部學刊 (2020).

⁷ Hirokawa Saho 廣川佐保, *Mōchi hōjō: "Manshūkoku" no tochi seisaku* 蒙地奉上: 「滿洲國」の土地政策 (Kyūko shoin, 2005); Ikegami Akihito 池上彰英, Xiao Gang 曉剛, "Kingendai ni okeru uchi Mongoru tōbu chiiki no nōgyō hensen: yūboku ni yoru bokuchikugyō kara teijū hōboku to kōshu nōgyō ni itaru katei" 近現代における内モンゴル東部地域の農業変遷: 遊牧による牧畜業から定住放牧と耕種農業に至る過程, *Meiji daigaku nogakubu kenkyū hōkoku* 明治大学農学部研究報告 64 (2015).

Mongolia region—a frontier area—through the analysis of its industrial policies in Xing'an Province. Particularly, since the eastern Inner Mongolia region where Xing'an Province was established developed forestry using the Great Khingan Mountains' forest resources and livestock farming on the steppe, this paper will explore how Manchukuo's management of forestry and livestock farming was related to its resource management and frontier policies in the eastern Inner Mongolia region.

Establishment of Xing'an Province in Manchukuo and the Governance of Eastern Inner Mongolia

Map 1. Regional Scope of Xing'an Province during the Manchukuo Period



Xing'an Province (Map 1)⁸ in Manchukuo encompassed the grassland regions of present-day eastern Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, Heilongjiang Province, Liaoning Province, and western Jilin Province. Originally, this area was inhabited by Mongolian tribes such as the Khorchin, Gorlos, Dörbed, and Jarud—known as “Mongolia within Manchuria”—during the Qing Dynasty. From the time of Nurhaci, the Qing Dynasty strengthened cooperation with the leaders of these Mongolian nomads by forming marriage alliances and governed them through the Mongolian League-Banner System (盟旗制度). Additionally, the Qing implemented the Blockade Policy (封禁政策) to prohibit Han Chinese migration and cultivation in eastern Inner Mongolia to preserve the nomadic economy. Through cooperation with these eastern Inner Mongolian nomads, the Qing succeeded in stabilizing its rule over Mongolia and Manchuria until the nineteenth century.

However, from the mid-nineteenth century, as population pressure increased in China Proper, and imperialist powers such as Russia began to advance into Manchuria, the Qing Dynasty opened the land of Mongolian banners in eastern Inner Mongolia to Han Chinese for reclamation as a defensive measure. This led to frequent disputes over land ownership and cultural differences between the existing Mongolian nomads and the newly arrived Han Chinese farmers. In 1891, during the Jindandao Incident, Mongolian nomads were massacred en masse by Han Chinese farmers and the secret society known as Jindandao.⁹

Meanwhile, after the First Sino-Japanese War in 1895, Japan began to expand its influence over Korea and Manchuria, viewing eastern Inner Mongolia and Manchuria as critical areas to protect Japan's sovereignty from China and Russia. This perspective laid the foundation for Japan's subsequent continental policy, known as the “Manchuria-Mongolia

⁸ Suzuki, *Manshūkoku to uchi Mongoru*, 214.

⁹ For the complex background of the Jindandao Incident of 1891, see Burensain Borjigin, “The Complex Structure of Ethnic Conflict in the Frontier: Through the Debates around the ‘Jindandao Incident’ in 1891,” *Inner Asia* 6 (2004).

Policy.”¹⁰ The Manchuria-Mongolia Policy was pursued in earnest after the Russo-Japanese War of 1904. In 1907 and 1912, Japan secured “special interests” in southern Manchuria and eastern Inner Mongolia through two secret agreements with Russia.¹¹ Additionally, in 1915, following a clash between Chinese troops and Japanese police in Zhengjiatun, Liaoyuan County, Japan stationed 1,500 soldiers there.¹² By pressuring the Beijing government of the Republic of China, which held jurisdiction over eastern Inner Mongolia, Japan secured several rights—including the rights of land leasing, land ownership, mining, and railroad construction—through the “Treaty on Southern Manchuria and Eastern Inner Mongolia.”¹³

Furthermore, Japan pursued the separation of eastern Inner Mongolia from the territory of China. Following the collapse of the Qing Dynasty, Inner and Outer Mongolian nobility initiated independence movements. Japan covertly supported the leaders of independence movements by sponsoring Manchu royalty, fomenting anti-Han Chinese uprisings in Inner Mongolia. Although the independence movements in Inner Mongolia during the 1910s ultimately failed due to suppression by the Beijing government, the Kwantung Army continued to gather various information about eastern Inner Mongolia and maintained contact with Inner

¹⁰ The term “Man-Mō” (滿蒙, meaning Manchu-Mongol or Manchuria-Mongolia) was created by Japan during its expansion into Manchuria and eastern Inner Mongolia. Until the Qing Dynasty, “Manchu” and “Mongol” were ethnonyms. After the Russo-Japanese War, however, Japan began referring to the areas of the Manchu and Mongol peoples as “Man-Mō” during its expansion into the northeastern frontiers of the Qing. The boundaries of “Man-Mō” varied over time, but following the third Russo-Japanese negotiation in 1912, which determined the territorial extent of Inner Mongolia, the area east of 116 degrees 27 minutes east longitude was referred to as “Man-Mō.” For details, see Yang Jiseon 양지선, “Ilje-ui Manmōng jeongchaeg-e daehan Hanjung-ui insik bigyo” 일제의 만몽 정책에 대한 한중의 인식비교, *Dongyanghak* 東洋學 66 (2017): 135.

¹¹ Suzuki, *Manshūkoku to uchi Mongoru*, 54-58; Yang Jiseon 양지선, “Hanin-ui dongbu Naemonggol iju-reul tonghae bon Ilje-ui Manmong jeongchaeg (1931-1945)” 한인의 동부 내몽골 이주를 통해 본 일제의 滿蒙政策 (1931-1945), *Monggolhak* 몽골학 39 (2014): 152-53.

¹² Yang, “Hanin-ui dongbu Naemonggol iju-reul tonghae bon Ilje-ui Manmong jeongchaeg (1931-1945),” 154.

¹³ Nihon kokuritsu kōkubunshokan 日本國立公文書館, “Nan Manshū oyobi tōbu uchi Mongoru ni kansuru jōyaku” 南滿洲及東部內蒙古二關スル條約 (June 8, 1915).

Mongolian nobility and intellectuals who had studied in Japan.

A key figure in planning and devising Japan's policy for eastern Inner Mongolia was Kikutake Jitsuzō (菊竹實藏, 1889–1946), head of the Zhengjiatun office of the South Manchuria Railway Company (滿鉄 Mantetsu).¹⁴ During the 1920s and 1930s, Kikutake supported the “Inner Mongolian Independence Army” and gathered extensive information about the region, which he provided to the Kwantung Army. Following the Manchurian Incident in 1931, Kikutake proposed a governance model for eastern Inner Mongolia to the Kwantung Army, centering on the establishment of an Inner Mongolian autonomous region based on the Mongolian Banner system (旗制). This proposal was incorporated into the establishment of Xing'an Province after the founding of Manchukuo, and Kikutake was appointed Deputy Director of the Xing'an Bureau under the Ministry of State Affairs in 1932, where he devised and organized the governance system for eastern Inner Mongolia.

On September 18, 1931, the Kwantung Army initiated the Manchurian Incident, occupying entire Manchuria and extending its influence into eastern Inner Mongolia. In December 1931, Captain Kakakura Tadashi (片倉衷), Kikutake Jitsuzō, and others held two meetings in Tailai and Liaoyuan with leaders and intellectuals of eastern Inner Mongolia,¹⁵ where they agreed to establish a Manchu-Mongolian Independent Government with eastern Inner Mongolia as its autonomous region. They also agreed to abolish the traditional Mongolian nobility system, guarantee the appointment of Mongolian officials, and prohibit land reclamation by Han Chinese.¹⁶ Consequently, in 1932, eastern Inner Mongolia was incorporated into Manchukuo, and the “Regulations on the Xing'an Bureau” were promulgated in March, initiating the formal establishment of

¹⁴ For Kikutake Jitsuzō's perceptions regarding eastern Inner Mongolia, see Suzuki, *Manshūkoku to uchi Mongoru*, 376-404.

¹⁵ For the process and results of the Tailai and the Liaoyuan Conferences led by the Japanese Kwantung Army, see Suzuki, *Manshūkoku to uchi Mongoru*, 146-51; Hirokawa, *Mōchi hōjō*, 26-28.

¹⁶ Suzuki, *Manshūkoku to uchi Mongoru*, 166-68.

Xing'an Province and the governance of eastern Inner Mongolia.¹⁷

Xing'an Province, including eastern Inner Mongolia, was a unique region in Manchukuo. Geopolitically, it was an important northwestern frontier bordering Russia and Outer Mongolia. Socio-economically, it was a unique nomadic area within Manchukuo's agricultural and industrial territories. The Manchukuo government established the Xing'an Bureau under the State Council to govern the Mongolians in Xing'an Province, headquartered in the capital, Xinjing. The Xing'an Bureau comprised the Political Affairs Office, responsible for administration, the General Affairs Office for accounting and finance, and the Agricultural Affairs Office for managing industries. Unlike other provinces in Manchukuo, which adopted the county system under the Ministry of Civil Affairs, Xing'an Province operated under the Mongolian Banner system, recognizing the 'autonomy' of the Mongolians.¹⁸

The governance system of eastern Inner Mongolia centered around the Xing'an Bureau inherited many aspects of the Qing and Republican Chinese Mongolian policies. The Qing Dynasty managed the Mongolian nobility through alliances and the Board for the Administration of Outlying Regions (理藩院). After the Qing's fall, the Beijing government of the Republic of China continued this system with the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission (蒙藏院), and the Nationalist government in the late 1920s also had the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission under the Executive Branch (行政院) to manage Mongolian and Tibetan issues.¹⁹ Although the Kwantung Army promoted the establishment of Xing'an Province as a break from the subordination under Qing and Republican China, in reality, Manchukuo partially inherited these traditions of Mongolian governance.

The governance structure and jurisdiction of eastern Inner Mongolia under the Xing'an Bureau underwent frequent changes after its estab-

¹⁷ "Xing'anjiu guanzhi" 興安局官制, *Manshūkoku seifu kōhō* 滿州國政府公報 (March 9, 1932).

¹⁸ Suzuki, *Manshūkoku to uchi Mongoru*, 231-33.

¹⁹ Suzuki, *Manshūkoku to uchi Mongoru*, 232-33.

lishment. Initially, the Xing'an Bureau's jurisdiction was limited to the non-open Mongolian lands in eastern Inner Mongolia, while Mongolian nomads in Fengtian, Jilin, and Heilongjiang Provinces were incorporated into the county system under the Ministry of Civil Affairs. This exclusion led to dissatisfaction among the Mongolian nomads, who desired inclusion in the Xing'an Bureau's jurisdiction.²⁰ Additionally, the occupation of Rehe Province by the Kwantung Army and Manchukuo's forces in 1933 necessitated an expanded governance structure for Mongolian territories.

In April 1934, Manchukuo inaugurated Puyi as emperor and restructured its administrative system nationwide. Xing'an Province was divided into Eastern Xing'an, Western Xing'an, Southern Xing'an, and Northern Xing'an sub-provinces. The Xing'an General Bureau (興安總署), which oversaw eastern Inner Mongolia's administration, was reorganized into the Department of Politics of Mongolia (蒙政部) in response to demands for expanded Mongolian autonomy. The Department of Politics of Mongolia's jurisdiction expanded to include parts of Rehe and Fengtian Provinces and gained broader administrative authority over local administration, security, industry, education, and religious affairs.²¹

The establishment of Xing'an Province and its reorganization into the Department of Politics of Mongolia reflected the trend of autonomy movements in eastern Inner Mongolia during the 1920s. To secure their interests in the region, Manchukuo and the Kwantung Army initially propagated 'national harmony' and superficially recognized Mongolian autonomy. They implemented the Banner system in eastern Inner Mongolia, reflecting the traditional nomadic order, and expanded Mongolian autonomous areas through the reorganization into the Department of Politics of Mongolia. Eastern Inner Mongolian officials were also appointed to positions within the Xing'an Bureau, the Department of Politics of Mongolia, and as Banner heads (旗長) within Xing'an Province.

²⁰ Hirokawa, *Mōchi hōjō*, 28-31.

²¹ Hirokawa, *Mōchi hōjō*, 33-34.

However, behind the facade of autonomy policies in eastern Inner Mongolia, there was a darker aspect of strengthened colonial rule and the destruction of traditional Mongolian social order. The Manchukuo government claimed to uphold ‘autonomy,’ but it was limited to the banner level, not the provincial level, and Japanese officials were embedded in various administrative organs within the banner. Additionally, in the late 1930s, Manchukuo and Japan conducted extensive surveys and reorganized the Mongolian lands in Xing’an Province, converting previously opened Mongolian lands (開放蒙地) into state-owned lands. This process, known as “the consolidation and nationalization of Mongolian land” (蒙地奉上), led to the socioeconomic decline of the Mongolian nobility, who had held ownership and various rights over these lands.²²

Furthermore, Japan transitioned into a total war state following the initiation of the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937 and the Pacific War in 1941. Consequently, it intensified control over its various colonies. The Xing’an region of Manchukuo was of significant strategic importance to both Manchukuo and Japan as a rear base for the Chinese front and a western front against the Soviet Union, thus being a crucial border region. In 1937, the Manchukuo government abolished the Mongol Government to strengthen its control over the eastern Inner Mongolia region, transferring Mongolian affairs back to the Xing’an Bureau under the State Council.²³ The abolition of the Mongol Government implied a significant reduction in ‘autonomy’ for eastern Inner Mongolia.

In this manner, Manchukuo and Japan actively utilized the “autonomy” (自治) movements within eastern Inner Mongolia during the 1930s to incorporate the nomadic society of eastern Inner Mongolia into their governance domain, establishing a special administrative region called Xing’an Province. They also created the Department of Politics of Mongolia to appear as if they were expanding autonomy in eastern Inner Mongolia. However, Xing’an Province was a strategically important

²² For representative research on the process of *mengdi fengshang* 蒙地奉上 during the Manchukuo period, see Hirokawa, *Mōchi hōjō*.

²³ Hirokawa, *Mōchi hōjō*, 84-85; Suzuki, *Manshūkoku to uchi Mongoru*, 363-67.

stronghold and rear base for Manchukuo and Japan, so the nominal autonomy concealed an underlying duality of increased control and colonial domination. This dual nature of Manchukuo's governance in eastern Inner Mongolia is clearly exemplified by the industrial policies implemented in Xing'an Province during the Manchukuo period.

Manchukuo's Control Policies for Forestry and Livestock Resources in Xing'an Province

One of the key reasons why Manchukuo's control over Xing'an Province was crucial for Japan's expansion of influence was the region's diverse and abundant resources. Since the mid-nineteen century, the Manchurian region had been recognized as a global resource hub. The Fengtian area was noted for its rich coal and iron ore deposits, while the Jilin and Heilongjiang regions were famous for their abundant forest resources and gold and silver deposits. The Xing'an area, corresponding to Manchukuo's northwestern frontier and eastern Inner Mongolia, featured vast steppes connected to the Mongolian Plateau and rich forests along the Greater Khingan Range, which formed a natural boundary between Manchuria and Mongolia. Consequently, from the late Qing Dynasty, this region saw active forestry and animal husbandry, and the upper Heilongjiang areas such as Jilalin and Qiganhe witnessed extensive gold mining development.

For Japan, which had sought to expand its influence into the Manchu-Mongolian region since the late nineteenth century, these resources of eastern Inner Mongolia were of great importance. As mentioned earlier, Japan viewed the Manchu-Mongolian region as its "line of interest" and engaged in numerous diplomatic negotiations with Russia and China to secure "special interests" in eastern Inner Mongolia following the Russo-Japanese War. During the negotiations from 1907 to 1916, Japan diplomatically secured rights in eastern Inner Mongolia through three agreements with Russia. In 1915, through the "Twenty-One Demands" with the Beijing government of the Republic of China, Japan obtained land leasing rights, mining rights, and joint management rights in agriculture

and industry in eastern Inner Mongolia. Subsequently, Japan actively engaged in the development of mines and forests in Manchuria and eastern Inner Mongolia through agreements such as the “Five Negotiation Agreements on the Three Eastern Provinces” and the “Joint Loan Agreement for Gold Mines and Forests in Jilin-Heilongjiang” with Zhang Zuolin’s Fengtian warlord regime.²⁴

After the establishment of Manchukuo and the incorporation of eastern Inner Mongolia into Xing’an Province, Japanese resource development efforts in this region intensified. The strategic value of eastern Inner Mongolia as a border area with the Soviet Union and as a rear base for Japan’s expansion into China increased significantly. Manchukuo and Japan enacted several laws and regulations to manage and develop the resources of Xing’an Province. From the preparation stages of Manchukuo’s establishment in 1931, the Kwantung Army formulated the “Plan for the Development of Manchuria and Mongolia,” outlining policies for resource development in eastern Inner Mongolia. This plan was reflected in the “Outline of Economic Construction in Manchukuo,” which formed the basis of industrial policies announced after Manchukuo’s establishment.²⁵ Subsequently, the Manchukuo government enacted various laws, including the “Important Industry Control Act,” the “Mining Control Act,” and the “Livestock Market Act,” to strengthen control over the resources in Xing’an Province.²⁶

Additionally, the Manchukuo government and Japanese authorities established several administrative bodies and companies to actively manage and develop the abundant resources of Xing’an Province. According to Qi Baishun, Xing’an Province’s economic control policy was implemented through a three-tiered hierarchical structure: (1) the Xing’an provincial level (peripheral); (2) the Manchukuo governmental level (cen-

²⁴ Qi, *Riben qinzhān shìqí Xīng’ānshēng jīngjì tóngzhì zhēngcè yánjiū*, 68-72.

²⁵ Qi, *Riben qinzhān shìqí Xīng’ānshēng jīngjì tóngzhì zhēngcè yánjiū*, 119.

²⁶ Qi, *Riben qinzhān shìqí Xīng’ānshēng jīngjì tóngzhì zhēngcè yánjiū*, 124-26.

tral); and (3) the Japanese governmental level (core).²⁷ Resource development was also carried out by this three-tiered hierarchical structure.

First, the resource development entity at the Xing'an provincial level was the Agricultural Affairs Office (權業處) under the Xing'an Bureau, responsible for executing various resource development policies of the central Manchukuo government and Japan.²⁸ The resource development entity at the Manchukuo government level was the Ministry of Industry (實業部) under the State Council, which oversaw agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry, and mining. However, as Manchukuo's economic control policies were strengthened, changes occurred in the resource development management institutions. In 1937, the Ministry of Industry was abolished and replaced by the Ministry of Industry and Commerce (産業部). In 1940, with the reinforcement of Japan's total war system and the intensification of Manchukuo's wartime control policies, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce was abolished. Its subsidiaries, the Mining and Industry Bureau (鑛工司) and the Water and Electricity Bureau (水電局), were incorporated into the Ministry of Economic Affairs (經濟部), and the Ministry of Agriculture (興農部) was established to carry out agricultural production increase plans. The Ministry of Agriculture, through its Animal Husbandry Division (畜産司) and Forestry Division (林業司), promoted resource development in animal husbandry and forestry in the Xing'an area.²⁹

A notable subject within the framework of Japan's policies in the Xing'an region of Manchukuo is the role of private corporations or state enterprises. These special Japanese companies led the overall industrial development of Manchukuo. Since Japan's management of the southern Manchurian region following the Russo-Japanese War in 1904, state enterprises such as the South Manchuria Railway Company (Mantetsu) and various Japanese corporations, including Ōkura-gumi (大倉組) and Mit-

²⁷ Qi, *Riben qinzhān shìqī Xīng'ānshēng jīngjì tóngzhì zhēngcè yánjiū*, 118.

²⁸ Qi, *Riben qinzhān shìqī Xīng'ānshēng jīngjì tóngzhì zhēngcè yánjiū*, 313.

²⁹ For the evolution of Manchukuo's industrial organizations and resource management agencies, see Qi, *Riben qinzhān shìqī Xīng'ānshēng jīngjì tóngzhì zhēngcè yánjiū*, 131-34.

subishi, have participated in resource development in Manchuria. These Japanese state enterprises and corporations were also actively involved in resource development in the Xing'an region of Manchukuo. Japanese companies such as Mantetsu, Mitsui, and Mitsubishi invested more than half of the capital in Xing'an resource development. Various Manchukuo state enterprises, including the Manchuria Coal Mining Company, Manchuria Petroleum Company, Manchuria Mining Development Company, Manchuria Gold Mining Company, Manchuria Forestry Company, and Manchuria Livestock Company, led the resource development in Xing'an.³⁰ It is essential to note that these companies operated under the control of Japanese government and remained loyal to state interests.

The management and development of resources in Xing'an Province under Manchukuo were conducted through a complex collaboration among three major entities. How, then, were the resource development policies in Xing'an Province specifically implemented? In the following sections, we will examine the realities of resource development in Xing'an Province, focusing on forestry and animal husbandry. These two industries were representative of the economy in eastern Inner Mongolia, and both Manchukuo and Japan paid significant attention to their development while controlling Xing'an Province. Therefore, this paper aims to elucidate the nature of resource development in the Xing'an region during the Manchukuo period by analyzing the forestry and animal husbandry sectors.

1. Manchukuo's Forestry Resource Policy in the Greater Khingan Region

Xing'an Province in Manchukuo, including the eastern Inner Mongolia region, was renowned for its rich forestry resources. In particular, the forests near the Greater Khingan Range, which runs from the west to the

³⁰ For Japanese special companies and state-run companies involved in the economic policies of Xing'an Province, see Qi, *Riben qinzhuan shiqi Xing'an sheng jingji tongzhi zhengce yanjiu*, 126-31.

south of Manchuria, along with the forests of the Yalu River, were notable as key forestry areas in Manchukuo. The forested area in Xing'an Province included 8,196,000 *mo* (畝) of dense forest and 24,261,000 *mo* of sparse forest, accounting for approximately 27% of the total forest area in Manchukuo.³¹ Moreover, the timber reserves in these forests also constituted 27% of the total timber reserves in Manchukuo, making the region crucial for the country's timber industry (Table 1).³²

Table 1. Statistics of Wood Reserves in Xing'an Province (Unit: 1,000 cubic meters)

Type of Wood	Xing'an Province	Entire Manchukuo	Proportion of Xing'an Province
Coniferous	573,556	2,050,202	27.9%
Broadleaf	901,831	3,130,242	28.8%
Total	1,475,388	5,180,443	28.4%

During the Manchukuo period, approximately 100 different types of trees were logged in Xing'an Province, indicating a high degree of diversity. Among these, about ten species were suitable for timber. This wood was utilized across various sectors of Manchukuo, ranging from industrial applications such as bridge construction and railroad ties to household products including wagon wheels, chairs, furniture, and firewood (Table 2).³³ Notably, the development of forests in Xing'an Province was significant for key industries like railway construction and the production of gun stocks, which were crucial for war supplies. This underscores the critical role that the forest resources of Xing'an Province played in the economy of Manchukuo.

³¹ Manshū jijō annaisho 滿洲事情案内所, ed., *Mōko jijō* 蒙古事情 (Manshū jijō annaisho, 1940), 125; Tōa mondai kenkyūkai 東亞問題研究會, ed., *Mōko yōran* 蒙古要覽 (Sanshindō, 1938), 34-35.

³² Manshū jijō annaisho, *Mōko jijō*, 135.

³³ Manshū jijō annaisho, *Mōko jijō*, 126-27.

Table 2. Industrial Timber Species and Uses in Xing'an Province

Tree Species	Main Uses of Wood
Larch	Building materials, bridges, shipbuilding, railroad ties, mine timbers, utility poles, masts, implements
Elm	Shipbuilding, railroad ties, implements, agricultural tools, wagon wheels, plywood
Birch	Agricultural tools, other implements, firewood, plywood
Soft Maple	Bowls, plates, axes, wagon wheels, chairs, carts, plywood
Yellow Birch	Gun stocks, ornaments, medicine, dye
Walnut	Gun stocks, handicrafts, chairs, plywood
Poplar	Firewood, cargo boxes, charcoal for gunpowder, pulp
Arborvitae	Railway cars, furniture, plywood
Maple	Furniture, fine woodworking
Linden	Firewood, casting molds

As demonstrated in the table above, the development and management of forestry resources in Xing'an Province were crucial to Manchukuo's industry. Consequently, Manchukuo established administrative bodies and enacted relevant laws to manage and develop these forestry resources. The forestry administration in Xing'an Province was bifurcated between the central government's Ministry of Industry and the Xing'an Bureau (namely, the Department of Politics of Mongolia).³⁴ The Ministry of Industry was responsible for overseeing forestry administration across Manchukuo, while the Xing'an Bureau executed forestry administration within Xing'an Province. The Ministry of Industry comprised three departments: General Affairs, Agriculture and Mining, and Commerce and Industry, with the Forestry Division (林務科) under the Agriculture and Mining Department overseeing the forestry administration.

Subsequently, in 1933, the Agriculture and Mining Department was

³⁴ Qi, *Riben qinzhān shiqi Xing'an sheng jingji tongzhi zhengce yanjiu*, 343.

reorganized into the Agriculture and Forestry Department, and the Forestry Division was incorporated into the latter. In 1934, the Forestry Division was separated into an independent agency, the Forestry Bureau (林務司), under which the Forestry Management Division and the Forestry Industry Division were established. The establishment of the Forestry Bureau indicated the growing importance of forestry in Manchukuo's industrial policy and the need for a more systematic and specialized forestry administrative organization. The Forestry Bureau established forestry offices in various forest regions to handle administrative operations, and in 1936, these offices were renamed forestry stations (林務署).³⁵ In 1936, the forestry stations in Xing'an Province were located in eight regions: Hailar, Yilekute, Halun'ar, Samha, Solun, Zалантun, Bogdo, and Xibuteha.³⁶

In 1937, two significant changes occurred in Xing'an Province's forestry administration. The first was the abolition of the Ministry of Industry and the establishment of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce. The creation of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce aimed to "develop and utilize resources related to national defense and establish an administrative body to protect resources"³⁷ in response to Japan's escalation into the Second Sino-Japanese War and the need to strengthen control over Manchukuo's resources. The forestry-related institutions under the Ministry of Industry were restructured, and a Forestry Department was established under the Ministry of Industry and Commerce. The Forestry Department included divisions for Forestry Management, Supervision, Administration, Planning, and Operations, with the Supervision Division

³⁵ For the evolution of Manchukuo's forestry administration, see Qi, *Riben qinzhān shiqi Xing'an sheng jingji tongzhi zhengce yanjiu*, 342-47.

³⁶ "Kōanhokushō rinmusho zankō kitei" 興安北省林務署暫行規程, *Manshūkoku seifu kōhō* 滿州國政府公報 (March 12, 1936); "Kōantōshō rinmusho zankō kitei" 興安東省林務署暫行規程, *Manshūkoku seifu kōhō* 滿州國政府公報 (April 25, 1936); "Kōantōshō rinmusho ichi meisshō oyobi kankatsu naka shūsei" 興安東省林務署位置名稱及管轄中修正, *Manshūkoku seifu kōhō* 滿州國政府公報 (February 2, 1937).

³⁷ "Guanyu zhongyang zhengzhi jigou gaige wenti" 關於中央政治機構改革問題 (May 5, 1937), in *Riben diguozhuyi qinhua dang'an xuanbian 3: Weiman kuilei zhengquan* 日本帝國主義侵華檔案選編 3: 偽滿傀儡政權, edited by Zhongguo di'er lishi dang'anguan 中國第二歷史檔案館 and Jilinsheng shehui kexueyuan 吉林省社會科學院 (Zhonghua shuju, 1994), 266.

being central to Manchukuo's forestry control policy, overseeing timber distribution and pricing, timber sales, lumbering, and timber export.³⁸

The second major change was the abolition of the Department of Politics of Mongolia. As previously mentioned, the Department of Politics of Mongolia symbolized the 'autonomy' of eastern Inner Mongolia. Its abolition signified a reduction in 'autonomy' and strengthened control by the central Manchukuo government over the region. With the abolition of the Department of Politics of Mongolia, its functions were integrated into the central Ministry of Industry. Through this administrative reorganization, the bifurcated forestry administration between the Ministry of Industry and the Department of Politics of Mongolia at the inception of Manchukuo was unified under the Forestry Department of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce. This indicated that even in terms of forestry, the eastern Inner Mongolia frontier became more subordinated to Manchukuo.

Manchukuo's forestry policy in the Greater Khingan region can be broadly categorized into four main directions: (1) regulation of forest rights (林場權); (2) establishment of a special account for the national forest industry; (3) a unified plan for forestry resource development; and (4) timber control.

First, regarding the regulation of forest rights (林場權), Manchukuo promulgated the "Forest Rights Regulation Law" in 1934, legally delineating the boundaries between national and private forests and establishing policies for applying for, reviewing, and approving forest ownership. In Xing'an Province, forest owners applied for forest rights through various subdivisions of the Xing'an General Bureau, which then reviewed and approved these applications. Through this process, 2.09 million hectares of forest land in Xing'an Province were registered.³⁹ Second, starting in 1936, Manchukuo implemented the special account for the national forest industry in the Xing'an forestry regions. This initiative aimed to

³⁸ Qi, *Riben qinzhān shiqi Xing'an sheng jingji tongzhi zhengce yanjiu*, 344-45.

³⁹ "Rinchōken seiri hō" 林場權整理法, *Manshūkoku seifu kōhō* 滿洲國政府公報 (June 9, 1934).

allocate 300,000 yen annually for logging military and industrial timber and to issue financial subsidies to each Mongolian banner in Eastern and Northern Xing'an to cover logging expenses.⁴⁰

Third, the unified plan for forestry resource development aimed to maximize the benefits of timber development under the guidance of the Japanese Kwantung Army. This plan had two main components: during the first five-year industrial development period, the logging volume of natural forests was set at ten million cubic meters, and during the second five-year development period, the annual logging volume was set at 1.3 million cubic meters.⁴¹ This plan was disseminated to the forestry departments in various regions of Xing'an Province.

Finally, Manchukuo implemented policies to control various aspects of timber-related activities. In 1938, the "Timber Control Ordinance" was enacted, which regulated the logging methods in national forests, timber distribution and price control by special companies like the Manchurian Forestry Corporation, government control over military and governmental timber, and the implementation of an export permit system for timber.⁴² Additionally, the Ministry of Industry's Forestry Department established divisions for timber utilization and processing to control timber production, while the Manchurian Forestry Corporation controlled timber export and distribution, thereby strengthening control over timber management in Xing'an Province. The "Commodity and Price Control Law" and the "Temporary Measures for Prices Law" further enabled the Manchukuo government to control timber prices in Xing'an Province.

⁴⁰ "Kōan tōhoku ryōshō nai shinrin shori yōkō" 興安東北兩省內森林處理要綱, in *Manshūkoku Mōsei jūnenshi* 滿洲國蒙政十年史, edited by Kōankyoku chōsaka 興安局調查課 (Manshū shūbunkan, 1942), 42-43.

⁴¹ "Yoshikai Tadashi hikkyō" 吉海忠之筆供 (July 1, 1954), in *Riben diguozhuyi qinhua dang'an xuanbian 14: dongbei jingji shouduo* 日本帝國主義侵華檔案選編 14: 東北經濟收奪, edited by Zhongguo di'er lishi dang'anguan 中國第二歷史檔案館 (Zhonghua shuju, 1991), 205-10.

⁴² *Manshūkoku kushi hansen kankōkai* 滿洲國史編纂刊行會, ed., *Manshūkoku kushi: kakuron ge* 滿洲國史: 各論 下, translated by Dongbei runhan shisninian Jilin bianxiezu 東北淪陷十四年吉林編寫組 (1990), 181.

2. Management of Animal Husbandry in Xing'an Province of Manchukuo

Along with forestry, animal husbandry was one of the most important industries in Xing'an Province of Manchukuo. The eastern Inner Mongolia region, including Xing'an Province, was predominantly a nomadic area with an economy largely based on pastoralism. Major livestock in this region included cattle, horses, sheep, goats, and camels, and the livestock products comprised wool, beef, dairy products, horsehair, and leather.⁴³ According to a survey conducted in 1934, the number of cattle, horses, and sheep per 1,000 people in Xing'an Province was as follows (Table 3).⁴⁴

Table 3. Numbers of Cattle, Horses, and Sheep per 1,000 People in Xing'an Province, Manchukuo in 1934

	Cattle (heads)	Horses (heads)	Sheep (heads)
Northern Xing'an Province	1,903.3	2,008.8	11,852.7
Eastern Xing'an Province	95.4	90	13.3
Southern Xing'an Province	119	26.3	180.6
Western Xing'an Province	378.7	94.3	479.4
Average in Xing'an Province	313.3	178.6	993.5
Average in Other Provinces of Manchukuo	46.6	68.1	35.5

The management of animal husbandry in eastern Inner Mongolia was also crucial in Japan's Manchuria-Mongolia Policy. Products such as wool, horsehair, and leather from livestock of eastern Inner Mongolia were significant trade goods and strategic materials during wartime. Japan often referred to the animal husbandry of Xing'an Province as the

⁴³ Qi, *Riben qinzhān shìqī Xīng'ānshēng jīngjì tóngzhì zhēngcè yánjiū*, 87.

⁴⁴ Tōa mondai kenkyūkai, *Mōko yōran*, 32.

“flower of Manchuria and Mongolia,” highlighting its importance.⁴⁵ Consequently, both Manchukuo and Japan devoted significant efforts to managing animal husbandry in Xing'an Province, particularly focusing on livestock breeding and production increases.

Initially, the administration of animal husbandry in Xing'an Province was divided among the Military Government, the Ministry of Industry, and the Xing'an General Bureau. The involvement of the Military Government in livestock management was due to the strategic importance of livestock products, such as horses, cattle, and leather, to the Kwantung Army of Manchukuo and Japan. Following the administrative reforms of Manchukuo in 1937, which saw the abolition of the Ministry of Industry and the Department of Politics of Mongolia, and the establishment of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, the administration of animal husbandry was also integrated into the Ministry of Industry and Commerce. Subsequently, with the establishment of the Ministry of Agriculture in 1940, the Livestock Bureau and the Livestock Affairs Bureau under this ministry took over the administration of animal husbandry.⁴⁶

Manchukuo's livestock policy in Xing'an Province focused on two main directions: control of livestock and livestock products, and increase of livestock production. The control of livestock and livestock products was implemented through policies such as livestock and livestock product quantity surveys and statistics, control over the distribution of livestock and livestock products, and policies on the shipment and allocation of livestock products.

The quantity surveys and statistics of livestock and livestock products were conducted periodically in various ways. In 1937, a survey on horse-related affairs in Xing'an Province was carried out,⁴⁷ followed by extensive livestock resource surveys in Northern Xing'an in 1939 and in

⁴⁵ Fujioka Kei 藤岡啓, *Manmō keizai taikan* 滿蒙經濟大觀, in *Jindai Zhongguo shiliao congkan sanbian* 近代中國史料叢刊三編 88 (Wenhai chubanshe, 1999), 151.

⁴⁶ Qi, *Riben qinzhān shiqi Xing'an sheng jingji tongzhi zhengce yanjiu*, 376.

⁴⁷ “Baji chōsa hō” 馬事調査法, “Baji chōsa hō shikō kisoku” 馬事調査法試行規則, *Manshūkoku seifu kōhō* 滿州國政府公報 (February 4, 1937).

Southern and Western Xing'an by the South Manchuria Railway Company in 1940. The 1940 livestock survey in Southern Xing'an examined various aspects, including livestock quantity, feeding management, breeding, rearing, and hygiene.⁴⁸

The control over the distribution of livestock and livestock products involved stringent regulations on meat and livestock, wool and leather, and general livestock. Meat and livestock, as well as furs and leather, were crucial military resources and were strictly controlled in terms of production and distribution. The control of meat and livestock was enforced through laws such as the "Slaughterhouse Law" and the "Livestock and Livestock Products Control Law," which mandated that meat in Xing'an Province be produced at government-designated slaughterhouses and distributed through the government-designated Manchurian Livestock Corporation. The production and distribution of wool, furs, and leather were also controlled under the "Livestock and Livestock Products Control Law" and were structured to be purchased by the Manchurian Livestock Corporation and the Central Cooperative Association. Additionally, the Manchukuo government enacted laws such as the "Livestock Trade Market Law" and the "Livestock Adjustment Law" to control the movement, allocation, and use of livestock, including horses, cattle, sheep, and camels, in Xing'an Province.⁴⁹

The shipment and allocation policy for livestock products in Xing'an Province was implemented as a part of the control policies following Japan's initiation of the Pacific War in 1941, strengthening the "integration of Japan and Manchukuo." The Manchukuo government, through the Ministry of Industry (later the Ministry of Agriculture), controlled the distribution volume of livestock products in Xing'an Province and allocated quantities to each Banner head, requisitioning livestock and livestock products for central or regional distribution to secure wartime supplies.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Qi, *Riben qinzhān shiqi Xing'an sheng jingji tongzhi zhengce yanjiu*, 386-87.

⁴⁹ Qi, *Riben qinzhān shiqi Xing'an sheng jingji tongzhi zhengce yanjiu*, 387-89.

⁵⁰ Qi, *Riben qinzhān shiqi Xing'an sheng jingji tongzhi zhengce yanjiu*, 390-91.

Another important task in the livestock policy of Manchukuo's Xing'an Province was the improvement and increase of livestock breeds. From the early days of its establishment, Manchukuo considered the improvement and breeding of horses, sheep, and other livestock in Xing'an Province as a crucial part of its agricultural policy. The "Outline of Economic Construction in Manchukuo" promulgated in 1933 outlined plans for the improvement and increase of livestock breeds in Xing'an Province, setting targets to increase the number of new horse breeds—such as Arabian and Anglo-Arabian horses—to at least two million, introduce four million heads of Merino sheep, and increase cattle numbers to 2.7 million with new breeds.⁵¹ These plans to increase livestock production were materialized in the first five-year livestock development plan in 1936 and the second five-year livestock development plan in 1941.

In the first five-year livestock development plan, the Manchukuo government planned to invest 430 million yen from 1937 to 1941 to increase the number of sheep by 4.5 million, cattle by three million, and horses by 2.5 million.⁵² In 1941, the second five-year livestock development plan was established, with specific items and figures detailed in the table below. (Table 4)⁵³

Table 4. The Second Five-Year Livestock Development Plan in Manchukuo

Item	Unit	Quantity in 1941	Production Increase Target	Predicted Quantity in 1946
Cattle	Heads	2,423,000	521,000	2,944,000
Sheep	Heads	3,771,000	1,086,000	4,857,000

⁵¹ "Manshūkoku keizai kensetsu kōyō" 滿洲國經濟建設綱要, *Manshūkoku seifu kōhō* 滿洲國政府公報 (March 1, 1933).

⁵² "Manshū sangyō kaihatsu gonon keikaku kōyō" 滿洲產業開發五年計劃綱要 (January 25, 1937), in *Riben diguozhuyi qinhua dang'an xuanbian 14: dongbei jingji shouduo* 日本帝國主義侵華檔案選編 14: 東北經濟收奪, edited by Zhongguo di'er lishi dang'anguan 中國第二歷史檔案館 (Zhonghua shuju, 1991), 225-27.

⁵³ Dongbei wuzhi tiaojie weiyuan yanjiuzu 東北物質調節委員研究組, ed., *Dongbei jingji xiaocongshu (chanye)* 東北經濟小叢書 (產業) (Dongbei wuzi diaocha weiyuanhui, 1948), 34-36.

Wool	Tons	3,958	2,241	6,199
Cattle Hides	Pieces	360,000	64,000	424,000
Sheep Pelts	Pieces	1,595,000	395,000	1,990,000
Meat	Tons	160,987	38,173	199,160
Bone Meal	Tons	11,000	41,000	52,000
Pastureland	Hectares		13,000,000	13,000,000

To achieve these livestock production increase plans, the Manchukuo authorities implemented various policies in Xing'an Province. First, policies for the improvement and breeding of horses, cattle, and sheep were implemented. For horse breeding, six national horse breeding farms were established in regions such as Hailar, Jixin, An'anji, Zounan, Tongliao, and Linxi to cultivate superior breeds.⁵⁴ For cattle, breeding farms were established in Western Xing'an, Southern Xing'an, and Eastern Xing'an, with additional breeding stations in the pasturelands of Mongolian banners to work on cattle improvement.⁵⁵ For sheep, national sheep improvement stations were set up in Zhalantun in Solon Banner, Wangyemiao in the right-wing Khorchin Banner, and Linxi in Linxi County to improve sheep breeds.⁵⁶ Additionally, Manchukuo enforced laws such as the "Regulation for National Livestock and Sheep Breeding," the "Regulation for National Horse Breeding," and the "Horse Management Law" to strengthen state control over livestock breeds in Xing'an Province.⁵⁷

Furthermore, Manchukuo paid considerable attention to livestock disease prevention in Xing'an Province. While breed improvement was

⁵⁴ Tōa mondai kenkyūkai, *Mōko yōran*, 32; "Kokuritsu shubajō no meishō, ichi oyobi kankatsu kūiki" 國立種馬場之名稱, 位置及管轄區域, *Manshūkoku seifu kōhō* 滿州國政府公報 (September 12, 1939).

⁵⁵ Tōa mondai kenkyūkai, *Mōko yōran*, 135-36.

⁵⁶ "Kokuritsu men'yō kairyōjō no meishō, ichi oyobi kankatsu kūiki" 國立綿羊改良場之名稱, 位置及管轄區域, *Manshūkoku seifu kōhō* 滿州國政府公報 (December 27, 1938); Dongbei wuzhi tiaojie weiyuan yanjiuzi, *Dongbei jingji xiaocongshu (chanye)*, 43.

⁵⁷ Qi Baishun, *Riben qinzhan shiqi Xing'an sheng jingji tongzhi zhengce yanjiu*, 384-85.

essential for stable livestock management, disease prevention, particularly against contagious diseases, was also critical. The region had previously suffered from the Manchurian Plague in the early 1900s. Consequently, Manchukuo enacted laws such as the “Regulations for Livestock Epidemic Prevention,” the “Livestock Epidemic Prevention Law,” and the “Veterinarian Law,”⁵⁸ and dispatched epidemic prevention experts from Japan and various parts of Manchukuo to Xing'an Province to cultivate specialized personnel in disease prevention. Stations for epidemic prevention were also established in Chifeng, Linxi, Tongliao, and Qiqihar to strengthen epidemic prevention policies.⁵⁹

In summary, the resource policies in eastern Inner Mongolia during the Manchukuo period, focusing on forestry and livestock, were aimed at actively developing the region's resources as part of Manchukuo's and Japan's broader control strategy. Under the pretext of ‘advancement’ or ‘modernization,’ Manchukuo and Japan implemented resource development projects in Xing'an Province, introducing modern management and development systems to some extent. However, this process increasingly subsumed the economy and industry of eastern Inner Mongolia under the control of Manchukuo and its ‘mother country,’ Japan. This economic dependency of Xing'an Province was further intensified as Japan's transition into a total war state in the 1940s and ensuing Manchukuo's policies led to the strengthening of control over the northern frontier regions.

Strengthening Manchukuo's Control over the Northern Frontier and the Colonization of Xing'an Province's Economy

Through the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) and the Pacific War (1941-1945), Japan transitioned into a wartime economy. Manchukuo also became a crucial logistical base for Japan's continental expansion

⁵⁸ Qi Baishun, *Riben qinzhān shìqī Xīng'ānshēng jīngjì tóngzhì zhēngcè yánjiū*, 385.

⁵⁹ “Kachiku bōekisho no meisshō, ichi oyobi kankatsu kūiki” 家畜防疫所之名稱、位置及管轄區域, *Manshūkoku seifu kōhō* 滿洲國政府公報 (April 27, 1943).

policy. However, the situation in Manchukuo's northern frontier was quite unstable in the late 1930s. Particularly, with Japan forming the Axis alliance with Germany and Italy and increasing tensions with the Soviet Union, conflicts arose along the Soviet-Manchukuo border, ranging from the Heilongjiang-Ussuri River to the Tumen River. Notable incidents include the Battle of Lake Khasan (or Changkufeng Incident) in 1938 and the Battle of Khalkhin Gol (or Nomonhan Incident) on the Outer Mongolian border in 1939.⁶⁰

Starting in 1938, the Japanese Kwantung Army launched military provocations around Lake Khasan (or Changkufeng) along the Tumen River to stabilize the unstable northern and eastern borders of Manchukuo and also to assert dominance over the Soviet Union. Following this, in 1939, the Kwantung Army deployed massive forces to attack Soviet troops at Khalkhin Gol (or Nomonhan) on the Outer Mongolian border. However, these military operations in the Manchurian border areas resulted in significant setbacks due to the overwhelming superiority of the Soviet military. The defeats at Changkufeng and Nomonhan enhanced the sense of crisis among Manchukuo and Japanese authorities against the Soviet Union, leading to strengthened controls over the northern frontier of Manchukuo.

The Northern Frontier Development Plan was a policy devised in response to these crises in the northern frontier of Manchuria, aiming to strengthen control over the regions bordering the Soviet Union and Outer Mongolia. The term “northern frontier” of Manchukuo at that time referred to the areas from Andong Province and Mudanjiang Province to Heilongjiang Province, Hejiang Province, and Northern Xing'an Province.⁶¹ This region was strategically critical as it bordered the Soviet Union but was sparsely populated and far less urbanized than the central

⁶⁰ For the background of the border disputes between the Soviet Union and Japan, including the Battles of Changkufeng and Nomonhan, see Hiroaki Kuromiya, *Stalin, Japan, and the Struggle for Supremacy over China 1894-1945* (Routledge, 2023), 377-89.

⁶¹ Zhang Ning 張寧, “Weimanzhouguo ‘Beibian zhenxing jihua’ yanjiu” 偽滿洲國「北邊振興計劃」研究 (Master's Thesis, Changchun Normal University, 2021), 9-10.

areas of Manchukuo, such as Xinjing and Fengtian. Moreover, its transportation, communication, and industrial facilities were underdeveloped. Consequently, from the early days of Manchukuo's establishment in 1933, Manchukuo and the Japanese Kwantung Army formulated plans to fortify the northern frontier region as a 'border stronghold' and strengthen frontier control. The Northern Frontier Development Plan was a concrete realization of these ambitions to enhance control over the northern frontier of Manchukuo and Japan.

Manchukuo began to officially draft and implement the Northern Frontier Development Plan on June 1, 1939, immediately after the Battle of Lake Khasan between Japan and the Soviet Union. At that time, Manchukuo, preparing for total war and serving as a rear base for Japan's continental policy, pursued the Northern Frontier Development Plan alongside the "One Million Households Immigration Plan" and the "Five-Year Industrial Development Plan" starting in 1936. These three policies were known as the "Three Major National Policies" of Manchukuo, and they were closely interconnected. The Northern Frontier Development Plan, aimed at "national defense maintenance, livelihood security, and industrial development," was a three-year policy with a total budget of one billion yen. Of this amount, 200 million yen was funded by the Manchukuo government, 600 million yen by the South Manchuria Railway Company, and the remaining 200 million yen by Manchukuo's special corporations.⁶²

The Northern Frontier Development Plan of Manchukuo was implemented with a focus on two main aspects: strengthening national defense and developing industry. From a defense perspective, the plan included the reorganization of transportation and communication systems to facilitate military transport and rapid command structures, the fortification of border regions, and the enhancement of electricity and water supply facilities. As a result, military railways were constructed between

⁶² Zhang Tao 张陶, "Weimanzhouguo 'Beibian zhenxing jihua' qianxi" 伪满洲国「北边振兴计划」浅析, *Xibu xuekan* 西部學刊 (2020): 140.

Tumen and Dongning, Dongning and Haxi, Longjing and Hualong, and Suihua and Jiagedaqui. Additionally, 1,448 km of existing railways within Manchukuo were converted to double tracks. In the northern frontier, 7,000 km of new roads were built, 5,800 km of existing roads were repaired, and 74 military airports were established in the border areas. Furthermore, the Japanese Kwantung Army invested 100 million yen to construct thirty power plants in the northern frontier and established water supply companies to expand water supply facilities.⁶³

In addition to strengthening military infrastructure in the northern frontier, Manchukuo undertook administrative reorganization in the 1940s under the pretext of enhancing national defense. This reorganization led to the creation of two new provinces: Bei'an Province and Dong'an Province. Originally, Manchukuo had advocated for 'national harmony,' appointing Mongolians as Banner heads in Mongolian regions and Chinese as provincial governors in other regions of Manchuria. However, as the Northern Frontier Development Plan progressed, even local governors were replaced with Japanese appointees, further strengthening the control by the Japanese Kwantung Army. In 1943, the administrative reorganization included parts of Xing'an Province, merging the four subdivisions of Eastern, Western, Southern, and Northern Xing'an into Xing'an General Province. The Mongolian banner system in Xing'an Province was significantly debilitated, with Japanese officials effectively taking over local administration.⁶⁴

In terms of industrial development, the plan promoted 'development' only ostensibly. In practice, it reinforced 'control.' In Xing'an Province, following the implementation of the Northern Frontier Development Plan, the previous dual structure of industrial administration under the Ministry of Industry and the Department of Politics of Mongolia was integrated into such departments directly under the State Council as

⁶³ Zhang, "Weimanzhouguo 'Beibian zhenxing jihua' qianxi," 140.

⁶⁴ Zhang Ning 張寧, He Jian 赫堅, "Weiman shiqi 'Beibian zhenxing jihua' yu 'beibian' chengzhen de xingshuai" 偽滿時期「北邊振興計劃」與「北邊」城鎮的興衰, *Jilinsheng jiaoyu xueyuan xuebao* 吉林省教育學院學報 (2021): 164.

the Ministry of Transportation, Ministry of Economy, and Ministry of Agriculture. This reorganization significantly diminished the influence of Mongolian autonomous institutions and strengthened the control of the central Manchukuo government. Furthermore, Manchukuo had already promulgated various laws for industrial control from the 1930s, such as the "Outline of Economic Construction in Manchukuo," the "Rice Control Law," the "Livestock Trade Market Law," the "Trade Control Law," and the "Forest Rights Regulation Law." In the 1940s, additional laws such as the "Industrial Control Law" (1942), the "Mining Control Law" (1943), and the "Livestock and Livestock Products Control Law" (1944) were enacted to further tighten control over the industries and resources in Xing'an Province.

To strengthen control over the northern frontier region, Manchukuo also pursued the "One million Households Immigration Plan" along with the Northern Frontier Development Plan. This plan can be seen as a Japanese-style "immigration for border consolidation" policy. Japan's immigration policy in Manchuria gradually developed after the Russo-Japanese War, primarily around areas affiliated with the South Manchuria Railway Company. From 1932 to 1936, following the Manchurian Incident, Japan promoted armed immigration to Manchuria, resulting in the migration of 7,296 people from Japan to Manchuria.⁶⁵ Additionally, Korean immigration to Manchuria and eastern Inner Mongolia was actively promoted from the 1920s, led by the East Asia Development Company, with 1,300 Koreans migrating to eastern Inner Mongolia in 1921.⁶⁶ However, due to the harsh environment and climate of Manchuria and eastern Inner Mongolia, the scale of Japanese and Korean immigration and settlement remained small until the 1930s. To address this, the Japanese government announced the "One Million Households Immigration Plan" in April 1936, aiming to promote large-scale immigration of Japanese and Koreans to Manchuria and eastern Inner Mongolia.

⁶⁵ Jiang Niandong 姜念東, *Weimanzhouguo shi* 偽滿洲國史 (Jilin renmin chubanshe, 1980), 341.

⁶⁶ Yang, "Hanin-ui dongbu Naemonggol iju-reul tonghae bon Ilje-ui Manmong jeongchaeg (1931-1945)," 158.

The “One million Households Immigration Plan” for Manchuria and eastern Inner Mongolia was a project involving not only the Manchukuo government but also various Japanese government agencies and corporations such as the Ministry of the Army, the Ministry of Colonial Affairs, the South Manchuria Railway Company, and the Manchurian Colonization Company. The plan aimed to relocate people to northern Manchuria and eastern Inner Mongolia over the period of twenty years starting in 1937. The target areas for this immigration plan largely coincided with those of the Northern Frontier Development Plan, including regions along the Soviet border such as Mudanjiang Province, Dong’an Province, Andong Province, Sanjiang Province, Southern Xing’an Province, and Northern Xing’an Province. The Manchurian Colonization Company (hereafter referred to as Manshu Taku) led this plan, organizing the “Manchuria-Mongolia Development Corps”⁶⁷ to implement large-scale Japanese and Korean immigration to Manchuria and eastern Inner Mongolia.

The Manshu Taku established branch offices in various parts of northern Manchuria to manage the immigration policy, and subordinate units of the Manchuria-Mongolia Development Corps were dispatched to the northern frontier areas of Manchukuo to carry out development work. In Xing’an Province, the immigration policy focused on the Hulunbuir area, with a Manshu Taku branch office overseeing the Hulunbuir immigration policy established in Zhalantun, and subordinate offices set up in Hailar, Nagidun, and Chinggis Khan.⁶⁸ The number of Manchuria-Mongolia Development Corps units and their personnel dispatched to Eastern and Northern Xing’an Province are as follows (Table 5).⁶⁹

⁶⁷ For comprehensive research on the Manchuria-Mongolia development groups, see Futamatsu Hiroki 二松啓紀, *Imin-tachi no “Manshū”*: *Manmō kaitakudan no kyo to jitsu* 移民たちの「満州」: 滿蒙開拓團の虚と實 (Heibonsha, 2015); Kato Kiyofumi 加藤聖文, *Manmō kaitakudan: kokusaku no ryoshū* 滿蒙開拓團: 國策の虜囚 (Iwanami shoten, 2023).

⁶⁸ Xu Tao 徐濤, “Riwei zai Hulunbei’er diqu de zhimin tongzhi” 日偽在呼倫貝爾地區的殖民統治 (Master’s Thesis, Inner Mongolia University, 2015), 24.

⁶⁹ Xu, “Riwei zai Hulunbei’er diqu de zhimin tongzhi,” 24.

Table 5. Status of Manchu-Mongolian Pioneer Groups in Eastern and Northern Xing'an Province around 1945

	Eastern Xing'an Province	Northern Xing'an Province	Subtotal
General Pioneer Group	27	2	29
Volunteer Pioneer Group	3	2	5
Volunteer Training Center	1	0	1
Women's Dormitory	1	0	1
National Service Farm	3	0	3
Registered Personnel	6,967	734	7,701

The primary activities of the Manchuria-Mongolia Development Corps involved recruiting immigrants from Japan and Korea to cultivate land and increase food production in the northern frontier areas of Manchukuo. Koreans, in particular, had experiences with rice farming in eastern Inner Mongolia since the 1920s, and they participated in rice field reclamation as part of the "One Million Households Immigration Plan" within Xing'an Province.⁷⁰ By the late 1930s, however, the focus of the Manchuria-Mongolia Development Corps shifted from land reclamation to military and labor conscription with the outbreak of the Pacific War in 1941. Volunteer military units and training camps were organized in Xing'an Province, and many young Japanese and Korean immigrants were conscripted and dispatched to the front lines.

The series of policies to strengthen control over the northern frontier by Manchukuo and Japan transformed the border society in Xing'an Province. The immigration policies of the Manchuria-Mongolia Development Corps led to urbanization in some parts of Xing'an Province. A notable example is Hailar in the Hulunbuir region. Hailar's history began as a fortress built in 1732 during the Qing Dynasty's Yongzheng period.⁷¹ It became an

⁷⁰ For the migration and irrigation farming of Koreans in the Xing'an region, see Yang, "Hanin-ui dongbu Naemonggol iju-reul tonghae bon Ilje-ui Manmong jeongchaeg (1931-1945)," 157-64.

⁷¹ Hulunbei'ermeng shizhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 呼倫貝爾盟史志編纂委員會, ed., *Hulunbei'ermeng*

area under the jurisdiction of the Chinese Eastern Railway in 1902 and was later administered by the Heilongjiang Commissioner under the Republic of China in the 1920s, establishing the county of Hulun.⁷² After Manchukuo's establishment in 1931 and the Japanese Kwantung Army's takeover of the Chinese Eastern Railway, Hailar came under Manchukuo and Japanese control. Manchukuo abolished the Hulun County established by the Republic of China and established Hailar City, developing a new urban area.⁷³ Through this process, Hailar grew into a new hub for Manchukuo's control over Xing'an Province and the northern frontier.

The urbanization of Hailar during the Manchukuo period was significantly influenced by the influx of immigrants from Japan and Korea. From 1933 to 1940, the population of Northern Xing'an Province increased by 45,439, reflecting a 73% growth rate in ten years. Hailar, the central area of Northern Xing'an Province, also saw a substantial population increase.⁷⁴ Before the establishment of Manchukuo, Hailar's total population in 1930 was 7,011, with nine Japanese, four Koreans, 3,132 Chinese, and 3,866 foreigners. By 1934, after Manchukuo was established, the population increased by approximately 2,900 to 9,780, with the Japanese and Korean immigrant populations growing to 1,036 and 150, respectively.⁷⁵ This population growth during the Manchukuo period indicates that Hailar developed as a colonial hub for Manchukuo and Japan in eastern Inner Mongolia.

Originally, Xing'an Province was predominantly inhabited by Mongolian nomads. However, from the late 1930s, as Manchukuo's policies to strengthen control over the northern frontier were implemented and various

zhi (*shang ce*) 呼倫貝爾盟志 (上冊) (Neimenggu wenhua chubanshe, 1999), 25.

⁷² Hulunbei'ermeng shizhi bianzuan weiyuanhui, *Hulunbei'ermeng zhi*, 26.

⁷³ Hulunbei'ermeng shizhi bianzuan weiyuanhui, *Hulunbei'ermeng zhi*, 27.

⁷⁴ Li Qiang 李强, *Weiman shiqi dongbei diqu renkou yanjiu* 伪满时期东北地区人口研究 (Guangming ribao chubanshe, 2012), 90-91.

⁷⁵ Wang Shengjin 王勝今, *Weiman shiqi Zhongguo dongbei diqu yimin yanjiu: jianlun Riben diguo-zhuyi shishi de yimin qinlüe* 伪满时期中国东北地区移民研究: 兼論日本帝國主義實施的移民侵略 (Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2005), 121.

“development corps” comprising Japanese and Korean immigrants became active, agricultural land reclamation was carried out. In the Hulunbuir region, 2.09 million mu (畝) of land were cultivated in 1942.⁷⁶ However, the grain produced from this reclaimed land in Xing'an Province was strictly controlled by the authorities of Manchukuo and Japan and was primarily used as war supplies for Japan. The Manchukuo government promulgated the “Grain Control Law” in 1940 to control and manage the distribution of thirteen types of crops produced in Xing'an Province, and from 1939, it implemented a policy of forcibly purchasing agricultural products at low prices. The situation regarding agricultural product shipments from Xing'an Province in the 1940s is as follows (Table 6).⁷⁷

Table 6. Shipment Status of Agricultural Products in Xing'an Province (1940-1943, Unit: Tons)

Year	Southern Xing'an Province	Eastern Xing'an Province	Western Xing'an Province	Northern Xing'an Province
1940	289,994	23,305	18,086	
1941	185,175	25,486	22,356	4,062
1942	299,080	40,350	35,130	3,500
1943	323,409	44,746	48,046	8,535

As shown in Table 6, the shipment volume of agricultural products from Xing'an Province gradually increased toward the end of the Pacific War. In Southern and Eastern Xing'an, the shipment volumes were higher due to the larger reclaimed areas compared to other regions of Xing'an Province. Northern Xing'an, with more nomadic lands and forests, had relatively lower volumes. However, by around 1943, a significant amount of agricultural products was requisitioned even from Northern

⁷⁶ Hulunbei'ermeng shizhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 呼倫貝爾盟史志編纂委員會, ed., *Hulunbei'ermeng zhi (zhong ce)* 呼倫貝爾盟志 (中冊) (Neimenggu wenhua chubanshe, 1999), 872.

⁷⁷ “Shōbetsu shukkaryō tōkeihyō (1940-1943)” 省別出荷量統計表 (1940-1943), in *Riben diguozhuyi qinhua dang'an xuanbian 14: dongbei jingji shouduo* 日本帝國主義侵華檔案選編 14: 東北經濟收奪, edited by Zhongguo di'er lishi dang'anguan 中國第二歷史檔案館 (Zhonghua shuju, 1991), 590-91.

Xing'an, indicating the intensified material requisition by Manchukuo and Japan.

The series of policies implemented by Manchukuo and Japan in the 1940s to strengthen control over the northern frontier in response to the Soviet threat led to the subjugation of the Xing'an region to the wartime regime of the Manchukuo government and Japan. While it is undeniable that these policies brought about some social changes in Xing'an Province, such as an influx of population into previously sparsely populated areas and the growth of cities like Hailar, the control exerted by Manchukuo and Japan over Xing'an's society and economy from the late 1930s resulted in the region's transformation from a unique area of Mongolian autonomy to a logistical base and 'colony' for Manchukuo and Japan. This situation persisted until August 1945, when Japan was defeated in the Pacific War and Manchukuo came to an end.

Conclusion

Ishihara Kanji of the Japanese Kwantung Army, known as one of the architects of Manchukuo, mentioned the economic value of the Hulunbuir and Greater Khingan regions in a document titled "Opinions on the Manchuria-Mongolia Problem (滿蒙問題私見)" written in May 1931 before the establishment of Xing'an Province:

Our country (i.e., Japan) must counter the northern threat from Russia as well as the southern threats from the United States and Britain. Therefore, the Hulunbuir and Greater Khingan areas hold particularly important strategic value. It is extremely difficult for Russia to advance eastwards while maintaining control over northern Manchuria, and it is also difficult to counter this with the power of Manchuria and Mongolia alone.⁷⁸

⁷⁸ Ishihara Kanji 石原莞爾, "Manmō mondai shaken" 滿蒙問題私見, *Nika nichu* 二課日誌 (1931), 99-101.

As Ishihara's statement indicates, for Japan, the Xing'an area was a critical frontier region to counter the eastward advance of Russia. This perception heavily influenced the establishment and governance of Xing'an Province following the creation of Manchukuo, as reflected in the resource development and industrial policies discussed throughout this paper.

Since the mid-nineteenth century, the Xing'an region had attracted attention from various empires due to its abundant forest, livestock, mineral, and aquatic resources. Japan, which actively pursued the Manchuria-Mongolia Policy after the Russo-Japanese War, also focused on the economic and defense value of this region. Even before the establishment of Manchukuo, Japan claimed special rights to the region's mines and forests. Following the establishment of Manchukuo in 1931, both Manchukuo and Japan actively developed Xing'an's resources through the central government, local government in Xing'an, and special companies. They managed the region's significant forest and livestock resources through various laws and regulations.

In Xing'an, the resource control policies of Manchukuo and Japan were further intensified by the series of control policies for the northern frontier in the 1940s. As Japan entered a wartime regime and border disputes with the Soviet Union increased in the late 1930s, Manchukuo and Japan implemented policies such as the Northern Frontier Development Plan, Industrial Development Plans, and the One million Households Immigration Plan in Xing'an Province. These policies aimed to strengthen the defense of Manchukuo's northern frontier and control various industries to establish a stable rear base. Consequently, these policies further subordinated Xing'an region economy to the central Manchukuo government and Japan, effectively transforming Xing'an into a colonial base for Japan.

Manchukuo's industrial policies in Xing'an Province highlight the duality of Japan's policies towards eastern Inner Mongolia. While promoting slogans of 'harmony' and allowing 'autonomy' for Mongolians, Japan gradually reduced the scope of Mongolian autonomy and strengthened economic control over resources. Unlike the Mongolian Autonomous Government in western Inner Mongolia, Xing'an Province was in-

corporated into Manchukuo's territory, making it politically and economically dependent on the central government of Manchukuo and Japan due to its strategic value as a border area with the Soviet Union. The governance of Xing'an Province under Manchukuo reveals the reality and limitations of Japan's Mongolian autonomy policy.

Furthermore, the governance and industrial policies in Xing'an during the Manchukuo period can be seen as part of the broader trend of "strengthening state power" over eastern Inner Mongolia that began in the late Qing period. From the mid-nineteenth century, the Qing Empire shifted from a policy of separation and indirect rule over Mongolia to promoting Han Chinese immigration and converting Mongolian pastures into farmland. The Republic of China maintained this policy, leading to increased Han Chinese immigration and land reclamation in Inner Mongolia, which fueled dissatisfaction among Mongolian nomads and sparked the Inner Mongolian independence movement in the 1920s. Manchukuo initially advocated separation from the Qing's and Republic of China's policies by promoting 'Mongolian autonomy' and prohibiting Han Chinese from cultivating pasturelands, thus gaining support from eastern Inner Mongolians. However, as Manchukuo transitioned towards a total war state in the 1940s, its policies shifted from 'autonomy' to 'control,' leading to the collective immigration and land reclamation by Japanese and Koreans in Xing'an Province. Such return to the policies of state control shows a degree of continuity in the governance of eastern Inner Mongolia from the late Qing down to the Manchukuo period. In this sense, Manchukuo's policies in Xing'an Province reflect both the aspirations and limitations of Japan's broader colonial ambitions in eastern Inner Mongolia.

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NORTHEAST ASIAN HISTORY FOUNDATION

Tracing the Evolution and Current Landscape of Korean Studies in Russia's Far East: The Case of Far Eastern Federal University

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Abstract

In 1900, the Oriental Institute in Vladivostok established the first Department of Korean Language in Russia and the world, marking the beginning of Russian Korean studies scholarship. Within a few years, the foundation of the Far Eastern School of Practical Korean Studies was firmly established. However, the turbulent events of the 20th century, including Stalin's repressions, severely disrupted its development, resulting in a harsh interruption of this scholarly tradition. Despite these challenges, Korean studies training was revived in Vladivostok in 1975. Over the past five decades, it has achieved significant progress, culminating in the establishment of the dynamic Department of Korean Studies and the Center for Korean Studies at Far Eastern Federal University (FEFU).

This study aims to examine the 125-year history and current state of Korean Studies at FEFU. The research draws upon materials from *Izvestiya Vostochnogo Instituta* (Bulletin of the Oriental Institute), the works of professors instrumental in reviving Oriental Studies education in Vladivostok, and the contributions of distinguished graduates who have advanced the field through their teaching at FEFU. The analysis of the current state is based on Vadim Akulenko's personal materials, interviews with the head of the Department of Korean Studies, and official documents available on the FEFU website.

Keywords

Korean Studies, Korean Studies Education, Far Eastern Federal University (FEFU), Vladivostok, Oriental Institute, Center for Korean Studies, Department of Korean Studies

Tracing the Evolution and Current Landscape of Korean Studies in Russia's Far East: The Case of Far Eastern Federal University

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Introduction

In 2025, Far Eastern Federal University (FEFU) will celebrate several significant anniversaries related to Korean studies. Among these is the 125th anniversary of the establishment of the world's first Department of Korean Language at the Oriental Institute, marking the inception of higher education in the Russian Far East. FEFU proudly upholds the traditions established by the Oriental Institute, which laid a strong foundation for the development of the Vladivostok Center for Korean Studies.

Over the past 125 years, the Oriental Institute, Far Eastern State University (FESU), and FEFU have collectively trained hundreds of specialists in Korean language, culture, economics, and literature. On September 4, 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, a commemorative plaque was unveiled at the historic Oriental Institute building on Pushkinskaya Street to honor this remarkable milestone.

Another significant milestone was the 50th anniversary of the resumption of Korean language instruction in Vladivostok following its interruption during the Great Purge. In 1975, the first cohort of students was admitted to the Korean Philology Division within the Oriental Faculty of FESU, which later was transitioned to FEFU in 2011.

Figure 1. Commemorative plaque at the historic Oriental Institute building on Pushkinskaya Street, marking the establishment of the world's first Department of Korean Language at the Oriental Institute (Photo by Vadim Akulenko)



Additionally, on October 2, 2025, FEFU will commemorate the 30th anniversary of the ceremonial opening of the Higher College for Korean Studies (HCKS FESU). This achievement was the result of a successful partnership between FESU and “Kohap Group,” one of the Republic of Korea’s largest financial and industrial groups at the time, led by Chairman Jang Chihyeok. His father, Jang Dobin, was a prominent Korean independence activist, scholar, and journalist who spent several years in Vladivostok. The establishment of the college represented the first educational investment project in the history of diplomatic and cultural relations between Russia and the Republic of Korea.

This study aims to explore the stages of development of Korean studies in Vladivostok and evaluate its current state. Research on the early stages draws on materials from *Izvestiya Vostochnogo Instituta* (Bulle-

tin of the Oriental Institute).¹ The analysis of the current state is based on the materials personally collected by Vadim Akulenko, interviews with the head of the Department of Korean Studies, and official documents available on the FEFU website.

The study also incorporates the works of professors who played pivotal roles in the revival of Oriental and Korean studies in Vladivostok during the second half of the 20th century, including V. M. Serov and V. V. Verkholyak. Additionally, it references the contributions of distinguished graduates of FESU, such as A. A. Khamatova and I. A. Tolstokulakov, who have dedicated their careers to advancing Oriental studies education in Vladivostok. The emergence and development of Korean studies are further contextualized through the works of L. R. Kontsevich, while the biography of the first Russian Koreanist, G. V. Podstavin, has been meticulously documented by A. A. Khisamutdinov.

Pioneering the Field: The World's First Department of Korean Language

In October 1899, the Oriental Institute was established in Vladivostok, one of the most remote yet rapidly developing cities of the Russian Empire. It quickly became a prominent center for the study of East Asian countries, including Korea. The primary mission of the Institute was to train specialists to support the development of relations with Asian nations such as China, Japan, and Korea.

Students at the Oriental Institute received their education within four divisions: Chinese-Manchurian, Chinese-Mongolian, Chinese-Japanese, and Chinese-Korean. The four-year curriculum provided a comprehensive education that included instruction in Chinese and English, as well as one of the four Oriental languages. In addition, students attended courses on the history, geography, and ethnography of East Asia, studied

¹ *Izvestiya Vostochnogo instituta* (Bulletin of the Oriental Institute) was the official publication and scientific journal of the Oriental Institute, published in Vladivostok from 1900 to 1921.

the economic and political conditions of Asian countries, and acquired knowledge in fields such as economics, law, and other relevant disciplines.²

The Oriental Institute was founded by Professor A. M. Pozdnev (1851–1920), a distinguished specialist in Mongolian and Manchu studies and a graduate of St. Petersburg University. Professor Pozdnev served as the Institute's first director. In 1903, he was briefly succeeded by his brother, D. M. Pozdnev (1865–1937), a noted Japanologist who held the position of director from 1904 to 1905. Following the revolutionary events of 1905 and continuing until 1917, the directorship was held by Professor A. V. Rudakov (1871–1949), an expert in Manchu and Chinese studies.

The Oriental Institute was conceived as a pioneering educational institution, unprecedented in Russia and other countries. As A. M. Pozdnev emphasized during a conference meeting on August 18, 1900, the teaching of Eastern languages should be guided by a practical orientation. Furthermore, students were to be thoroughly acquainted with the natural, economic, and legal conditions of the East Asian states they studied.³

Thus, Oriental studies in Vladivostok initially adopted a practical orientation, with a strong emphasis on fieldwork in neighboring countries such as Mongolia, China, Korea, and Japan. For instance, the inaugural issue of *Izvestiya Vostochnogo Instituta* highlighted the expectation that professors and instructors at the Institute should undertake educational and research internships in the countries they studied at least once every three years. To facilitate this initiative, the Institute sought for additional funding from the Governor-General of Priamurye.⁴

Regarding travel to Korea, it was specifically noted that such jour-

² V. M. Serov, "Stanovlenie Vostochnogo instituta (1899-1909 gg.)," *Izvestiya Vostochnogo instituta* 1 (1994): 16.

³ V. M. Serov, "Protokoly zasedaniy Konferentsiy Vostochnogo instituta za 1900-1901 akademicheskii god," *Izvestiya Vostochnogo instituta* 2, no. 1 (1901): 45.

⁴ Serov, "Protokoly 1901," 11.

neys could only be undertaken on horseback, requiring the hiring of drivers and guides. The estimated total cost for such an educational trip was 400 rubles, with the expectation that a professor from the Oriental Institute would cover a distance of no less than 2,000 li (approximately 1,000 kilometers) round-trip (*Izvestiya Vostochnogo Instituta*, 9-10). In contrast, travel to China was recommended by water transport, with inland travel utilizing horse-drawn vehicles. Depending on the destination, the cost for such trips ranged from 350 to 530 rubles.⁵ Travel to Japan also required water transport; however, in Japan, transportation could be conducted by train, rickshaw, or horse-drawn vehicles, with total expenses estimated between 500 and 600 rubles.⁶

The Department of Korean Language at the Oriental Institute was led by Professor G. V. Podstavin (1875–1924), who is recognized as the founder of academic Korean studies in Russia and the world's first head of a Korean language department. He held this position from its establishment until 1921 when he was forced to leave his homeland.

Podstavin studied Mongolian, Chinese, and Manchu languages at Saint Petersburg Imperial University under the mentorship of distinguished scholars such as Professors V. P. Vasiliev and A. M. Pozdnev. After graduating with honors from the university's Oriental Faculty, Podstavin briefly interned in Korea from October 1899 to May 1900 before relocating to Vladivostok at the invitation of A. M. Pozdnev.⁷

The history of Russian academic Korean studies truly began with Podstavin's appointment as a professor in the Department of Korean Language at the Oriental Institute. Prior to this, the Korean language had not been taught as part of a separate division's curriculum or as a mandatory discipline anywhere in Russia. Since 1897, it had only been offered as an elective for students at Saint Petersburg Imperial University.

It is reasonable to infer that, despite the innate talent of the young

⁵ Serov, "Protokoly 1901," 8.

⁶ Serov, "Protokoly 1901," 11.

⁷ V. M. Serov, "Protokoly zasedaniy Konferentsiy Vostochnogo instituta za 1901-1902 akademicheskii god," *Izvestiya Vostochnogo instituta* 3, no. 5 (1902): 163.

graduate, Podstavin's brief stay in Seoul could not have allowed him to achieve a level of proficiency in Korean sufficient for practical teaching. Significant support in developing practical Korean language skills—both for the students of the Oriental Institute and for Podstavin himself—was provided by the Korean lecturer Han Gilmyeong. In recommending Han for this position, Podstavin noted that Han came from an ancient aristocratic family and had studied classical Chinese from the age of five. Beginning in 1896, Han studied the Russian language for three years at the Russian Language School in Seoul. Podstavin remarked that the school administration had recommended Han as its best student and as an ideal assistant for his own study of the Korean language.

Han Gilmyeong subsequently accompanied Podstavin on his travels through northern Korea and later joined him in Vladivostok, where he continued to contribute to the study and teaching of the Korean language. Podstavin particularly praised Han's "extensive knowledge of Chinese and Korean literature, fully worthy of the position of lecturer in the Department of Korean Language."⁸

Unfortunately, Han Gilmyeong's health prevented him from holding his position for long, and in 1901, he was succeeded by Tae Wonson (1901–1903). Tae Wonson, also from a noble Korean family in Seoul, had graduated from the Seoul School of Foreign Languages that same year.⁹ In 1903, Tae Wonson was succeeded by Yun Byeongji (1903–1905). However, from 1905 to 1908, Han Gilmyeong returned to his position at the Oriental Institute.¹⁰ Tragically, overwhelmed by the humiliation of his homeland's plight, he took his own life within the walls of the institute on February 12, 1908.¹¹ Subsequently, the position of Korean language lecturer was held by Kim Byunghak, the father of the future So-

⁸ Serov, "Protokoly 1902," 12-13.

⁹ Serov, "Protokoly 1902," 24-26.

¹⁰ L. R. Kontsevich, "O razvitií traditsionnogo koreevedeniya v tsarskoy Rossii," accessed September 2, 2024, <https://koryo-saram.site/o-razvitií-traditsionnogo-koreevedeniya-v-tsarskoj-rossii>.

¹¹ "Otchet o sostoyanii Vostochnogo instituta za 1909 g. s istoricheskim ocherkom ego desyatiletney deyatelnosti," *Izvestiya Vostochnogo instituta* 11, Appendix 1 (1910): 3-4.

viet intelligence officer and writer R. N. Kim.¹²

Upon assuming leadership of Russia's first Department of Korean Language, Podstavin faced an immense challenge. He not only needed to design a curriculum for teaching the Korean language and other Korean studies disciplines for the first time but also had to independently create teaching materials. To address this, Podstavin promptly raised the issue with the institute's administration of acquiring printing fonts from a Japanese company. The plan was to print texts in both *Hangeul* and a mixed script incorporating Chinese characters.¹³ Additionally, from his initial journey to Korea, Professor Podstavin brought back a substantial collection of Korean books—137 pieces in 819 volumes—and one map of eight copies.¹⁴

The curriculum for studying the Korean language, developed by Podstavin during his first year as head of the Department of Korean Language, began with a theoretical introduction. This introductory section covered existing knowledge on the origins of the Korean language, the influence of Chinese on its development, and the history of Korean script.

The main part of the course followed the classical method, focusing on the study of Korean grammar and syntax. Practical exercises included reading texts from *Cours d'exercices gradués*, included as a supplement to *Grammaire coréenne, composée par les Missionnaires en Corée* (Yokohama, 1881), and excerpts from selected Korean books. They were also to memorize conversational phrases from *A Korean Manual, or Phrase-book* by James Scott (Seoul: English Church Mission Press, 1893), and *Korean Grammatical Forms, being a Manual of Korean Verb Forms* by James S. Gale (Seoul: Trilingual Press, 1894). In addition to these exercises, students practiced Korean calligraphy and read Korean texts written in Chinese characters, further enhancing their linguistic and cultural

¹² "Otchet o sostoyanii," 3-4.

¹³ Serov, "Protokoly 1901," 14.

¹⁴ Serov, "Protokoly 1901," 16.

understanding.¹⁵

Although Korean studies were still in their infancy at the time, Professor Podstavin made significant efforts to compile essential publications for teaching the Korean language. He presented these works as a list of recommended editions for study:

1. Baird, Annie L. A. *Fifty Helps for the Beginners in the Use of the Korean Language*.
2. Gale, J. *Korean Grammatical Forms being a Manual of Korean Verb Forms*. Seoul, 1894.
3. *Korean-English Dictionary*. Yokohama, 1897.
4. *Grammait e coréenne, composée par les missionnaires de Corée*. Yokohama, 1881.
5. *Dictionnaire coréen-français par les missionnaires de Corée*. Yokohama, 1880.
6. *Korean Words and Phrases by Hodge*. Seoul, 1897.
7. Imbault-Huart, C. *Manuel de la langue coréenne parlée*. Paris, 1889.
8. Ross, John. *Korean Speech, with Grammar and Vocabulary*. 1882.
9. *Corean Primer; being Lessons in Corean*. Shanghai, 1877.
10. Scott, James. *Corean Manual, or Phrase-book with Introductory Grammar*. Seoul, 1893.
11. *English-Corean Dictionary*. Corea, 1891.
12. Underwood, H. G. *An Introduction to the Korean Spoken Language*. Shanghai, 1890.
13. *A Concise Dictionary of the Korean Language*. Shanghai, 1890.¹⁶

Subsequently, Podstavin not only expanded this list but also independently developed an extensive series of textbooks on the Korean language. Within the first three years of leading the department, and alongside the ongoing development of the curriculum, he prepared essential

¹⁵ Serov, "Protokoly 1901," 34-36.

¹⁶ Serov, "Protokoly 1901," 36.

materials to ensure its successful implementation. These included *Korean Chrestomathy* in two parts (1901), *A Guide to the Practical Study of the Korean Language* (1901), as well as several collections on colloquial Korean (1902), mixed Korean-Chinese script (1902), and samples of official documents (1903). In later years, Podstavin continued his efforts, compiling *Chrestomathy of literary Korean* (1905), a collection of contemporary Korean satirical works (1907), and a manual on the study of the official style of modern Korean (1908).¹⁷

Although Podstavin had to prioritize teaching, he successfully systematized an extensive body of lexical and grammatical material on the Korean language, which he had independently compiled in his textbooks. The Russian transcription system for the Korean language that he developed was adopted for use in Russian cartography and in publications by the Academy of Sciences until the 1930s.¹⁸

The training program for the first Korean Studies specialists, much like contemporary programs, was not limited to language instruction but also encompassed the study of specialized disciplines. According to data published in *Izvestiya Vostochnogo Instituta*, Professor Podstavin developed and taught courses such as “The Political Organization of Korea” and “The Trade and Industrial Activities of Contemporary Korea.” These courses combined lectures with practical components, including the analysis of specific texts from Korean newspapers, legislative documents, and significant trade records.¹⁹

In addition to specialized language courses, students at the Oriental Institute attended general lectures on Oriental studies. First-year students participated in a foundational course on the geography and ethnography of China, Korea, and Japan, while second and third-year students took a course on the modern history of these countries. The history of China

¹⁷ A. A. Khasamutdinov, “Osnovatel’ shkoly koreevedeniya G. V. Podstavin,” *Problemy dal’nego vostoka* 1 (2015): 107.

¹⁸ Kontsevich, “O razvitii traditsionnogo koreevedeniya v tsarskoy Rossii,” <https://koryo-saram.site/o-razvitii-traditsionnogo-koreevedeniya-v-tsarskoj-rossii>.

¹⁹ Serov, “Protokoly 1902,” 209-10.

was taught with particular depth, beginning with the rise of the Manchus and their conquest of China. The history of Korea was studied starting from the events of the late sixteenth century, whereas the focus on Japan centered primarily on the transformations of the nineteenth century following the Meiji Restoration, with a preliminary analysis of the conditions for these changes in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.²⁰ Fourth-year students further expanded their knowledge by attending lectures on the commercial geography of China, Korea, and Japan.²¹

Comprehensive training of well-rounded Oriental studies practitioners would have been impossible without the inclusion of additional subjects such as political economy, international law, the political structures of Russia and major Western European powers, civil and commercial law, judicial procedures, merchandise studies, accounting, and theology.²²

Given the intensity of this program, it is evident that, with proper diligence, a student could graduate as a fully-fledged specialist by the fourth year of study. However, as previously noted, a distinctive feature of the Vladivostok Center for Oriental Studies was its emphasis on practical training. A key component of this education was the so-called “excursions” to the countries of the languages being studied, conducted during the summer holidays and supported by dedicated financial aid. For instance, during the summer holidays of the 1901-1902 academic year, seven second and third-year students from the Chinese-Korean division were sent to Korea—four to Seoul, and each of the rest to Busan, Nampo, and Incheon.²³ After these trips, students prepared detailed reports, the best of which were published in *Izvestiya Vostochnogo Instituta*.

These excursions were not limited to students; professors at the Oriental Institute were also required to refine and update their expertise through similar trips to East Asian countries. *Izvestiya Vostochnogo*

²⁰ Serov, “Protokoly 1902,” 230-42.

²¹ Serov, “Protokoly 1902,” 227-30.

²² Serov, “Protokoly 1902,” 284.

²³ Serov, “Protokoly 1902,” 185.

Instituta provides details about the preparations for Podstavin's second trip to Korea. Following instructions from the Institute's director, A. M. Pozdneev, Podstavin was tasked not only with deepening his practical proficiency in the Korean language but also with gathering additional information on Korea's political organization, trade and industrial activities, administrative structure, legal regulations, and other aspects that may have been overlooked during his initial visit to Seoul.²⁴

With regard to the Korean language, Professor Podstavin was given specific directives. He was to focus primarily on familiarizing himself with the spoken language of both the common people and the intelligentsia. Additionally, he was instructed to study the official language in detail, including various forms of business correspondence. Another key objective was to collect essential literature to expand the Institute's library resources.²⁵

Although Seoul—being the capital of Korea, home to its main administrative institutions, and a hub for foreigners and local intelligentsia—was chosen as the primary location for Professor Podstavin's internship, he was also instructed to undertake several trips throughout the country. These excursions were designed to provide him with a more comprehensive understanding of contemporary Korea's economic development and to collect additional geographical and ethnographic information.²⁶ Specific recommendations were made regarding the routes of these trips: (1) from Seoul to Gaesong, continuing through Hwanghae Province to Pyongyang and Nampo; and (2) from Mokpo to Gwangju, then through Jinju to the ports of Masan and Busan.²⁷

Given his teaching responsibilities, it was impractical for Podstavin to be absent for an extended period, so the duration of the trip was limited to five months, from May 1 to September 1, 1902. He was to spend three months in Seoul and the remaining two months traveling around Korea. A substantial sum of 900 silver rubles was allocated for this trip, a

²⁴ Serov, "Protokoly 1902," 164.

²⁵ Serov, "Protokoly 1902," 165.

²⁶ Serov, "Protokoly 1902," 165.

²⁷ Serov, "Protokoly 1902," 166.

considerable amount at the time.²⁸

Podstavin's efforts were not confined solely to academic pursuits; he also made significant contributions to the cultural and educational development of Koreans in Primorsky Krai. For instance, from 1914 to 1916, he chaired a commission tasked with establishing schools for Korean children in the Amur region. During the turbulent years of 1919 to 1921, he served as the first rector of Far Eastern State University, the successor institution to the Oriental Institute. However, with the establishment of the Soviet Union, Podstavin was forced to emigrate, traveling through Korea to Harbin, where he passed away in 1924.

Another prominent scholar associated with the Oriental Institute was N. V. Kyuner (1877–1955), a distinguished expert on Korea and other Far Eastern countries. Kyuner taught general courses covering the history, historiography, geography, and cultural history of East and Central Asian countries, which were a core part of the curriculum for all Oriental studies students. His works remain part of the golden treasury of Russian Oriental studies. His contributions to the development of the Oriental studies program and the training of specialists in Korean studies have been briefly outlined earlier.

The development of Korean studies at the Oriental Institute was inextricably linked to its rich library, which began to take shape in the institute's early years. The library's structure was formalized after the Russo-Japanese War, evolving into a specialized repository of Oriental studies texts. It also included materials on political economy, accounting, encyclopedias, dictionaries across various disciplines, and Russian periodicals, although these were comparatively fewer in number.

Following the Russo-Japanese War, the library was divided into the following sections: Russian-foreign, Chinese, Japanese, Manchu, Korean, Mongolian, Tibetan, periodicals, bibliographic, and cartographic. While the Chinese section was the largest one, the Korean section was notable for its unique contents. It housed a collection of xylographic and

²⁸ Serov, "Protokoly 1902," 166.

printed books, including the renowned encyclopedia *Munheon Bigo*,²⁹ most of which had been collected by Podstavin. Out of 911 titles in the Korean section, 456 were acquired through his efforts. The collection predominantly comprised materials for studying conversational Korean, as well as collections of fairy tales, songs, stories, and novels, primarily published in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It also included numerous Korean translations of Japanese textbooks on subjects such as mathematics, geography, and history. Additionally, the library featured a complete collection of publications from the Russian Orthodox Mission in Seoul and various materials on Korean reforms.³⁰

The holdings of the Oriental Institute's library were regularly replenished, but frequent reorganizations were required due to a lack of funds. After the reorganization of the Oriental Institute in 1920, many rare manuscripts were transferred to the library of FESU. Later, some Korean-language books were moved from FESU to the Far Eastern International Pedagogical Institute (later renamed the Korean Pedagogical Institute), which was established in Vladivostok in 1931. However, following the closure of the institute in September 1937 due to the deportation of Koreans from the Far Eastern region, the surviving Korean collection was relocated to Kazakhstan along with the displaced Korean community.³¹

The Korean Studies program in Vladivostok persisted until July 1939, when FESU was closed, and the Oriental Studies programs were dissolved. This marked a devastating blow to Far Eastern Oriental studies: the field suffered a significant depletion of human resources, with many professors facing repression, and its unique library collection was almost entirely destroyed.

²⁹ This encyclopedia of Korean traditional culture was initially compiled as *Dongguk munheon bigo* 동국문헌비고 in 100 volumes during the 46th year of King Yeongjo's reign (1770). It was finally expanded and published in 1903, the seventh year of Emperor Gwangmu of the Korean Empire. The complete work consists of 250 volumes in 50 books and is currently housed in institutions such as the National Library of Korea.

³⁰ Serov, "Protokoly 1902," 27-28.

³¹ S. Yu. Vradii, "Koreyskie ksilografiy biblioteki DVO RAN," *Izvestiya Vostochnogo instituta* 1, no. 41 (2019): 70.

A Renaissance of Scholarship: The Revival of Korean Studies in Vladivostok

The study of the Korean language in Vladivostok resumed 36 years later in 1975 when the Academic Council of FESU decided to reintroduce Korean Studies programs. This decision led to the creation of two new divisions within the Faculty of Oriental Studies: the Korean Philology Division and the Korean History Division. The Korean Philology Division was incorporated into the Department of Japanese Philology, while the Korean History Division became part of the Department of Area Studies.

The revival of Korean Studies at FESU during the 1970s and 1980s was significantly supported by the country's leading Korean Studies centers—Moscow State University and Leningrad State University. The first Korean language instructor at FESU was T. Y. Kaplan.³² At the time, no textbooks for Korean or related disciplines were available, so the grammar course relied heavily on Kaplan's lectures, which students transcribed. Practical materials included photocopies of texts from the Korean Philology Division at Leningrad State University and resources from Kim Il-sung University in Pyongyang.³³ Additionally, reading North Korean newspapers and magazines became a common practice in language classes.

It is notable, however, that FESU's geographical proximity to the DPRK did not provide any significant advantages in establishing con-

³² Tamara Yuryevna Kaplan (born April 24, 1952) graduated in 1975 from the Department of Korean Philology in the Faculty of Oriental Studies at Leningrad State University (LSU). In 1979, she completed a correspondence postgraduate program at LSU and was awarded the title of Associate Professor on October 20, 1999. Kaplan has been a faculty member at FESU and its Faculty of Oriental Studies since 1975. She has served as the Head of the Department of Korean Philology at FESU's Oriental Institute since 1999 and was promoted to the rank of Professor in 2005. Kaplan is the author of approximately 50 publications, including the widely used *Korean Language Textbook for First-Year Students*, which has been published in three editions (1985, 1997, 2003). This work highlights her significant contributions to the field of Korean language education and her dedication to advancing Korean studies in Russia.

³³ I. A. Tolstokulakov, "Podgotovka spetsialistov-koreevedov v Vostochnom institute DVGU: istoriya i sovremennost'," *Izvestiya Vostochnogo instituta* 15 (2008): 7-8.

tacts with the North Korean academic community.

In addition to Kaplan, S. N. Zhetpisov, from the Institute of Asian and African Studies at Moscow State University, joined the effort to revive Korean studies in 1976. From 1978, Moon Yengir, a native speaker and senior lecturer in the Department of Japanese Philology, also made important contributions.³⁴ Furthermore, V. M. Serov³⁵ and L. V. Galkina,³⁶ a research associate at the Far Eastern Branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences, played a significant role in training the next generation of Korean studies scholars.

By the late 1970s, the Korean language training program had evolved to include the following components: (1) practical grammar of modern Korean; (2) theoretical grammar of modern Korean; (3) history of the Korean language; (4) hieroglyphics; (5) theory and practice of translation; and (6) practical Korean conversation. The in-depth study of Korean grammar was further supported by specialized courses such as “Problems of Modern Korean Grammar” (Kaplan), “Fundamentals of

³⁴ A. A. Khamatova, S. N. Ilin, “Shkola vostokovedov v DVGU (1962-1994 gg.),” *Izvestiya Vostochnogo instituta* 1(1994): 90.

³⁵ Vadim Mikhailovich Serov (August 14, 1935-2004) graduated in 1959 from the Faculty of Oriental Studies at LSU. He earned his Ph.D. in History on October 29, 1964, with a dissertation titled “The Peasant Uprising in Korea in the 12th Century.” In recognition of his academic achievements, he was awarded the title of Associate Professor on July 30, 1969. From 1964 to 2003, Serov served as a lecturer at FESU, where he held the position of Head of the Department of Regional Studies starting in 1980. He played a pivotal role in establishing the School of Oriental Studies at FESU during the early 1960s. By the early 2000s, many faculty members of the Oriental Institute at FESU were his former students, reflecting his profound influence as an educator and mentor. A dedicated scholar, Serov authored more than twenty publications, making significant contributions to the development of Korean studies in Russia.

³⁶ Ludmila Vasilievna Galkina (December 8, 1947-May 16, 2010) graduated in 1974 from the Faculty of Oriental Studies at LSU. She earned her Ph.D. in Philology on August 13, 1980, with a dissertation titled “The Life and Work of the Korean Poet Kim Jeong-sik Sowol (1903-1934)” (Oriental Institute, USSR Academy of Sciences). From 1974 to 1981, Galkina worked as a research fellow at the Institute of History, Archaeology, and Ethnography of the Far Eastern Branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences. She then joined FESU, serving as a lecturer at the Faculty of Oriental Studies (1981-1990) and the Oriental Institute (1990-1999). During this period, she also served as the Head of the Department of Korean Philology (1990-1999). A highly active scholar, Galkina participated in numerous academic events and made significant contributions to the field of Korean Studies, authoring over twenty publications.

Literary Translation” (Galkina), and “Introduction to Special Philology” (Galkina and Kaplan).³⁷ This curriculum remained largely unchanged, with only minor modifications, until the early 2010s.

Following the re-establishment of the Korean division, its professors concentrated their efforts on teaching Korean studies disciplines. Unlike the pioneering academic Korean studies scholars, such as Podstavin, who had to build the field from scratch, Vladivostok’s Korean studies scholars were able to shift from addressing immediate practical needs to combining teaching with research activities by the early 1980s.

During this period, V. V. Verkholyak,³⁸ a graduate of LSU, joined FESU and made significant contributions to the advancement of Korean studies in Vladivostok. This era also marked the emergence of the division’s first candidates for philological sciences degrees: Galkina, Yengir, and Verkholyak. The teaching staff further expanded with the addition of top graduates, including E. Ivlieva, Z. Khaustova, and E. Rusetsky.³⁹

In the 1980s, Far Eastern State University (FESU) developed its first textbooks for Korean studies: *Textbook on the Korean Language* (V. V. Verkholyak, T. Y. Kaplan, 1985), *Textbook on the Korean Language* (Moon Yengir, 1988), *Foreign Words in Modern Korean: A Textbook* (Moon Yengir, 1988), and *Korean Poetry of the 1920s* (L. V. Galkina, 1987).⁴⁰

³⁷ V. V. Verkholyak, “Iz istorii prepodavaniya i izucheniya koreyskogo yazyka v Dal’nevostochnom gosudarstvennom universitete,” *Izvestiya Vostochnogo instituta* 5 (1999): 135.

³⁸ Vladimir Vasilievich Verkholyak (born April 3, 1957) graduated in 1980 from the Faculty of Oriental Studies at LSU with a specialization in Korean Philology. He earned his Ph.D. in Philology on October 26, 1989, with a dissertation titled “Grammatical Categories of Predicativity in the Korean Language of the 17th Century (Based on the Material of ‘*Pak Tongsa Onhae*’)” (LSU) and was awarded the title of Associate Professor on October 20, 1999. Verkholyak served as a lecturer at the Faculty of Oriental Studies (1980-1990) and the Department of Korean Philology at the Oriental Institute (1990-1991). From 1995 to 2000, he headed the Department of History, Economics, and Culture of Korea at the Oriental Institute at FESU. He also served as the Director of the Higher College for Korean Studies at Oriental Institute, FESU from 1994 to 2003. An active participant in numerous international and regional conferences on Korean studies, Verkholyak has authored more than twenty publications, making significant contributions to the field.

³⁹ Tolstokulakov, “Podgotovka,” 8.

⁴⁰ Verkholyak, “Iz istorii,” 135.

By the end of the 1980s, significant progress had been made in establishing the education of Korean studies. In 1989, discussions commenced regarding the creation of an independent Department of Korean Philology within the Faculty of Oriental Studies. Galkina was appointed as the first head of the department and served in this role until 1999. This structural change enabled the department to expand the number of its staff to nine instructors by 1994, with two additional Korean studies scholars working in the Area Studies Department of the Faculty of Oriental Studies. By this time, the total number of Korean studies students had grown to 62.⁴¹

Simultaneously, Korean studies began to emerge in other universities in Vladivostok. With the active involvement of FESU graduates, Korean language instruction was introduced at the Oriental Institute of the Far Eastern State Technical University (FESTU).

This rapid development of Korean studies in Vladivostok was closely linked to shifts in foreign policy. The establishment of diplomatic relations between the USSR and the Republic of Korea in 1990 marked a new phase in Russian-Korean relations. To further advance Korean studies, a structural reorganization was necessary. On June 10, 1994, the FESU Academic Council approved the transformation of the Department of Korean Philology into the Faculty of Korean Studies. In 1995, this was further reorganized into the Higher College (Faculty) of Korean Studies (HCKS FESU).

The creation of the HCKS FESU was the result of a collaborative effort between the FESU team, the Primorsky Krai Administration, and one of South Korea's leading financial and industrial groups, "Kohap Group." Significant contributions were made by Kohap's chairman, Jang Chihyeok, and South Korean parliamentarian Lee Seung. The first director of the HCKS was V. V. Verkholyak.

Structurally, the HCKS FESU comprised two departments: the pre-existing Department of Korean Philology and the newly established De-

⁴¹ Tolstokulakov, "Podgotovka," 9.

partment of Korean History, Economics, and Culture, the latter of which was created alongside the HCKS. In 2000, another significant academic unit was added to FESU's structure—the Center for Korean Studies. This center was established with financial support from the Korea Foundation and was headed by the rector of FESU, V. I. Kurilov.⁴²

The Department of Korean Philology at the HCKS FESU trained specialists with expertise not only in the Korean language and literature but also in linguistics, literary studies, history, and modern Korean grammar. The Department of Korean History, Economics, and Culture offered two specializations: Korean history and Korean economics. All students were enrolled in the field of “Oriental Studies and African Studies” (and for some time under the specialty of “Regional Studies”),⁴³ focusing on philological, historical, and economic disciplines.⁴⁴

The curriculum was centered on studying the Korean and English languages alongside training in a comprehensive range of area studies disciplines, including history, literature, ethnography, economics, and the political systems of Korea. Students during this period had opportunities to intern at universities in the Republic of Korea. Unfortunately, access to study programs at Kim Il-sung University was lost, though efforts to restore this partnership were made as late as in 2007.⁴⁵

Faculty members of the HCKS FESU were actively involved in developing textbooks and educational materials, contributing significantly to the academic resources for Korean studies. Key publications included: *Korean Language Textbook for First-Year Students* (V. V. Verkholyak, T. Y. Kaplan, 1997); *Korean Language Textbook for First-Year Students* (V. V. Verkholyak, L. V. Galkina, V. N. Kozhemyako, 1998); *Speech Etiquette in Modern Korean* (T. Y. Kaplan, T. S. Deryugina, 2003); *Modern Korean Literature* (M. V. Soldatova, K. A. Pak, 2003); *Korean*

⁴² Tolstokulakov, “Podgotovka,” 10.

⁴³ Verkholyak, “Iz istorii,” 137.

⁴⁴ Tolstokulakov, “Podgotovka,” 9.

⁴⁵ Tolstokulakov, “Podgotovka,” 10.

Language Textbook for Non-Oriental Studies Specialties (T. Y. Kaplan et al., 2004); *Korean Language through the Press* (T. Y. Kaplan, Jeong Eunsang, 1999); *Korean Language for Business Communication* (T. Y. Kaplan, Jeong Eunsang, 2004); *Guide to Commercial Translation from Korean* (I. V. Yusov, 2006); *The Development of the Korean Economy: Lessons from the Transition Period* (edited by N. V. Kuznetsova and I. A. Tolstokulakov, 2001); *An Outline of the History of Korean Culture* (I. A. Tolstokulakov, 2002); *The Role of the Religious Factor in the Life of Korean Society* (edited by I. A. Tolstokulakov, 2004); and *History of Socio-Political Thought in Korea* (I. A. Tolstokulakov, 2007).

Most of these publications were prepared under the auspices of the Center for Korean Studies at FESU and were supported financially by the Korea Foundation or the Academy of Korean Studies.

By the end of the 1990s, the HCKS FESU had over 200 students and approximately 20 faculty members.⁴⁶ The growth in student numbers was driven by the increasing demand for specialists capable of supporting the expanding economic interaction between Russia and the Republic of Korea.

In the first decade of the 21st century, the Korean Studies Center in Vladivostok became one of the largest in modern Russia. By the 2000s and 2010s, the HCKS had around 300 students, including both specialist-level and undergraduate students. Initially, the training program followed a five-year specialist degree course; however, in 2004, the first bachelor's degrees were awarded, and the department gradually transitioned to a four-year program. A significant milestone in its academic development was the introduction of a master's program in "History of Asian and African Countries (Korea)" in 2008. Additionally, the most outstanding HCKS students were recommended by the administration for admission to graduate school and offered opportunities to work in the department as teaching assistants.

The HCKS FEFU received consistent support from philanthropist

⁴⁶ Verkholyak, "Iz istorii," 137.

Jang Chihyeok. Through his efforts and with assistance from the Korea Academic and Cultural Foundation, which he chaired, FESU hosted numerous research projects and academic conferences, including events involving North Korean scholars. Faculty members of the department, including the author of this text, also participated in the activities of the “Bohai” Archaeological Research Center. Established jointly by the foundation and FESU, this center conducted extensive archaeological research in the Primorsky Krai region.

In 2009, a landmark achievement for Korean studies in the Russian Far East occurred when I. A. Tolstokulakov,⁴⁷ a graduate of FESU, lecturer at the HCKS, and the Head of the Department of History, Economics, and Culture of Korea, was awarded a Doctor of Sciences (Habilitation) degree. Dr. Tolstokulakov remains the only Korean studies scholar in Vladivostok to hold this prestigious qualification.

By the time a new federal-level university was established based on FESU, the HCKS had solidified its position as not only the largest Korean studies center in the Russian Far East but also one of the leading Korean studies institutions in Russia.

Modern Horizons: The Vladivostok Center for Korean Studies Today

In 2011, the merger of four major universities in Primorsky Krai—FESU,

⁴⁷ Igor Anatolyevich Tolstokulakov (born January 30, 1963) graduated in 1986 from the Faculty of Oriental Studies at FESU. He earned his Ph.D. in History in 2000 with a dissertation titled “The Development of the Democratic Process in South Korea during the Sixth Republic” and a Doctor of Sciences in History in 2009 with a dissertation titled “Political Modernization in a Post-Traditional Society (Using South Korea as an Example).” Since 1986, Tolstokulakov has been a lecturer at the Department of Korean Studies. In 2000, he was appointed the Head of the Department of History, Economics, and Culture of Korea at the Oriental Institute of FESU. In addition, he has served as the Academic Secretary of the Oriental Institute and Coordinator of the Center for Korean Studies at FESU since 2000. Tolstokulakov has held several editorial roles, including membership on the editorial board of *Izvestia of the Oriental Institute* (1996-2003), editor-in-chief of the *Bulletin of the Confucius Institute*, and membership on the editorial board of the almanac *Russian Korean Studies*. An accomplished scholar, Tolstokulakov has authored over 300 academic and educational publications, contributing significantly to the field of Korean Studies in Russia.

FESTU, Pacific State University of Economics (PSUE), and Ussuriysk State Pedagogical Institute (USPI)—led to the gradual consolidation of previously parallel Korean studies programs. As a result, the HCKS FESU and the Korean Studies division of the Department of Japanese and Korean Studies at FESTU were merged into a single structural unit: the Department of Korean Studies within the School of Regional and International Studies at FEFU. The newly unified department was headed by E. M. Ermolaeva.⁴⁸

The institutional reorganization was a complex process, and it brought with it the challenge of unifying educational programs. Nevertheless, the successors of the proud traditions of the Vladivostok school of Korean Studies worked diligently not only to preserve but also to build upon the achievements of its 35-year development since 1975. The adoption of federal state education standards facilitated the integration of original courses designed by the department's leading instructors, elevating the program to a new level.

Despite these changes, the department largely retained its classical approach to training Korean studies specialists, focusing on producing graduates with not only a high level of language proficiency but also a deep understanding of the history, culture, literature, economy, and other aspects of Korea.

Currently, the Department of Korean Studies in the School of Regional and International Studies at FEFU offers a four-year program for an undergraduate degree in Oriental Studies and African Studies with a focus on Korean studies, designed to last four years, as well as a two-year master's program in the same field.

The curriculum for both undergraduate and graduate students com-

⁴⁸ Ekaterina Mikhailovna Ermolaeva (born January 26, 1980) graduated in 2002 from the Department of Korean Regional Studies at the Oriental Institute of FESU. She completed her postgraduate studies at FESU in 2005 and earned a Ph.D. in History in 2010 with a dissertation titled "The Formation and Development of Ideology during the Period of Authoritarian Regimes in South Korea: 1948-1987." Ermolaeva has been teaching at FESU since 2002 and currently serves as the Head of the Department of Korean Studies at FEFU. She is the author of over twenty academic and educational publications, contributing significantly to the field of Korean Studies in Russia.

prises several components. Core courses cover the Korean language, history, geography, literature, and culture of Korea, alongside a wide range of specialized courses. As in previous years, Korean studies students are required to study hieroglyphics and work with specialized texts. At the same time, the department places a strong emphasis on preparing students for research, with students beginning to collaborate with academic advisors in their second year after selecting their specialization within Korean studies. Interdisciplinary research is encouraged, allowing students to explore fields beyond traditional areas such as philology, literature, history, or economics.

The training program also includes various internships designed to develop professional skills and competencies in research and organizational-administrative activities. Additionally, master's students receive specialized training in working with electronic databases—an essential skill for modern research.⁴⁹

Today, the academic process in the Department of Korean Studies is supported by 22 full-time faculty members, most of whom are graduates of the Korean Studies programs either at FESU or FESTU. Six faculty members hold Ph.D. degrees and serve as full professors or assistant professors, while the rest are highly qualified specialists with extensive teaching experience and practical expertise in academia and the economy.⁵⁰

In recent years, interest in Korea has grown significantly, both in Russia and globally. Consequently, students across Russia now enroll in the Department of Korean Studies at FEFU, marking a shift from earlier periods at FESU when most students came from Primorsky Krai and the Far East. During the 2023–2024 academic year, the department had 101 first-year students, 95 second-year students, 80 third-year students, and 69 fourth-year students, along with 12 first-year master's students and 15 second-year master's students, totaling 372 students. Furthermore, many

⁴⁹ Based on the educational programs available on the FEFU website (<https://www.dvfu.ru/sveden/education/>), accessed September 2, 2024.

⁵⁰ The information of this and the following paragraphs is based on information provided by E. M. Ermolayeva, Head of the Department of Korean Studies at FEFU.

students from other FEFU departments express interest in learning Korean, prompting the Korean Studies faculty to offer additional elective classes in the language as part of their broader academic programs.

Faculty members and students of the department are also actively engaged in introducing Russian audiences to Korean traditions and culture. The department organizes an annual Korean Culture Festival to sustain interest in Korean heritage. Additionally, the artistic group *Samul Nori*, founded in 1995 under T. A. Son⁵¹ at the HCKS FESU, continues its legacy under the name *Haedong*. In their free time, members of this group learn to play traditional Korean musical instruments and explore Korean dance traditions.

The folk ensemble of the Korean Studies Department has become a hallmark of the School of Regional and International Studies at FEFU. It has regular participation in numerous international student events and activities hosted by the Korean diaspora in Primorye, showcasing its rich cultural contributions.

The scientific research activities of the Department of Korean Studies at FEFU continue to thrive. In January 2016, the FEFU leadership decided to reestablish the Center for Korean Studies within the structure of the Oriental Institute—School of Regional and International Studies. This decision was closely tied to the Academy of Korean Studies of the Republic of Korea providing grant support to the Center during the 2016–2020 period.⁵²

The re-establishment of the Center allowed FEFU to revive its tradition of hosting scientific conferences, attracting Korean studies special-

⁵¹ Son Tita Hikhenovna (Tina Alexandrovna) (October 2, 1950–May 15, 2019) graduated in 1978 from the Khabarovsk Institute of Culture with a degree in Choreography and in 1988 from the Department of Korean Philology at the Faculty of Oriental Studies, FESU. From 1988 to 1995, she worked as a translator for various organizations in Vladivostok. In 1995, she joined the Department of Korean Studies at FESU, continuing her academic career at FEFU following its establishment. Son was an active participant in numerous academic conferences and served as the longstanding leader of a Korean drumming folk ensemble, significantly contributing to the promotion of Korean culture in the Russian Far East.

⁵² “Tsentr koreevedcheskikh issledovaniy,” accessed September 2, 2024, https://www.dvfu.ru/schools/school_of_regional_and_international_studies/structure/centre_of_korean_studies/.

ists from Russia and abroad. Additionally, distinguished scholars were invited to deliver annual lectures specifically for FEFU students. The Center also supported the publication of several notable monographs on Korean studies, including: *Juvenile Delinquency: Criminological, Legal, and Political Expertise of the Republic of Korea* (A. A. Maltsev, 2018); *Spatial Development of Urbanization on the Korean Peninsula: A Comparison of South and North* (P. P. Em, 2018); *Ethnogenesis of the Korean People: South and North Korean Scholarly Perspectives* (V. S. Akulenko, 2019); *History of Socio-Political Thought in Korea: A Reader* (I. A. Tolstokulakov, E. M. Ermolaeva, 2021); *Customs and Tariff Regulation in Korea: A Textbook* (I. A. Tolstokulakov, M. P. Kukla, 2019); *Regional Identity of Ethnic Koreans in the Russian Far East and Central Asia: A Collaborative Analysis* (T. G. Troyakova, Y. I. Din, D. A. Sokolova, E. E. Sapozhnikova, V. S. Akulenko, K. A. Pak, 2019); *Republic of Korea in the Authoritarian Period: Ideology, Power, and Society: A Monograph* (E. M. Ermolaeva, 2021); *Public Geography of the States of the Korean Peninsula: A Collection of Articles* (Edited by L. E. Kozlov, Foreword by P. P. Em, 2023); *Economy of the Republic of Korea: A Textbook* (M. P. Kukla, 2022); and *Foreign Policy and Diplomacy of the Republic of Korea: A Textbook* (M. P. Kukla, L. E. Kozlov, E. M. Ermolaeva, K. A. Pak, V. I. Voloshchak, 2022).

The publication of the *Bulletin of the Center for Korean Studies* was also resumed during this period. However, the ambitious plans for the Center were disrupted first by the COVID-19 pandemic and later by funding shortages. Despite these setbacks, the Department of Korean Studies has retained its core scientific and pedagogical staff, providing hope for the swift resumption of the Center's activities.

Of particular note is the resumption of relations with North Korean colleagues following the pandemic. As the DPRK was among the last countries to reopen its borders to foreigners, opportunities for bilateral cooperation were delayed. Nevertheless, the recent strengthening of relations, including mutual visits by the leaders of Russia and North Korea, has paved the way for new areas of collaboration between FEFU's and North Korea's academic and educational institutions. Current discussions

include potential assistance from the DPRK in teaching the Korean language, with the North Korean side already expressing interest. The resumption of academic exchange programs, which has been interrupted, now is likely to happen in the near future.

Conclusion

Korean studies at FEFU have undergone a long and challenging journey of development. Begun nearly 125 years ago with the establishment of the world's first Department of Korean Language, led by its pioneering scholar Podstavin, the tradition of practical Korean studies was abruptly interrupted by Stalin's repressions. The founder of the university's Korean studies program was forced to emigrate and passed away in Harbin, while the department's invaluable library was largely destroyed—partially lost and partially dispersed among the collections of other academic institutions.

In 1975, the teaching of the Korean language was revived through the efforts of specialists from Leningrad State University, Moscow State University, and the Far Eastern Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Within just 15 years, Korean studies at FEFU not only regained its position but also earned significant authority among Soviet university centers for Korean studies. This progress laid the foundation for the establishment of the HCKS FESU in 1995 and the Center for Korean Studies in 2000.

Today, the Department of Korean Studies at FEFU simultaneously trains more than 300 students in bachelor's and master's programs and employs over 20 faculty members. It is actively engaged in publishing scientific and educational literature and fosters strong connections with other centers of Korean studies worldwide. Additionally, the department continues to strengthen its collaboration with academic and research institutions in both North and South Korea.

Initially created as a center for the practical study of Korea, the school of Korean Studies in Vladivostok has remained true to its roots. At the same time, the Department of Korean Studies at FEFU strives to

stay aligned with modern trends, successfully integrating the latest methods in research and teaching to advance the field.

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NORTHEAST ASIAN HISTORY FOUNDATION

The Demise of the British Military Commitment to Korea, 1979-1993

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Abstract

Since the end of the Korean War, Britain had maintained a military presence in South Korea, the most visible element of which was the British contingent to the United Nations Honor Guard. The British Ministry of Defense began calling for the withdrawal of this commitment from the 1970s in view of budgetary constraints and the possibility of Britain being involved in another conflict on the Korean peninsula. This argument was thwarted by the British Foreign Office until the mid-1980s on account of the commitment's importance in the dynamics of Anglo-American relations. However, the decision to hand over Hong Kong to China and the discovery of the absence of a Status of Forces Agreement protecting the rights of British military personnel in Korea meant that the Foreign Office could no longer resist the demands of the Ministry of Defense, leading to the withdrawal of British troops from Korea in 1993.

Keywords

Britain, Korean War, United Nations Command, Military Armistice Commission, Commonwealth Liaison Mission, Status of Forces Agreement

The Demise of the British Military Commitment to Korea, 1979-1993

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Introduction

On January 16, 1968, the British Chancellor of the Exchequer, Roy Jenkins, announced that Harold Wilson's Labor government would end Britain's military involvement in the Gulf and Southeast Asia by 1971.¹ Britain would make immediate defense cuts of more than 100 million pounds, all British military personnel would be evacuated from Malaysia, Singapore, and the Gulf by the end of 1971, and no military bases in the future would exist outside Europe and the Mediterranean.² Only Hong Kong, Britain's last remaining colony in Southeast Asia, would continue to have a British military presence.³ This new direction of foreign policy would naturally have an impact on Britain's military strategy concerning an area that was not usually thought of as being high on the list of Britain's global military interests and therefore has been given little attention by scholars and other observers of British foreign policy

¹ John Darwin, *Unfinished Empire: The Global Expansion of Britain* (Bloomsbury, 2012), 379-80.

² Ronald Hyam, *Britain's Declining Empire: The Road to Decolonization, 1918-1968* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 395.

³ Sue Thompson, *British Military Withdrawal and the Rise of Regional Cooperation in South-East Asia, 1964-73* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 153.

during the Cold War: the Korean peninsula.

While Britain's continued military assistance to the defense of South Korea after the end of the Korean War—in which of the 82,000 British military personnel deployed 1,068 lost their lives and 2,674 were injured⁴—was little more than a token contribution in terms of volume, the British military commitment to Korea was of enormous political significance to the South Korean government which was at the time heavily competing against its North Korean rival for diplomatic recognition and support throughout the world.⁵ This British military commitment to Seoul during the Cold War is also noteworthy in the history of global British military involvement because of the real possibility that this token British military presence would find itself involved in a potentially devastating second conflict in the Korean peninsula: the attack on British military personnel in the event of a second Korean conflict would—as is the case with American forces in Korea effectively acting as “human tripwires”⁶—result in Britain being automatically entangled in a direct military confrontation with North Korea and its allies.⁷ Korea was—and remained for a long time—one of the most dangerous and volatile places in the world for British military personnel to be stationed.

As previously mentioned, there has been little academic interest in this issue of the British military commitment to Korea during the Cold War era. This author has written previously on the history of this British role in the Korean peninsula during the 1960s and 1970s,⁸ and this article follows up on this preceding research by looking into the development—and the ultimate collapse—of this British commitment throughout the

⁴ E. McNair, *A British Army Nurse in the Korean War: Shadows of the Far Forgotten* (Tempus, 2007), 38.

⁵ Deon Geldenhuys, *Isolated States: A Comparative Analysis* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 72.

⁶ Chae-Jin Lee, *A Troubled Peace: US Policy and the Two Koreas* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 257.

⁷ Tae Joon Won, “Britain’s Retreat East of Suez and the Conundrum of Korea 1968-1974,” *Britain and the World* 9, no. 1 (2016): 78.

⁸ Won, “Britain’s Retreat East of Suez and the Conundrum of Korea 1968-1974.”

Conservative governments of the 1980s and the early 1990s. Relying almost exclusively on the relevant Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and Ministry of Defense (MOD) papers for primary source material in an attempt to fill the gap in the existing literature concerning the history of the British military's global activities in the postwar era, this article focuses on the continued clashes over the fate of Britain's symbolic contribution to the defense of South Korea between the various government ministries in Whitehall—as well as between the diplomats on the ground in Korea and the decision-makers back home in London—during the closing decade of the Cold War era at a time when Britain's importance and prestige as a significant regional player in Asia was finally coming to an end.

The Origins and Development of the British Military Commitment to Korea until the late 1970s⁹

As the Armistice Agreement that was to bring an end to hostilities of the Korean War was being concluded on July 27, 1953, the sixteen nations who had fought under the United Nations banner during the three-year struggle signed the Joint Policy Declaration on Korea—also known as the Greater Sanctions Statement—in Washington, DC on the same day.¹⁰ The nations declared their support for the Armistice Agreement and reaffirmed:

... our faith in the principles and purposes of the United Nations, our consciousness of our continuing responsibilities in Korea, and our determination in good faith to seek a settlement of the Korean problem. We affirm, in the interests of world peace, that if there is a renewal of the armed attack, challenging again the principles of the United Nations, we

⁹ This chapter is based upon a previous article written by this author as stated above.

¹⁰ The sixteen signatories were Australia, Belgium, Canada, Colombia, Ethiopia, France, Greece, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Philippines, Thailand, Turkey, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

should again be united and prompt to resist. The consequences of such a breach of the armistice would be so grave that, in all probability, it would not be possible to confine hostilities within the frontiers of Korea.¹¹

With the Armistice and the Declaration in place, the first Commonwealth Division—which was composed of British, Australian, Canadian, and New Zealand troops—was allowed to be reduced to a Commonwealth Brigade Group in September 1954 when American troops in Korea were also reduced from six divisions to two.¹² In May 1956, this was further reduced to a battalion commitment known as the Commonwealth Contingent, and when this was withdrawn from service in August 1957, Britain, Australia, and New Zealand decided to create a liaison mission at the headquarters of the United Nations Command (UNC) with effect from September 1, 1957. The functions of this liaison mission, which itself was not under UNC control, were:

- a. To demonstrate by its presence the continued support of the participating governments for the Republic of Korea and the objects of the United Nations in working for a united, independent, and democratic Korea.
- b. To represent the participating countries on the Military Armistice Committee.
- c. To represent the Chiefs of Staff of the participating countries at United Nations Command negotiations and conferences and on appropriate public or military occasions in Korea.¹³

This mission, named the Commonwealth Liaison Mission (CLM), had a British brigadier as its head whose responsibility—in addition to

¹¹ The National Archives (TNA), FCO 21/347, Text of Joint Policy Declaration on Korea of July 27, 1953.

¹² Jeffrey Grey, *The Commonwealth Armies and the Korean War* (Manchester University Press, 1988), 183.

¹³ TNA, FCO 21/1996, From Hoare to England, September 15, 1981.

being the British Defense Attaché in the British embassy in Seoul and a member of the Military Armistice Committee (MAC)—was:

- a. To administer the United Kingdom element of the United Nations Honor Guard platoon provided on rotation from forces under the command of the Commander British Forces Hong Kong.
- b. To provide pay, postal, motor, transport, and quartermastering facilities to the Mission.¹⁴

From the end of the 1960s, when the Wilson government announced Britain's intention to retreat from east of Suez, the British government's military commitment to Korea became an issue of serious contention between the two major government departments responsible for Britain's overseas policy: the FCO and the MOD. The assassination attempt on South Korean President Park Chung Hee by 31 elite North Korean commandos on January 21, 1968,¹⁵ as well as the North Korean attack on and capture of the American spy ship, the USS Pueblo, off the coast of Wonsan,¹⁶ rendered the Park government to make an official request to the sixteen nations that had signed the July 1953 Joint Policy Declaration on Korea—which of course included Britain—that they “make some kind of declaration at this time expressing their support for South Korea.”¹⁷ This request brought the fact home to London that Britain could find itself entangled in a highly dangerous situation in the Korean peninsula that it had no wish to involve itself in, especially at a time “of uncertainty for [Britain] as we consider the future of our own defence

¹⁴ TNA, FCO 21/1996, From Hoare to England, September 15, 1981

¹⁵ Michael Breen, *Kim Jong-Il: North Korea's Dear Leader* (Wiley, 2012), 26.

¹⁶ The 82 crew members captured alive—one had died during the attack—were subject to continuous torture and threats of execution until they were released on December 23, 1968 after the United States had issued a formal admission of spying and an apology for its actions. Lonnie M. Long and Gary B. Blackburn, *Unlikely Warriors: The Army Security Agency's Secret War in Vietnam* (iUniverse, 2013), 183-85.

¹⁷ TNA, FCO 21/347, From Gore-Booth to Murray, January 29, 1968.

policies in the light of the changing British role in South East Asia.”¹⁸ While London managed to resist Seoul’s dogged pleas for public assurances when the United States concluded that a unanimous and unqualified joint reaffirmation of the 1953 Declaration was not feasible and “anything less than a full and unqualified statement at this time by all the original signatories would [...] detract from the terms of the original declaration and might well impair, rather than promote, the purposes of such a reaffirmation,”¹⁹ this incident nevertheless prompted many in the British government to ask fundamental questions about Britain’s military presence and role in South Korea. The MOD’s position was that “with the run-down in the Far East, [the] Ministry of Defence now clearly wish to be rid of [the commitment to Korea] altogether,”²⁰ while the FCO opposed such a withdrawal of the commitment since Britain’s military presence in Korea could be used as an important diplomatic leverage vis-à-vis the Americans at a time when Anglo-American relations were strained over the issues of Britain’s refusal to commit troops to the Vietnam War.²¹

The reassessment of Britain’s defense policy for Asia that occurred with the arrival of the Edward Heath administration in June 1970—which led to the signing of the Five Power Defense Agreement with Singapore, Malaysia, Australia, and New Zealand (ANZUK) in April 1971²²—provided the opportunity for London to review Britain’s military commitment to Korea.²³ In January 1972, the Heath government informed Seoul that while a British frigate, which had been made available to the American Commander-in-Chief of the UNC (CINCUNC) for use in Ko-

¹⁸ TNA, FCO 21/347, From Holyoake to Park, May 2, 1968.

¹⁹ TNA, FCO 21/347, US State Department Telegram to US Mission in Seoul, April 23, 1968.

²⁰ TNA, FCO 21/347, US State Department Telegram to US Mission in Seoul, April 23, 1968.

²¹ See Jonathan Colman, *A ‘Special Relationship?’ Harold Wilson, Lyndon B. Johnson, and Anglo-American Relations ‘at the Summit,’ 1964-68* (Manchester University Press, 2004), 147-66.

²² Michael Leifer, *Dictionary of the Modern Politics of South-East Asia* (Routledge, 2001), 113.

²³ TNA, FCO 21/947, From Thomas to Crowson, January 18, 1971.

rean waters since 1957,²⁴ would be no longer available, the provisions of the British detachment to the UN Honor Guard—which at the time consisted of one officer and eighteen other ranks on rotation from Hong Kong—and of a British brigadier as Head of the CLM and as the Commonwealth’s representative in the MAC would continue.²⁵

But then, a question was suddenly raised in Whitehall concerning who would have command over the British contingent to the UN Honor Guard should another major military conflict occur in Korea. The view that the British contingent would be under the direct command of the Commander of the United States Honor Guard Company at a time of armed conflict in the Korean peninsula opened up the possibility of Britain being dragged into a war against the will of the British government. This unimaginable prospect led to the MOD’s argument that it was “not acceptable to the UK that UK contingent should be under UN or US command [...] retention of British contingent under national command will need to be explained to the UNC [United Nations Command],”²⁶ and instructions were sent to the British Defense Attaché in Seoul informing him that “day-to-day arrangements for liaisons on ceremonial duties between the UK Honour Guard Contingent Commander and the US Honour Guard Company Commander shall be left to your discretion. These arrangements, however, must in no way prejudice your command of the UK Contingent whilst it is in Korea.”²⁷ However, on receiving word that the Americans were unwilling to formally cede control over the British contingent because of the Honor Guard’s role in providing “security for CINCUNC and his family during peacetime and periods of active hostilities [and] for command facilities of headquarters UNC [...] UNC confirm they have always considered these [instructions] as applying to

²⁴ TNA, FCO 21/352, From Campbell to Sykes, March 6, 1968.

²⁵ TNA, FCO 21/1073, Brief entitled ‘UK Defence Commitment in Korea,’ January 1972.

²⁶ TNA, FCO 46/832, Draft Signal to Defense Attaché Seoul, March 28, 1972.

²⁷ TNA, FCO 46/832, From Parkes to FCO Defense Department, April 4, 1972.

whole Honor Guard [and] not just to American component,”²⁸ the MOD argued strongly for the absolute abolition of the CLM since “we do not regard ourselves as being legally committed to providing troops for service in Korea in the event of hostilities breaking out with the North [...] improbable that we should ever wish voluntarily to take any part in fighting in Korea.”²⁹

But, once again, the MOD’s proposals were rebuffed by the FCO, which was at that time considering establishing diplomatic relations with North Korea despite strong objections from Seoul,³⁰ and therefore felt that it was “unwise, from the point of view of our relations with South Korea, to withdraw one of the few remaining symbols of our support [for South Korea].”³¹ Undeterred, the MOD then made a counterargument demanding that the rank of the British Defense Attaché in Seoul be downgraded from a brigadier to a lieutenant-colonel since only those with the rank of colonel or higher could serve as members of the MAC, and the Defense Attaché’s loss of his membership would bring about the weakening and possible abolition of Britain’s military commitment to South Korea.³² But, this too was vetoed by the FCO, which argued that the South Koreans “might feel slighted if anyone of less than full Colonel rank were appointed as Defence Attaché” and therefore recommended that the post be downgraded only from brigadier to colonel.³³ This did not occur, and the Defense Attaché’s rank—as well as the overall British military commitment to Korea—managed to remain generally unaltered into the late 1970s in the midst of this intense struggle between the FCO and the MOD.

²⁸ TNA, FCO 46/832, Telegram No. 210720Z from UK Mission in Seoul to MOD, April 1972.

²⁹ TNA, FCO 46/1007, From Denne to Hervey, November 23, 1973.

³⁰ See Tae Joon Won, “To Be or Not to Be? The North Korean Challenge to British Foreign Policy, 1971-1976,” *Britain and the World* 7, no. 2 (2014).

³¹ TNA, FCO 46/1007, From Denne to Hervey, November 23, 1973.

³² See Korea Institute of Military History, *The Korean War*, vol. 3 (University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 712.

³³ TNA, FCO 46/1171, From FCO Far Eastern Department to Haskell, September 25, 1974.

The Beginning of Whitehall's Struggle over Korea under the Thatcher Government

On coming to power in 1979, the Margaret Thatcher administration's military commitment to South Korea soon increased in terms of the number of British military personnel serving on the United Nations Honor Guard: the size of the British platoon would swell to 34 in 1982 following the request of the American authorities after their assessment of an increased threat to the personal security of senior officers in Korea rendered an increase in the security duties of the Honor Guard.³⁴ But, even as this increase in British commitment was happening, it looked as if the MOD was not prepared to give up on its long-standing objective to ensure that Britain would never be entangled in a potentially devastating military situation on the Korean peninsula.

In June of that year, a senior diplomat in the South Korean embassy in London—after congratulating the Thatcher government on its successful Falklands campaign—made inquiries to the FCO as to whether senior Korean military officials could visit Britain “to discuss the lessons of the Falklands operation both in respect of tactics and of equipment.”³⁵ Since “the situation on the Korean Peninsula was unlikely to be similar to that of the Falkland Islands in any very notable way,” Seoul would be more eager to discuss “the lessons of the operation for equipment” with a particular interest in “missiles, whether launched from land, sea or air, and aircraft.”³⁶ The diplomat expressed South Korea's admiration for Britain's “special military skills as exemplified by the Marines and the Special Air Service” and stressed that his proposal, albeit a personal initiative, would be fully supported by the administration in Seoul.³⁷ It soon transpired that this request was not actually the diplomat's own idea but a

³⁴ TNA, FCO 21/3228, From Seoul to MODUK, February 22, 1985.

³⁵ TNA, FCO 21/2328, From Elliott to Weston, June 18, 1982.

³⁶ TNA, FCO 21/2328, From Elliott to Weston, June 18, 1982.

³⁷ TNA, FCO 21/2328, From Elliott to Weston, June 18, 1982.

“pet brainchild” of the head of South Korea’s Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA)—indeed, the diplomat in question was the DIA’s representative in London—and that the South Korean Defense Minister was “also taking a keen personal interest” in the matter.”³⁸ Although the FCO was initially quite eager to push ahead with the proposal since such a visit could bring about “opportunities for defence sales [since] the Koreans are anxious to diversify away from their almost exclusive reliance on the US as a source of supplies,”³⁹ the mood suddenly shifted when it was discovered that the MOD was “not disposed at this stage to provide any more information” on the Falklands operation to the Koreans other than that which the MOD was sending out to its Defense Attachés posted all over the world.⁴⁰ Thinking that a visiting Korean delegation would not be impressed at having flown halfway around the world only to be fobbed off with information that was readily available at the British embassy, the FCO informed the South Korean embassy that a straightforward presentation in Seoul by the British Defense Attaché using the standard MOD materials would be better than a visit to London by Korean generals.⁴¹ The senior diplomat—now also uncovered as the DIA representative in London—expressed his disappointment at this response, reiterating the advantages for Britain “in terms of defence sales to Korea of a detailed exchange in due course with the experts in London about the effectiveness of British military equipment during the Falklands campaign.”⁴² All that the FCO could say by way of consolation was to suggest that the Koreans “should first look at what the [Defense Attaché] had to offer them, and then, if they wished for more, come back to [the FCO] some time later with a renewed request for discussions which [the FCO] would look at on its merits.”⁴³ Privately, the FCO officials responsible for Korea ex-

³⁸ TNA, FCO 21/2328, From Underhill to Elliott, July 21, 1982.

³⁹ TNA, FCO 21/2328, From Elliott to Weston, June 18, 1982.

⁴⁰ TNA, FCO 21/2328, From Weston to Elliott, July 30, 1982.

⁴¹ TNA, FCO 21/2328, From Elliott to Weston, August 4, 1982.

⁴² TNA, FCO 21/2328, From Elliott to Weston, August 4, 1982.

⁴³ TNA, FCO 21/2328, From Elliott to Weston, August 4, 1982.

pressed their annoyance at this typical MOD determination to keep the South Koreans at arm's length, fuming that "it would be a mistake for the MOD entirely to rule out the possibility in due course of discussions with Korean Generals which might lead to substantial defence sales."⁴⁴

The Division and Reunification of the Ministry of Defense's Position on Korea

However, this would not be the end of the MOD's expression of hostility towards the British commitment to Korea for 1982. In August, the MOD bluntly proposed to the FCO that the costs of British military involvement in Korea be transferred from the MOD to the FCO on the basis that it was "for political more than military reasons that our military involvement in Korea is justified,"⁴⁵ an approach that the FCO regarded as "an unfortunate development" and that the MOD should be persuaded to abandon.⁴⁶ The FCO argued that there was "more of case to be made" on military grounds for the retention of the British contingent in the United Nations Honor Guard "than MOD admits."⁴⁷ For example, the British soldiers in the Guard also "from time to time operate as members of Special Investigation Teams following up incidents in the Demilitarized Zone by assisting UNC/ROK forces, often in difficult and dangerous circumstances. Furthermore, the operational usefulness of the British platoon in Seoul has been ignored, usefulness which will only be put to the test should the situation here merit urgent evacuation of the [British] Embassy and the safe passage out of the country of the 800-plus UK nationals" in South Korea.⁴⁸ The FCO also deployed the tried-and-tested argument of potential American displeasure in the event of the British pla-

⁴⁴ TNA, FCO 21/2328, From Elliott to Weston, August 4, 1982.

⁴⁵ TNA, FCO 21/4132, From Elliott to Streeton, December 17, 1982.

⁴⁶ TNA, FCO 21/4132, From Field to Elliott, November 11, 1982.

⁴⁷ TNA, FCO 21/4132, From Field to Elliott, November 11, 1982.

⁴⁸ TNA, FCO 21/4132, From Field to Elliott, November 11, 1982.

toon's removal: the United States "has consistently placed a high value on the UK's visible support in the form of the Honor Guard in Korea. The UN Commander, General Sennewald, told the [British] Ambassador [...] how much he prized the Honor Guard for this reason. Proposals in the past to reduce or eliminate our presence here have been strongly opposed by the Americans and there is no reason to suppose there would be any change in their attitude now."⁴⁹ In addition, the FCO pointed out that the British "soldiers and aircrew have to be paid and fed whether they are in Hong Kong or elsewhere [...] the flights to and from Seoul could be regarded as training. If not, and reducing the cost is the aim, [the Commander of British Forces in] Hong Kong says he would be content to make the turn-round by civil air at approximately one-third the current airlift cost as quoted by MOD."⁵⁰ However, on receiving the MOD's negative reaction to these arguments, the FCO officials called the MOD's bluff by recommending that the MOD's proposal for the transfer of costs be accepted at the risk of the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs making inquiries concerning "the justification for expenditure of this order on what is in effect a British military deployment well outside the NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] area."⁵¹ The idea of accepting the transfer of the total cost of maintaining the British platoon in the Honor Guard—which was then calculated to be GBP 650,000 a year but would rise to GBP 950,000 by 1987/1988—was in the end "quashed" by the Permanent Under-Secretary of the FCO, Sir Antony Acland, but the status quo managed to remain unchanged.⁵²

Interestingly, in early 1985, a rift seems to have occurred within the MOD between the top brass of the British military and some civilian officials concerning the British commitment to Korea. In January, the British Chiefs of Staff decided to undertake additional contingency planning

⁴⁹ TNA, FCO 21/4132, From Field to Elliott, November 11, 1982.

⁵⁰ TNA, FCO 21/4132, From Field to Elliott, November 11, 1982.

⁵¹ TNA, FCO 21/4132, From Elliott to Streeton, December 17, 1982.

⁵² TNA, FCO 21/4132, From Bowie to Hoare, June 21, 1988.

for Korea—in effect, commissioning “an urgent [planning] exercise to review how the UK might respond to a North Korean attack on the South”⁵³—as part of the annual review of Britain’s defense strategy and activities outside the NATO area. At this time, the only British contingency plan for a renewed conflict on the Korean peninsula was the Joint Theater Plan (JTP) 88, which was drawn up in 1971 and merely provided for five C-130 Hercules aircraft and two VC-10 aircraft to fly in a satellite communication dish and other related equipment in order to provide any necessary additional communications capacity.⁵⁴ The main instigator of this urgent planning exercise was none other than Sir Edwin Bramall, the Chief of the Defense Staff and therefore the professional head of the British armed forces, who was concerned that government ministers might “suddenly ask what work had been undertaken in relation to a longstanding commitment, even if it was morally rather than legally binding, and be critical if they were told that the answer was none.”⁵⁵ However, some sections of the MOD howled in protest at Bramall’s initiative regarding “the damage that could ensue if word of such planning got abroad [...] It will be particularly important to impress on all concerned that no hint of what is being considered should be given to the S[outh] Koreans or Americans [...] Any planning for Korea is no great priority [for the use of British resources] and should take its place in the queue.”⁵⁶ When a top secret report, in conjunction with the exercise, was published in March recommending that British forces in Hong Kong be allowed to participate in Team Spirit—an annual joint military training exercise involving the US military in Korea and the South Korean military—as a way of helping to demonstrate “the UN nature” of the American military presence in Korea,⁵⁷ these MOD officials argued that such

⁵³ TNA, FCO 21/3228, From Bell to Orr, June 13, 1985.

⁵⁴ TNA, FCO 21/4132, From Bowie to Hoare, June 21, 1988.

⁵⁵ TNA, FCO 21/3228, From Alston to Elliott, January 15, 1985.

⁵⁶ TNA, FCO 21/3228, From Legge to DROW, March 15, 1985.

⁵⁷ TNA, FCO 21/3228, From Sills to DMAO, March 11, 1985.

participation “could be taken to imply a continuing UK commitment to Korea [when] our long-term aim should be, as political circumstances allow, increasingly to distance ourselves from whatever vestigial commitment still remains.”⁵⁸ The MOD officials also reiterated that the British “contributions to the Commonwealth Liaison Mission and UN Honor Guard [...] represent a more than adequate involvement.”⁵⁹ However, the British Ambassador in Seoul, Nicholas Spreckley, argued that while there was indeed “no legal commitment for reinforcement,” the current British posture created the perception that Britain did consider that it had such a commitment, and that Britain did “not want to change [its] posture because this could be destabilizing” for the region.⁶⁰ Spreckley also voiced his approval for Bramall’s contingency planning since it was “possible that the government of the time might anyway want to reinforce, and it is accordingly sensible to establish what the options would be.”⁶¹ Clearly, some in the FCO were hoping to make the most of this unusual turn of events at the MOD and use the opportunity to try and strengthen the British commitment in Korea even further.

This internal disruption within the MOD over the reinforcement planning in Korea came at a particularly awkward time for the Ministry. In July of that year, in a meeting with the newly appointed British Defense Attaché in Seoul, the CINCUNC piled on the pressure by stressing that “North Korea and the Republic of Korea are technically still at war, and the truce negotiated in 1953 is very fragile” and that the “prime aim of United Nations Command Korea was currently to maintain [this] truce between North and South. In order to do that, the United Nations Command must be seen to be what its name implied and not just an American military association with the Republic of Korea. [...] It is the continued presence of the British Honor Guard platoon, small as it is, which gives

⁵⁸ TNA, FCO 21/3228, From Legge to DROW, March 15, 1985

⁵⁹ TNA, FCO 21/3228, From Legge to DROW, March 15, 1985.

⁶⁰ TNA, FCO 21/3228, From Seoul to FCO, April 18, 1985.

⁶¹ TNA, FCO 21/3228, From Seoul to FCO, April 18, 1985.

[the UNC] its essential credibility as a United Nations force [...] The British Honor Guard platoon [...] may only be a tiny force in fighting terms, but, politically, its presence is most significant.”⁶² The CINC then hammered the point home by “urging [the British] to maintain the numbers and the high profile of the platoon at its present level or better.”⁶³ As if this American squeeze were not enough for the MOD to wrestle with, France was recredited into the Military Armistice Commission in mid-October, over twenty years after the last French military contingent left Korean soil.⁶⁴ Following this reaccreditation, the French Defense Attaché based in Tokyo “lost no time” in joining the annual tour of the United Nations bases in Japan such as Camp Zama, Yokosuka Naval Base, and Sasebo Naval Base, while the French Defense Attaché in Seoul attended the UNCMAC meeting on October 26.⁶⁵ At a reception hosted by the British Defense Attaché in Seoul at his home on October 30, his French counterpart—a man “clearly finding his feet”—informed his American colleague and the senior South Korean liaison officer in attendance that France “took very seriously her responsibilities to the UNC” since France was “legally committed to support Korea militarily should Kim Il-sung invade the South again.”⁶⁶ The British Defense Attaché expressed his dismay at this French proclamation by informing the relevant officials in London that Britain “could have done without this on several counts.”⁶⁷ At a time when MOD officials were trying their best to extricate themselves from the British military commitment in Korea with the minimum of political or economic inconvenience, the French were openly declaring themselves bound to the Joint Policy Declaration of July 1953.⁶⁸ The British Defense Attaché clearly regarded this French ploy as

⁶² TNA, FCO 21/3228, From Seoul to MOD, July 2, 1985.

⁶³ TNA, FCO 21/3228, From Seoul to MOD, July 2, 1985.

⁶⁴ TNA, FCO 21/3228, From Hackworth to Currie, November 5, 1985.

⁶⁵ TNA, FCO 21/3228, From Hackworth to Currie, November 5, 1985.

⁶⁶ TNA, FCO 21/3228, From Hackworth to Currie, November 5, 1985.

⁶⁷ TNA, FCO 21/3228, From Hackworth to Currie, November 5, 1985.

⁶⁸ TNA, FCO 21/3228, From Hackworth to Currie, November 5, 1985.

a means to boost French defense sales to Korea: although “membership of the UNCMAC per se does not directly aid sales of defence equipment (in that Attachés who are also UNCMAC members get much better access to UNC/[Republic of Korea-United States Combined Forces Command] Koreans than those who are not, but this enhanced access does not extend to the ROK procurement staff who have no UNC connections),” the Koreans were always “looking for a declared political commitment, and if France gives it to them, then this must enhance French sales prospects. Furthermore, both Americans and Koreans are likely to draw invidious comparisons between France’s declared position over the binding force of the [Joint Policy Declaration] and [Britain’s] non-committal stance”⁶⁹ as per the FCO’s confirmed view made in 1983 that the Declaration “does not impose any legal obligation on the United Kingdom to go to the assistance of South Korea”⁷⁰ since the Declaration “is not a legally binding document.”⁷¹ Therefore, this unexpected French intervention, as well as the renewed American pressure, indeed had the potential for Bramall, whose support for Korea was regarded as one of his “pet subjects,” to press the case for a stronger British military commitment to Korea.⁷²

The South Korean authorities, meanwhile, seemed to be putting in their own effort to emphasize how close and important Seoul regarded the defense relationship with London, while the reinforcement issue was being actively discussed within the MOD during the course of 1985. In October, a party from the Korean National Defense College visited London and was briefed by David Trefgarne, the Minister of State at the Ministry of Defense, on British defense policy. During the briefing, a member of the Korean delegation suddenly informed Trefgarne that in “light of the threat to us from China and Japan, as well as the Soviet

⁶⁹ TNA, FCO 21/3228, From Hackworth to Currie, November 5, 1985.

⁷⁰ TNA, FCO 21/5833, From Bowen to PS/SofS, January 7, 1994.

⁷¹ TNA, FCO 21/5833, From Hum to Reeves, December 15, 1993.

⁷² TNA, FCO 21/3228, From Bell to Orr, June 13, 1985.

Bloc, [the South Koreans] are considering the possibility of acquiring a nuclear capability” and asked him bluntly “what lessons can you derive from your experience of nuclear weapons.”⁷³ Given that South Korea had ratified the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty in 1975—and probably thinking that no high-ranking Korean military official would ever have been that indiscreet about such a sensitive and potentially illegal course of action without having received prior instructions from his superiors in Seoul—the FCO was “to say the least somewhat surprised” at this extraordinarily candid Korean remark and went so far as to request the British embassy in Seoul to verify “the extent to which [the Korean military official’s] views might reflect official thinking” in the Seoul administration.⁷⁴ In any case, despite the American pressure, the French intervention, and the Korean overtures, however, Bramall came to the conclusion in December of that year that no further planning on sending reinforcements to Korea would be necessary, thereby undoubtedly putting many MOD officials’ minds at rest and reconstructing the collective MOD effort to remove the British military commitment from Korea.⁷⁵

The Foreign Office Triumph over Korea at the End of the Thatcher Government

At the intragovernmental Far East and Australian Regional Review in January 1987, the MOD proclaimed its desire to withdraw the Honor Guard by 1994—a point which they raised again later that year. The FCO argued that they “wanted to see how the political situation in the ROK developed”—such as the Presidential election in December 1987 and the Seoul Olympic Games in September 1988—before entertaining any possibility of a potential change in British military policy for Korea.⁷⁶ The

⁷³ TNA, FCO 21/3230, From Kenyon to McCleary, October 23, 1985.

⁷⁴ TNA, FCO 21/3230, From Kenyon to McCleary, October 23, 1985.

⁷⁵ TNA, FCO 21/4132, From Bowie to Hoare, June 21, 1988.

⁷⁶ TNA, FCO 21/4132, From Bowie to Hoare, June 21, 1988.

FCO was, at this time, especially mindful of the possibility that, as mentioned earlier, British withdrawal could “run the risk of upsetting the South Koreans in a way that might have a knock-on effect on government decisions about commercial contracts, particularly arms sales.”⁷⁷ The Northern Irish defense contractor Shorts had won a contract worth GBP 30 million to sell Javelin missiles to the South Korean military at the end of 1986,⁷⁸ and although this was admittedly due more to “a letter from [Margaret] Thatcher to President Chun which was the key factor in encouraging the Korean government to hold out against intense American pressure to buy the Stinger missile, which the Korean Armed Forces did not want,” there was no guarantee that the removal of Britain’s military commitment to Korea would have no adverse effects on future British arms sales to Seoul.⁷⁹ This FCO concern was ironically strengthened by a visit to South Korea by the British Defense Secretary, George Younger, in March 1988. During the visit, Younger told the Korean Foreign Minister, Choi Kwang Soo, that the “small [British] contingent for the UN Honor Guard was an important commitment and popular posting [for British soldiers from Hong Kong] and had talked to [the Korean Defense Minister] about developing defence contacts and the possibility of encouraging joint ventures on production of defence equipment,”⁸⁰ to which Choi replied that “the size of the Honor Guard was not significant, but the political commitment that it represented was.”⁸¹ Choi then attempted to entice the British delegation further into maintaining the military commitment by commenting that whilst the South Korean armed forces “used essentially American equipment, there was some scope for diversification and cooperation with other countries [...] Any contribution that the UK could make to peace and stability in the region would be

⁷⁷ TNA, FCO 21/4132, From Bowie to Hoare, June 21, 1988.

⁷⁸ TNA, FCO 21/5254, Defense Sales List written by Davies, February 13, 1992.

⁷⁹ TNA, FCO 21/4132, From Bowie to Hoare, June 21, 1988.

⁸⁰ TNA, FCO 21/4132, From Bowie to Carter, June 15, 1988.

⁸¹ TNA, FCO 21/4132, From Bowie to Carter, June 15, 1988.

most welcome. The ROK was a small country, in a strategically important area, and remained concerned about Soviet objectives.”⁸² Emboldened by this positive attitude towards the British commitment to Korea from the political lord and master of their Whitehall rivals, the FCO felt confident enough to issue a statement to the MOD in June 1988 arguing that although “the internal political situation in Korea has calmed down considerably, nothing has changed in the region as a whole which leads us to conclude that it is time to change our defense relations. In particular, we see value in the continued presence of the Honor Guard, to which the Koreans clearly attach importance judging from the record of Mr. Younger’s call on the Korean Foreign Minister on March 28. We will naturally be willing to review this question regularly, and it may be that the picture will look differently in the 1990s. But, for the time being, we would like to maintain the present arrangement.”⁸³ Once again, having had their master plan for Korea foiled by the FCO—who were this time armed with covering fire from none other than the Defense Secretary—the MOD had little choice but to put a hold on their plans to establish a clear government policy to withdraw the military commitment from Korea. In a letter to the Commander of British Forces in Hong Kong in November 1988, the MOD explained that in line with the FCO’s pro-status quo stance and the Defense Secretary’s pro-FCO attitude on the matter, a final decision on the future of the British contingent to the UN Honor Guard would probably not take place until 1993.⁸⁴ With all interested parties having reached this conclusion—willingly or otherwise—by the end of 1988, there would be no more in-depth, intragovernmental discussion on the subject of withdrawing the British military commitment in Korea during the remaining years of the Thatcher administration.

⁸² TNA, FCO 21/4132, From Bowie to Carter, June 15, 1988.

⁸³ TNA, FCO 21/4132, From Bowie to Whitaker, June 20, 1988.

⁸⁴ TNA, FCO 21/4132, From Walker to Johnson, November 24, 1988.

The Reemergence of the Military Commitment Debate under the Major Government

Of course, the discussion over the future of the British military commitment in Korea could not be held up indefinitely, given the tumultuous events that would engulf the global arena in the 1990s. The most pressing, and directly relevant, issues concerning the British military commitment to Korea were the handover of Hong Kong to the People's Republic of China in July 1997 and the Persian Gulf War which lasted from August 1990 to February 1991. In December 1984, London and Beijing had signed the Sino-British Joint Declaration, in which Britain agreed to the transfer of the sovereignty of Hong Kong to China in 1997 under the condition that "Hong Kong would enjoy a high degree of autonomy and separate economic, social, political, and legal systems—the 'One Country, Two Systems' arrangement—for fifty years."⁸⁵ As such, the MOD felt it necessary for the British military's Hong Kong Garrison—which was approximately 9,000 strong in January 1990 and from which the British contingent to the United Nations Honor Guard in Korea was deployed⁸⁶—to be gradually run down from 1991 onwards in preparation for the handover deadline.⁸⁷ This in turn meant that as the "size of the garrison shrinks, it will become increasingly difficult to provide the manpower and necessary support for this deployment [to the UN Honor Guard in Korea]."⁸⁸ To add to this dilemma, Britain's involvement in the said Persian Gulf War—which saw the deployment of nearly 35,000 army personnel during the campaign⁸⁹ and the continued patrol of two

⁸⁵ Cora Chan, "Subnational Constitutionalism in Hong Kong," in *Constitutionalism in Context*, edited by David Law (Cambridge University Press, 2022), 381.

⁸⁶ L. Raynor, "The Security Forces," in *The Other Hong Kong Report 1990*, edited by Richard Y. C. Wong and Joseph Y. S. Cheng (The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 1990), 194.

⁸⁷ TNA, FCO 21/5254, From Howard to Warren, August 9, 1991.

⁸⁸ TNA, FCO 21/5254, From Howard to Warren, August 9, 1991.

⁸⁹ Theo Farrell, Sten Rynning, Terry Terriff, *Transforming Military Power since the Cold War: Britain, France, and the United States, 1991-2012* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), 123.

no-fly zones in Iraq after the war officially came to an end in April 1991⁹⁰ —meant that pressures on the British defense budget were “more critical than they have ever been.”⁹¹ Consequently, barely nine months after the John Major government came into power in November 1990, the MOD officially informed the FCO in August 1991 that the Ministry could “no longer afford to ignore the [GBP] 1 m[illion] or so a year that the Honor Guard and the rest of our UN related presence costs us” and therefore proposed that the military commitment “should cease by the end of financial year 92/3.”⁹² The MOD added that the FCO should work with the MOD “towards the dismantling of the UN apparatus in South Korea, as it becomes increasingly anachronistic and unnecessary. In this way, the requirement for the UK contribution would disappear naturally, and we could achieve our objective [of commitment withdrawal] without causing any difficulties in our relations with Seoul and Washington.”⁹³

Unsurprisingly, the British diplomats in Seoul reacted strongly against this MOD proposal. Citing “the importance of not delivering mistaken signals at a time of delicate negotiations” amongst the interested parties following Washington’s announcement in September 1991 of the unilateral withdrawal of all naval and land-based tactical nuclear weapons deployed abroad and Seoul’s subsequent Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula the following November,⁹⁴ the diplomats argued that “any unilateral move by the UK to end our Honor Guard role would run the risk of throwing a spanner into a delicate set of works at one of the worst possible times.”⁹⁵ The diplomats also cited the comment of Admiral Benjamin Bathurst, the Vice-Chief of the UK Defense Staff, on a report that he wrote of his visit to Seoul in October. Bathurst had commented that the UK position was that “the timing of

⁹⁰ Rosemary Hollis, *Britain and the Middle East in the 9/11 Era* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 25

⁹¹ TNA, FCO 21/5254, From Howard to Warren, August 9, 1991.

⁹² TNA, FCO 21/5254, From Howard to Warren, August 9, 1991.

⁹³ TNA, FCO 21/5254, From Howard to Warren, August 9, 1991.

⁹⁴ TNA, FCO 21/5254, From Seoul to FCO, December 30, 1991.

⁹⁵ TNA, FCO 21/5254, From Seoul to FCO, December 30, 1991.

such a [...] removal of the Honor Guard would have to be judged against events, but one year to eighteen months' notice would be required to prepare the ground. We need therefore to build some flexibility into any [...] saving measure.”⁹⁶ The diplomats took this comment to mean that the Vice-Chief “accepts the view we hold and believes the Honor Guard commitment should be [continued] annually until the signal is received from UNC that the Honor Guard [...] are no longer required.”⁹⁷ Upon receiving this advice from Seoul, the FCO decided it was necessary to “act quickly if we are to forestall any action by MOD to cease the funding of the British contingent”⁹⁸ and subsequently prepared a briefing note for the Minister of State at the FCO, the Earl of Caithness. In this note, the FCO advised Caithness that “a unilateral move by Britain to pull out of the Honor Guard before the UNC machinery in Korea starts to be dismantled could upset the South Koreans in a way that might well have an adverse effect on [Korean] Government decisions about commercial contracts, particularly in the defence sales field. [Also,] the North Koreans are unpredictable, and that unpredictability was enhanced by news in December that Kim Jong-il, son of [Kim Il-sung], had taken over Supreme Command of the North's armed forces. [...] Any unilateral move by the UK at the present time to end its Honor Guard role would run the risk of throwing a spanner into what is a delicate set of works. Things may become even more delicate over the next year or so. [...] There is no point [...] in risking millions of pounds worth of British contracts, perhaps sending the wrong signals to North Korea, and maybe upsetting the Americans/UNC, in order to save [GBP] 1 million [per annum].”⁹⁹ On the basis of this note, Caithness sent a letter to Archie Hamilton, the Minister of State at the MOD, in February 1992 arguing that “to make a decision now to pull out our UN Honor Guard contingent at the end of FY

⁹⁶ TNA, FCO 21/5254, From Seoul to FCO, December 30, 1991.

⁹⁷ TNA, FCO 21 5254, From Seoul to FCO, December 30, 1991.

⁹⁸ TNA, FCO 21/5254, From Morris to Davies, January 9, 1992.

⁹⁹ TNA, FCO 21/5254, From Davies to Burns, February 12, 1992.

1992/93, regardless of the situation on the ground then, would be wrong [...] It would be far better in my opinion for us to keep our option open and to review the situation say every six months with a view to withdrawing once the conditions on the ground seemed right.”¹⁰⁰ But, Hamilton staunchly defended his Ministry’s position the following March, stating that he found it “hard to believe that the withdrawal of 30-40 British military personnel will really make a significant difference” to the “progress in reconciliation between North and South and the denuclearization of the peninsula” and that “the validity of such a connection [between retaining the Honor Guard and success in defense sales] is difficult to prove either way, but it would certainly be unprecedented for us to maintain an operational deployment [...] primarily in support of defence sales.”¹⁰¹ On receiving this MOD reply, the FCO decided to “return to the charge” and retorted that it was “the Koreans, not us [...] who have made a linkage between defence support and defence sales,” and that since Caithness had sent his letter of February 26 to Hamilton, the North Koreans “have formally called on at least four UNC countries, Canada, Australia, France, and the UK to withdraw their UNC military presence from South Korea. All concerned have declined on the grounds that in the absence of a peace treaty, the provisions of the Armistice Agreement should continue to be adhered to, and that any weakening of the UNC presence at this time would play into North Korean hands.”¹⁰² Furthermore, the FCO informed the MOD of the US State Department’s opinion, which was relayed verbally to the British embassy in Washington in early May, that against “the background of serious US and international concern over the prospects for nuclear inspections in North Korea [fol-

¹⁰⁰ TNA, FCO 21/5254, From Caithness to Hamilton, February 26, 1992.

¹⁰¹ TNA, FCO 21/5254, From Hamilton to Caithness, March 16, 1992.

¹⁰² TNA, FCO 21/5254, From Davies to Burns, May 11, 1992. The South Korean Vice Minister of Defense told the British ambassador in Seoul in 1991 that there would be “a clear linkage [...] between Korea’s defence sales purchases and countries to which Korea would look for assistance in dealing with aggression.” TNA, FCO 21/5254, From Davies to Burns, February 12, 1992.

lowing North Korea's signing of a comprehensive safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency in January 1992],” the Americans hoped Britain “would retain our UN Honor Guard commitment. Progress had been made with the North Koreans because of concerted international pressure, and this was the wrong moment to signal that we no longer thought the UN arrangements were necessary. It was important to hold firm.”¹⁰³ With all these counterarguments in place, the new Minister of State at the FCO, Alastair Goodlad, wrote to Hamilton in May stating his hope that the latter would “accept that there are sound reasons for avoiding an early decision on the ending of MOD funding for the British element in the Honor Guard in Korea. There is no doubt [that] now is not the time even to suggest any weakening of the UNC’s presence there. It would look odd at the very least if Britain, one of South Korea’s strongest supporters, were to appear suddenly to make a concession to the North by withdrawing its Honor Guard contingent.”¹⁰⁴

Such inter-ministerial exchanges of letters between two prominent Conservative Members of Parliament led the Foreign Secretary himself, Douglas Hurd, to take a closer interest in the issue of the British military commitment in Korea.¹⁰⁵ Upon receiving a request from Goodlad to review the relevant papers before his meeting with Hurd in early June on the matter, the buoyant FCO officials reiterated that “there is a good case for maintaining that we should not withdraw from the honor guard [...] This is not the time to flinch. We are not saying to the MOD that the honor guard should remain for all time. But, it should be scaled down or phased out on timing of our choosing, taking into account the important political developments between North and South which are now underway.”¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ TNA, FCO 21/5254, From Davies to Burns, May 11, 1992.

¹⁰⁴ TNA, FCO 21/5254, From Goodlad to Hamilton, May 20, 1992.

¹⁰⁵ TNA, FCO 21/5254, From Tibber to Hum, June 2, 1992.

¹⁰⁶ TNA, FCO 21/5254, From Hum to Coles, June 5, 1992.

The Unexpected Ambush: The Obstinacy of Hurd and the Absence of SOFA

However, this optimistic outlook of the FCO in regards to the continuation of the British military commitment to Korea would soon be dealt a severe blow by a series of unexpected events in both London and Seoul. Firstly, during the meeting on June 5, 1992 between Douglas Hurd and Alastair Goodlad, the Foreign Secretary stated that he himself was “not persuaded of the need to continue with the Honor Guard. He made clear that, if it were FCO money, he would not agree to further funding beyond this [financial year].”¹⁰⁷ This unexpected conclusion from none other than their own minister—which came about despite the enormous effort put in by the diplomats in order to persuade all those involved of the necessity of retaining the Honor Guard—greatly surprised and annoyed the relevant FCO officials, who found it “ironic that ministers took this view on the day we saw the North Koreans [in London] and made clear to them our determination to strongly support the proper function of the MAC and the [Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission].”¹⁰⁸ As if to rub salt into the wound, Hamilton of the MOD chose that particular moment to write back to Goodlad stating that the MOD would only agree to retain the Honor Guard contribution “provided that the FCO agree to reimburse MOD for the extra costs involved [which] would amount to between [GBP] 0.5 m[illion] and 1 m[illion] per annum.”¹⁰⁹ In view of Hurd’s negative views on any FCO spending for the retention, the MOD ultimatum was obviously unacceptable to the FCO. It was, in the FCO officials’ view, a “pretty unsatisfactory” state of affairs.¹¹⁰

As if this ‘friendly fire’ was not damaging enough, a legally significant and highly alarming incident occurred in Seoul around the same

¹⁰⁷ TNA, FCO 21/5254, From Davies to Wright, June 10, 1992.

¹⁰⁸ TNA, FCO 21/5254, From Davies to Wright, June 10, 1992.

¹⁰⁹ TNA, FCO 21/5254, From Hamilton to Goodlad, June 9, 1992.

¹¹⁰ TNA, FCO 21/5254, From Davies to Wright, June 10, 1992.

time, which would ultimately serve to pour cold water over the FCO's valiant efforts to keep the British military commitment to Korea alive. On June 10, Gurkha troops from the British contingent of the UN Honor Guard were involved in a bar fight with Korean civilians in Seoul, which resulted in one Korean being seriously injured.¹¹¹ This led to the detainment of the Gurkha soldiers by Korean authorities, but they were then handed over to UNC authorities.¹¹² In cases such as this, US military personnel were subject to the 1966 US-ROK Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA). However, non-US military personnel under the UNC in Korea were subject to the provisions of Article 3.13 of the Agreement on Economic Coordination Between the Republic of Korea and the Unified Command—the so-called Meyer Agreement of May 1952—which reads as follows:

To grant to individuals and agencies of the Unified Command, except Korean nationals, such privileges, immunities, and facilities as are necessary for the fulfillment of their function within the Republic of Korea and of the above-cited resolutions of the United Nations, or as have been heretofore granted by agreement, arrangement or understanding or as maybe agreed upon formally or informally hereafter by the parties or their agencies.¹¹³

The UN Command and the legal advisers of the UK embassy in Seoul had all advised the British diplomats that “their interpretation of the treaty governing the status of UN troops in Korea was that they were immune from Korean civilian proceedings.”¹¹⁴ As such, the British embassy decided “to remove the five principal miscreants to Hong Kong for investigation and possible court martial by the military authorities there”

¹¹¹ TNA, FCO 21/5253, From Davies to Barratt, July 16, 1992

¹¹² TNA, FCO 21/5253, From Seoul to FCO, June 23, 1992.

¹¹³ TNA, FCO 21/5253, From Seoul to FCO, June 23, 1992

¹¹⁴ TNA, FCO 21/5253, From Seoul to FCO, June 23, 1992.

and issued a formal diplomatic note of this action to the Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) on June 18.¹¹⁵ It was also agreed that the Korean police would be able to interview all the Gurkhas involved who had not yet left for Hong Kong.¹¹⁶ Five days later, however, the MFA summoned the First Secretary of the embassy as well as the Assistant Defense Attaché and informed them that the said incident “fell within Korean civil jurisdiction, and [Britain] had therefore acted improperly in removing some of the alleged offenders to Hong Kong.”¹¹⁷ The MFA’s logic was that since the incident occurred while the Gurkha soldiers were off-duty, Article 3.13 of the Meyer Agreement was not applicable in this case because “the Honor Guard only enjoy immunity in respect of acts performed in the course of their duties.”¹¹⁸ This was a baffling situation for the UK diplomats because not only was this in conflict with the original advice given by the legal experts, but the British embassy was also “not aware of any previous incidents involving [non-US] nationals in the UN Honor Guard in which the Korean authorities have insisted that they have jurisdiction.”¹¹⁹ Concerned that they would find themselves “unwittingly agreeing to setting precedents with potential wider ramifications,” the British embassy sought urgent advice from London on how to deal with the matter.¹²⁰ The FCO’s view was that “full immunity from criminal jurisdiction is necessary for the fulfillment of the functions of the members of the UN Command. It seems wrong to us that the British element in the Honor Guard should be viewed and treated differently from the US element, despite the Status of Forces Agreement. [...] If the argument continues, it may be necessary to turn up examples of Status of Forces Agreements which we can use to establish formally general prac-

¹¹⁵ TNA, FCO 21/5253, From Seoul to FCO, June 23, 1992.

¹¹⁶ TNA, FCO 21/5253, From Seoul to FCO, June 23, 1992.

¹¹⁷ TNA, FCO 21/5253, From Seoul to FCO, June 23, 1992.

¹¹⁸ TNA, FCO 21/5253, From FCO to Seoul, June 24, 1992.

¹¹⁹ TNA, FCO 21/5253, From Seoul to FCO, June 23, 1992.

¹²⁰ TNA, FCO 21/5253, From Seoul to FCO, June 23, 1992.

tice in this area.”¹²¹

The situation rapidly deteriorated on June 24 when, on arriving at the police station for questioning at the request of the Korean authorities as previously agreed, one of the two Gurkha miscreants present was promptly detained and then formally charged.¹²² The incident could not have occurred at a more awkward moment for both countries: Alastair Goodlad happened to be on an official visit to Seoul at that time and was able to visit the detained Gurkha in question as well as lodge a protest to the Superintendent of Police.¹²³ The British embassy immediately lodged a complaint to the MFA concerning this detention and stressed the urgent need to “reach mutual agreement on the interpretation of the wording of the treaty to avoid any further problems of this nature.”¹²⁴ In preparation for this showdown with the Koreans, the UK diplomats—in line with the FCO’s advice—prepared their official reasoning that when the Meyer Agreement was signed, “executive jurisdiction over United Nations forces in Korea lay with the United Nations and not with the Korean authorities,” and therefore Article 3.13— which remained in place for non-US military personnel in the UNC—merely “confirmed an already existing informal understanding that full immunity would apply to UN forces and that as the Article remains unchanged, so full immunity continues to apply.”¹²⁵

This now meant that the British diplomats could choose one of two options when confronting the Korean side: they could either “continue to argue that we were justified in the action we took [or] concede that the Koreans have jurisdiction in the matter.”¹²⁶ The embassy clearly preferred to take the latter option in order “to settle this matter quickly as possible by telling the Koreans that in the interests of seeing the case set-

¹²¹ TNA, FCO 21/5253, From FCO to Seoul, June 24, 1992.

¹²² TNA, FCO 21/5253, From Seoul to FCO, June 26, 1992.

¹²³ TNA, FCO 21/5253, From Seoul to FCO, June 26, 1992.

¹²⁴ TNA, FCO 21/5253, From Seoul to FCO, June 26, 1992.

¹²⁵ TNA, FCO 21/5253, From Seoul to FCO, June 30, 1992.

¹²⁶ TNA, FCO 21/5253, From Seoul to FCO, June 30, 1992.

tled quickly and to avoid unnecessary damage to bilateral relations, we are willing to concede jurisdiction in this instance [...] The prosecutor has indicated to us that if we are prepared to concede the principle of jurisdiction, he will be willing to release the Gurkha and close the whole case.”¹²⁷ But, the FCO, which expressed surprise that the “question of what legal regime applied to the non-US members of the Honor Guard” had been unclear for “so long,” instructed the embassy “not to indicate to the Koreans at this stage that we may be prepared to concede that they have jurisdiction” and to discuss this problem with other non-US members of the Honor Guard.¹²⁸

However, the FCO instructions arrived in Seoul only after a British diplomat had met with the relevant MFA official on the issue on July 1. At this meeting, the MFA official reiterated that Article 3.13 “states that immunities and privileges are granted to individuals within the Unified Command [...] for the fulfillment of their function [and that] this is consistent with Section 18 of the Convention on Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations under which officials of the UN are immune from legal process in respect to all acts performed by them in their official capacity.”¹²⁹ The British diplomat replied that while he “did not necessarily accept this interpretation” in line with the official position of his embassy, he would nevertheless be “prepared to have the matter dealt with by the Korean authorities in this case, provided it was agreed that the two sides, in cooperation with other members of the UN Command, could then get together to agree an interpretation of Article 3.13” so that the incident “should not be allowed to damage bilateral relations.”¹³⁰ In their report to London on the meeting, the embassy strongly advised London that no further action should be taken on the issue since “a face saving compromise has now been reached whereby the prosecutor can claim to

¹²⁷ TNA, FCO 21/5253, From Seoul to FCO, June 30, 1992.

¹²⁸ TNA, FCO 21/5253, From FCO to Seoul, June 30, 1992.

¹²⁹ TNA, FCO 21/5253, From Seoul to FCO, July 1, 1992.

¹³⁰ TNA, FCO 21/5253, From Seoul to FCO, July 1, 1992.

have stuck to his principles over jurisdiction, while in practical terms the matter is dealt with by UK military authorities.”¹³¹ Consequently, the Korean prosecutor decided on July 3 that “in view of the good relations between the UK and Korea, no further action would be taken, and the Gurkha would be released.”¹³²

While this dispute between Britain and Korea concerning the jurisdiction over the British Gurkha soldiers may have been settled amicably and quickly, the matter had obviously, in the words of an FCO official, “thrown up many questions” concerning the British military commitment to Korea.¹³³ It had come, as mentioned above, as a great surprise to the British authorities to discover that no clear position had been developed as to the exact legal status of British soldiers in Korea throughout the 40-odd years that British troops had been on Korean soil. It was now imperative that this legal quandary be solved as quickly as possible “to avoid future uncertainty should other incidents [involving British soldiers] occur.”¹³⁴ Another such fiasco, especially if it once again received the same “high-level intervention” as the Gurkha incident had, could indeed “lead some to question the merits of keeping British soldiers in Seoul”—a situation the FCO was desperately hoping to avoid.¹³⁵

Rather unhelpfully, the UNC sent over to the British embassy a written legal opinion on the Status of Honor Guard Foreign Soldiers four days after the Gurkha soldier had been set free by the Korean authorities which, “if available earlier, might have helped [the British embassy] avoid all subsequent difficulties.”¹³⁶ This written legal opinion was clearly at odds with the original advice that the UNC had relayed to the embassy at the beginning of the Gurkha incident: non-US members of the Honor Guard were indeed “subject to civil and/or criminal liability under

¹³¹ TNA, FCO 21/5253, From Seoul to FCO, July 1, 1992.

¹³² TNA, FCO 21/5253, From Seoul to FCO, July 3, 1992.

¹³³ TNA, FCO 21/5253, From FCO to Seoul, July 17, 1992.

¹³⁴ TNA, FCO 21/5253, From Morris to PS/Mr. Goodlad, July 7, 1992.

¹³⁵ TNA, FCO 21/5253, From FCO to Seoul, July 2, 1992.

¹³⁶ TNA, FCO 21/5253, From Seoul to FCO, July 7, 1992.

the ROK law for any injury caused by them while not in the performance of their official duties. In these non-duty cases, US soldiers are also subject to civil and/or criminal liability.”¹³⁷ The only difference between arrangements for US members and those for non-US members was that while the US-ROK SOFA “provides procedure for waiver of jurisdiction or transfer of custody,” the Meyer Agreement did not.¹³⁸

Having received official confirmation that the principle of Korean jurisdiction would be applied equally to both UK and US members of the Honor Guard in similar circumstances, the British embassy informed the FCO that there should be “no difficulty [accepting] the Korean interpretation of Article 3.13 limiting immunity to acts committed during official duties.”¹³⁹ However, the diplomats expressed concern about “two areas where the legal provisions are unclear or unsatisfactory.”¹⁴⁰ The first concerned off-duty offenses, such as the Gurkha incident: was the FCO “content for these to be handled entirely under Korean law or would we wish to push for protection comparable to that offered under the US/Korea SOFA?”¹⁴¹ The second concerned the problem of “what, if any, protection is accorded to dependents under Article 3.13. In particular, the members of the CLM are here for up to two years at a time, and a number of them are here with wives and families. Our understanding is that, like the Honor Guard, they would also be covered by Article 3.13. But, unlike the [US-ROK] SOFA, Article 3.13 makes no mention of immunity for dependents.”¹⁴² The embassy in particular stressed the need for “urgent clarification” on the latter concern.¹⁴³

On receiving this report from the embassy in Seoul, the FCO realized that it would indeed be necessary to negotiate a proper SOFA in or-

¹³⁷ TNA, FCO 21/5253, From Howells to Davies, July 8, 1992.

¹³⁸ TNA, FCO 21/5253, From Howells to Davies, July 8, 1992.

¹³⁹ TNA, FCO 21/5253, From Seoul to FCO, July 7, 1992.

¹⁴⁰ TNA, FCO 21/5253, From Seoul to FCO, July 7, 1992.

¹⁴¹ TNA, FCO 21/5253, From Seoul to FCO, July 7, 1992.

¹⁴² TNA, FCO 21/5253, From Seoul to FCO, July 7, 1992.

¹⁴³ TNA, FCO 21/5253, From Seoul to FCO, July 7, 1992.

der to protect the legal rights of British soldiers and their families in Korea.¹⁴⁴ But then, two major problems arose in the course of discussions concerning potential negotiations for a SOFA. The first was whether this was a matter on which the FCO should take the lead, or whether this was an issue within the purview of the MOD.¹⁴⁵ This was an extremely delicate point for the FCO because if the MOD—which, as seen above, wanted to remove the British commitment to Korea as soon as possible—were to take a leading role in planning for any SOFA negotiations, it was obvious that MOD officials would bring up the complexities, the rigmarole, and the hassle of negotiating a new SOFA as a pretext to justify the withdrawal of the British contingent at the earliest opportunity.

The second issue was the dilemma of who would actually be conducting the negotiations for a new SOFA. The legal advisers in the FCO argued that since the UN Honor Guard is under the command of the UNC, the UNC should be responsible for negotiating with the South Korean government a new SOFA for the British contingent.¹⁴⁶ However, some officials in the Research Department of the FCO disagreed with this view. From the beginning of the 1970s, as seen above, there had been a dispute between the British government and the UNC over the question of who had command over the British contingent of the UN Honor Guard.¹⁴⁷ The view of the Research Department was that the contingent was under the command of the British Defense Attaché in Seoul and that the contingent was only “loaned temporarily to the UN Commander for ceremonial purposes [...] In the event of hostilities, it had been the view of the Defence Attaché in Seoul that these troops automatically revert to his immediate command.”¹⁴⁸ Following this logic, it was not for the UN Command to negotiate a SOFA either for the British con-

¹⁴⁴ TNA, FCO 21/5253, From Davies to Barratt, July 16, 1992.

¹⁴⁵ TNA, FCO 21/5253, From Davies to Barratt, July 16, 1992.

¹⁴⁶ TNA, FCO 21/5253, From Barratt to Davies, July 22, 1992.

¹⁴⁷ See Won, “Britain’s Retreat East of Suez,” 92.

¹⁴⁸ TNA, FCO 21/5253, From Hoare to Davies, July 24, 1992.

tingent or for the CLM which was also under the command of the British Defense Attaché: the British government would have to either negotiate for one directly with the Koreans or, by leaving the negotiations to the UNC, in effect admit that the British contingent was under American command.¹⁴⁹ Also, even if one assumed for the sake of argument that the British contingent was under the command of the CINCUNC—a position that, as seen above, had been unsurprisingly advocated by the Americans¹⁵⁰—the Research Department could see “little enthusiasm on the part of the UN Command for negotiating a separate [SOFA] to cover [British forces]” when the Americans already had a SOFA of their own.¹⁵¹ The FCO, being able to find no satisfactory solution to this conundrum, in effect washed its hands of the situation by writing to the MOD at the end of July indicating that the MOD “should confirm the exact position” of the command structure of the Honor Guard and the CLM, and informing them that whatever the outcome was, “this is likely to take well over a year to set up”—a longer-than-ideal period of time during which incidents similar to the Gurkha debacle could well occur again and thus further frustrate the FCO argument on Korea.¹⁵²

Up until July 1992, the main MOD arguments for withdrawing the British military commitment in Korea were about saving money and staying out of a potential military conflict in the Korean peninsula—arguments that the FCO had just about managed to stave off by deploying various counterarguments concerning the need to maintain good relations with the United States, to increase defense sales to South Korea, and “to maintain the firmest possible front against [North Korea] over nuclear inspections and their desire for expanded diplomatic relations.”¹⁵³ But, in July 1992, a serious legal anomaly—an unexpected dilemma that had the

¹⁴⁹ TNA, FCO 21/5253, From Hoare to Davies, July 24, 1992.

¹⁵⁰ TNA, FCO 46/832, From Seoul to MOD, April 1972.

¹⁵¹ TNA, FCO 21/5253, From Hoare to Davies, July 24, 1992.

¹⁵² TNA, FCO 21/5253, From Hoare to Davies, July 29, 1992.

¹⁵³ TNA, FCO 21/5254, From Hum to Coles, June 5, 1992.

potential not only to cause serious distress for British soldiers and their families in Korea but also to create significant political and diplomatic difficulties for the British government—had completely taken the wind out of the FCO’s sails on the matter of the British military commitment in Korea. The writing was now clearly on the wall.

Conclusion

With there being no SOFA to cover the British military contingent to Korea—a situation that the FCO felt was impossible to remedy since entering into negotiations for one at that stage would be “too late”¹⁵⁴—and with Hurd’s decision that no FCO money could be used to fund the retention of the British Honor Guard in Korea,¹⁵⁵ all that remained for the FCO to do was to “bite the bullet and accept that the time has come to pull our Honor Guard contingent out of Korea.”¹⁵⁶ Therefore, in choosing a timetable for withdrawal which would “not only soften the blow for the South Koreans and the Americans but also avoid making what might appear to be a significant concession to the North Koreans at a time when they have been calling for just this kind of disengagement,” the FCO proposed that the MOD conduct a two-stage withdrawal, “one at the end of this financial year [in early April 1993] and the remainder by the end of FY 93/94.”¹⁵⁷ But, the MOD, knowing full well that the tide had finally and irreversibly turned in their favor, rejected this proposal out of hand and replied that this could only happen if the FCO “were prepared to pick up” the cost of maintaining the remaining soldiers from 1993 to 1994.¹⁵⁸ This being an impossible scenario for the FCO to accept, the FCO had no choice but to wave the white flag and conclude that “it

¹⁵⁴ TNA, FCO 21/5255, Checklist of Points for FCO/MOD Meeting, July 13, 1992.

¹⁵⁵ TNA, FCO 21/5255, From Gozney to Coles, July 15, 1992.

¹⁵⁶ TNA, FCO 21/5255, From Davies to Hum, September 28, 1992.

¹⁵⁷ TNA, FCO 21/5255, From Goodlad to Hamilton, July 22, 1992.

¹⁵⁸ TNA, FCO 21/5255, From Hamilton to Goodlad, August 25, 1992.

would be acceptable for the whole of our Honor Guard contingent to be withdrawn at the end of FY 1992/1993.”¹⁵⁹ After much wrangling between the two ministries that ensued concerning the precise date of withdrawal, it was agreed that the British contingent would leave Korea for the final time on March 15, 1993,¹⁶⁰ and that the CLM—the main function of which was to provide support for the British contingent and therefore would not be needed when the British soldiers left Korea—would be wound up two months later.¹⁶¹ On January 15, 1993, the British Defense Attaché formally informed the CINCUNC, General Robert RisCassi, of Britain’s intention to withdraw the Honor Guard, and the British ambassador to Seoul also informed his American counterpart of this decision on the same day,¹⁶² while the South Korean government was only notified by a Note Verbale sent to the MFA three days later, on January 18.¹⁶³ As scheduled, on the morning of March 15, the most tangible and visible element of the 43-year-long British military commitment to Korea left Osan Air Base for the last time.

Much has been made in the press of recent admissions to the United Nations Command of European nations such as Italy in 2013 and Germany in 2024 as a symbol of their “dedication to shared security and [...] close ties with like-minded partners, particularly the US and Korea”¹⁶⁴ and of their determination to “stand firm against those who want to undermine peace and stability, against those who attack our common order.”¹⁶⁵ While there is no evidence to suggest that the intentions of these nations are anything but sincere and well-meaning, it must be remembered that the British government, when notifying the South Korean

¹⁵⁹ TNA, FCO 21/5255, From Goodlad to Hamilton, September 28, 1992.

¹⁶⁰ TNA, FCO 21/5517, From Hamilton to Goodlad, January 11, 1993.

¹⁶¹ TNA, FCO 21/5517, From Cochrane to DPSO/CDS, January 15, 1993.

¹⁶² TNA, FCO 21/5517, From Seoul to FCO, January 15, 1993.

¹⁶³ TNA, FCO 21/5517, From Seoul to FCO, January 20, 1993.

¹⁶⁴ “Germany joins UN Command as 18th member state,” *The Korea Times*, August 2, 2024.

¹⁶⁵ “Germany joins multinational force monitoring Korean border,” *Deutsche Welle*, August 2, 2024.

government of the withdrawal of its contingent to the UN Honor Guard in 1993, tried to soothe Seoul's ruffled feathers by emphasizing the fact that Britain "remains a member of the United Nations Command and the Military Armistice Commission"¹⁶⁶ while simultaneously doing everything possible in order to rid herself of her military commitment to Korea and thereby free herself of the burden of having to undertake any prominent military role in a future conflict on the Korean peninsula. While the increase in the size of the UNC may indeed endow South Korea with a certain amount of cachet on the world stage vis-à-vis Seoul's endeavors to attain global political prominence over Pyongyang, it would be foolhardy to simply and automatically assume that the member states' proclaimed commitment to the objectives of the UNC would be fulfilled as expected and as required should a conflict on the peninsula occur again. Rather than relying on abstract and general declarations of military support which may be regarded by some as legally unenforceable—such as the Joint Policy Declaration on Korea—Seoul would do well to take measures that will allow for the negotiating of clear, precise, and concrete military commitments from the UNC member nations.

¹⁶⁶ TNA, FCO 21/5517, From Seoul to FCO, January 14, 1993.

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Review



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Yonsei University

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Controversial Decision***

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Book Reviewed

Wayne Patterson. *William Franklin Sands in Late Chosŏn Korea: At the Deathbed of Empire, 1896-1904*. Lexington Books, 2021.

In *William Franklin Sands in Late Chosŏn Korea: At the Deathbed of Empire, 1896-1904*, Wayne Patterson has written a fascinating account of the life and times of William Franklin Sands in Daehan Empire Korea and the beginning of the period of Japanese domination. The major strengths of the book lie in detailing the connections between the personal relationships that affected government policy and international relations as well as the machinations of the international struggle to which the Chosŏn dynasty was subjected. The audience is drawn into the inner workings of the American legation in Seoul and the power struggles within the Korean government, with a small taste of the politicking surrounding personnel assignments within the US government in Washington, DC.

Patterson has tapped into the rich trove of primary source materials in the Catholic Historical Research Center of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and woven it into a comprehensive picture of the personal relationships, government decisions, and international politics that character-

ize this period. The personal letters and accounts of Sands and Horace Allen illuminate the personalities and attitudes that were so critical to determining the course of Korean history and its relationships with the United States, Japan, and Russia. On the one hand, domestic and international politics cannot be separated since one affected the other. On the other hand, any attempt at removing the personal relationships, which Patterson details so closely, would remove one of the key elements that determined the decision-making of Emperor Gojong and the Korean government.

Emperor Gojong was obviously the most important figure on the Korean government side due to his power and position at the center of Korean politics and decision-making. Patterson's account highlights the centrality of Gojong to all Korean actions while also illuminating his relative powerlessness in the face of international pressures. One of the most powerful features of Patterson's account highlights the human foibles of all of the major characters. Emperor Gojong is presented as the key figure of Korean court politics. Therefore, one's proximity to Gojong, and the ability to gain an audience with the emperor, was the ultimate sign of one's power within the Korean government. In the beginning of his time in the Korean government, Sands was easily able to gain audiences, which seemed to reinforce Sand's position within court politics. However, the loss of this access shows how Sands was gradually marginalized and ultimately relied on either begging Korean figures for an audience or turning to the distasteful option of asking Horace Allen to arrange an audience.

Another character study of human frailty is Patterson's portrayal of Sands himself who began his diplomatic career as the secretary of the American legation but then found himself elevated to the position of foreign advisor to the Imperial Households as well as advisor to the Korean Foreign Office. While not clearly stated, it seems fairly obvious that Sands lacked the ability to develop the friendships and interpersonal connections necessary to be effective in the halls of Korean power as well as among the various diplomatic legations operating in Seoul. Instead, Sands seems to have been either young or arrogant enough to believe that

his position within the Korean government was due to his own personal abilities. By the end of his story, Sands shows that the position and the period were either too complex or too big for him to fill, and his pettiness and immaturity seem to have been key factors in his own undoing.

This is perhaps one area where Patterson could have explored more deeply, which was the reason why Sands was employed by Gojong in the first place. While the reason itself is not explicitly stated, it seems that Sands was simply another American pawn that Gojong hoped to use to tie Korea closer to the United States and maintain American interest in the small, undeveloped Chosŏn kingdom. Undoubtedly, Sands was seen as a relatively valuable pawn due to the stature of his father, Admiral Sands, who clearly had access to the halls of American power and could meet readily with US Secretary of State Hayes and even with President Theodore Roosevelt.

While Patterson does introduce key Korean figures, such as Yi Yong-Ik, as Sands' mortal enemy, there could have been more exploration of the internal court politics and the machinations that played between the different factions of pro-Russian, pro-Chinese, and pro-American Korean groupings that made this period such a dynamic and dangerous time in Korean history. Clearly, Sands is the central figure in Patterson's story, but the reader is often left longing for a more holistic portrayal of the various schemes, plots, and conspiracies that appear through the Horace Allen Papers and other historical sources.

Along the same lines, Patterson does an admirable job of detailing key historical events within which Sands was directly involved, such as the 1901 Jeju Uprising and the international attempts to supplant Sands with alternative foreign advisors. However, there is a slightly repetitive cadence to Sands' story, particularly in the later portions of the book, that could have been supplemented with additional materials from other sources or a generalized portrayal of the context within which they occurred.

Nevertheless, this book remains a valuable contribution to the field, particularly in a time period for which much more research needs to be conducted. Personally, I was fortunate to meet Wayne Patterson at the

historical archives of the Philadelphia Archdiocese as I was conducting my own research project. While I did not know that I would be writing a review of the fruit of his endeavors, it is clear that his work produced an important addition to the existing canon on Korea at the turn of the twentieth century as it stood at the doorstep between traditionalism and modernity.

Book Review of *Hiroshima and the Historians: Debating America's Most Controversial Decision*

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Book Review of *Hiroshima and the Historians: Debating America's Most Controversial Decision*

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Book Reviewed

Kenneth B. Pyle. *Hiroshima and the Historians: Debating America's Most Controversial Decision*. Cambridge University Press, 2024.

Hiroshima and the Historians: Debating America's Most Controversial Decision is a book by Kenneth B. Pyle, a historian of modern Japan and an expert in US-Japan relations. It originated from the honors seminars Pyle taught for about twenty-five years at the University of Washington. Reflecting on his specialized knowledge and accumulated experience, in 2013, Pyle gave a public lecture as part of the 2013 Griffith and Patricia Way Endowed Lecture.¹ The lecture's topic was the so-called Hiroshima decision, by which the Truman administration executed the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to end World War II. The value of Pyle's lecture was recognized by the managing editor of *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, the well-established peer-reviewed journal with over a hundred years of publication history. In the summer of the same

¹ "Kenneth Pyle's lectures on 'Hiroshima and the Historians,'" accessed December 1, 2024, <https://jsis.washington.edu/news/kenneth-b-pyle-lectures-on-hiroshima-and-the-historians/>

year, the journal published Pyle's lecture under the title "Hiroshima and the Historian: History as Relative Truth."² It is this article's structure and contents that later developed into the current book under this review.³

In a nutshell, *Hiroshima and the Historians* presents the historical controversy of the Hiroshima decision from a bifurcated perspective. The two central questions this book raises are the American government's reasons for the use of A-bombs against the Japanese cities and the different approaches that historians have taken to explain the wartime decision. The book adopts an expository strategy that can address these two inquiries simultaneously: composing a comprehensive review of the existing Hiroshima decision literature. Specifically, it identifies six strands of the existing research on the decision to use atomic bombs:

1. First is the orthodox view elaborated in the immediate post-war times to defend the American use of A-bombs. Pyle's discussions about this official view center around Henry L. Stimson's 1947 article in *Harper's Magazine*. The article justifies the use of A-bombs by contending that it saved more lives, "a million [possible] casualties," including both countries' soldiers as well as civilians. Pyle details how this Secretary of War's account builds the argument that there was no alternative but the demonstration of an overwhelming capacity of destruction like A-bombs to frustrate the Japanese war leaders' determined resistance. The author also finds that this official version resonated with the general sentiment of the American public, helped assuage their moral conflict, and consolidated their worldview where America takes the good side (pp. 84-87).

2. Next is the revisionist view born from the 1960s and 1970s

² Kenneth Pyle, "Hiroshima and the Historian: History as Relative Truth," *The Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 103, no. 3 (2013).

³ John M. Findlay, "Introduction to Kenneth B. Pyle's 'Hiroshima and the Historians: History as Relative Truth,'" *The Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 103, no. 3 (2013): 122-23.

anti-war and civil movements in the US. The representative work Pyle reviews in this category is Gar Alperowitz's 1965 *Atomic Diplomacy*, which was expanded and republished in 1995 without a significant change in the main arguments. According to Pyle, this revisionist history argues that if the Truman Administration openly announced the Soviet Union's impending entry into the war against Japan, it would facilitate an early Japanese surrender. He also points out that Alperowitz's discovery was possible because of previously unavailable sources, such as newly declassified Stimson papers, intercepted wartime Japanese diplomatic messages, and Dwight Eisenhower's remarks on the unnecessary of A-Bombing (pp. 103-106). Another critical work Pyle cites is Tsuyoshi Hasegawa's *Racing the Enemy*,⁴ which also singles out the Soviet entry, not the A-bomb, as the primary cause of Japan's early surrender. According to the author, Hasegawa's use of diplomatic sources from all three countries—the UK, Japan, and Russia—enabled and reinforced his claim, while its credibility remains debatable.

3. An established historian of modern Japan, Pyle does not fail to discuss the Japanese responsibility for the destruction of its cities by atomic bombs. His first reference is Robert Butow's *Japan's Decision to Surrender* (1954).⁵ According to Pyle, this book calls attention to the still-debated question of how much the Japanese emperor Hirohito was responsible for Japan's failure to surrender earlier. He also contrasts Butow's description of Hirohito as a constitutional monarch—who reigns but does not rule—to that of Herbert Bix. In his Pulitzer Prize-winning book, *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan* (2000), Bix depicts the Japanese emperor as a “fighting generalissimo” contrary to the previous passive image and attributes a decisive role to him for the defeat (pp. 195, 199).

⁴ Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, *Racing the Enemy: Stalin, Truman, and the Surrender of Japan* (Belknap Press, 2006).

⁵ Robert J. C. Burrow, *Japan's Decision to Surrender* (Stanford University Press, 1954).

4. Pyle also looks beyond the Truman Administration, during which the Hiroshima decision was made. Taking a long-term perspective, he reviews the studies that focus on the legacy of Franklin D. Roosevelt (henceforth FDR) and its influence on his successor. The author pays particular attention to “Roosevelt scholars’ discussions of ‘unconditional surrender policy’.” This school of scholars draws a conclusion that Truman did not have to make the decision—in fact, there is no record of a meeting for the Hiroshima decision. Truman simply did not interfere with the progress of his predecessor’s policy. Pyle, in agreement, tells how FDR’s policy was important in shaping the course of the war, from the weakening of diplomatic exchange between the US and Japan, the justification of Japanese hardliners who refused surrender, to the massive destruction of Japan through air raids even before the Hiroshima decision, thus leaving Truman with few alternatives. The fact that 90% of the American public supported FDR’s policy by the summer of 1945 testifies to the irreversibility (pp. 212-14, 224-26, 228).

5. Additionally, Pyle introduces two strands of scholarly discussions regarding the Hiroshima decision that did not appear in his 2015 article. One is military historians’ accounts. Knowing the conventions that locate military histories outside mainstream academia, he nevertheless assigns one full chapter (Chapter 6) to this genre of historiography. He defends his choice by thoroughly reviewing two particular works, Edward Drea’s *In the Service of the Emperor* (1998) and Richard Frank’s *Downfall* (1999). Pyle concisely and persuasively summarizes both works’ common argument that the Japanese military was strengthening its will to resist by fortifying its territories and thus, Japan was far from being on the verge of surrender in the summer of 1945, unlike the revisionist historians’ claims. In effect, this chapter on military historians echoes the orthodox view while discrediting the revisionists’ findings (pp. 162-63, 165-66).

6. Another new theme that the current book introduces is racial relevance. Pyle examines whether racism is relevant to the US decision to bomb Japanese cities. He raises this issue in the book’s opening chapter by recalling a question that his Waseda University professor asked in the

1960s. “Would America have dropped an atomic bomb on Germany?” (p. 1) He provides some circumstantial evidence: FDR’s racist remarks on Japanese immigration and the US’s internment of Japanese (but not Germans) during World War II. But, Pyle concludes that historians have failed to find direct proof of racism’s relevance to the Hiroshima decision (pp. 148-149, p. 152).

Having provided basic historiographical discussions on the Hiroshima decision, this book might not be the answer for readers seeking original findings and arguments. As mentioned earlier, Pyle composed the monograph based on his teachings of honors seminars. Indeed, the characteristics of the book can be best described as informative and instructive rather than experimental and disputatious. Perhaps for the same reason, the author is attentive in giving a refined reading list for the historiography of the Hiroshima decision. This practice already appeared in the article version of his writing on this topic, with attached “bibliographical notes.” In the present monograph, he devotes a 10-page appendix titled “Suggestions for Further Reading,” which is evidence of why this book serves well for college-level readers who have just gained an interest in this historical topic (See Table 1). Still, one should note that for the author, a historian, the “unconditional surrender policy” school of thought, which takes a longer-term perspective, makes the best appeal. Thus, his writing tone appears more supportive in that section of the book, Chapter 8.

Table 1. Kenneth Pyle’s Recommended Reading List for the Hiroshima Decision (refined by the reviewer)

School of Thought	Recommended Readings
Orthodox Interpretation	Henry Lewis Stimson, “The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb,” <i>Harper’s Magazine</i> (1947).
Revisionist Account	Gar Alperovitz, <i>Atomic Diplomacy: Hiroshima and Potsdam</i> (Vintage Books, 1965); Gar Alperovitz, <i>The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb and the Architecture of an American Myth</i> (Knopf, 1995); Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, <i>Racing the Enemy: Stalin, Truman, and the Surrender of Japan</i> (Harvard University Press, 2005).

Japanese Responsibility	Robert J. C. Butow, <i>Japan's Decision to Surrender</i> (Stanford University Press, 1954); Yoshimi Yoshiaki, <i>Grassroots Fascism: The War Experience of the Japanese People</i> (Columbia University Press, 2015); Herbert P. Bix, <i>Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan</i> (Harper Collins, 2000).
Unconditional Surrender Policy	Leon Sigal, <i>Fighting to a Finish: The Politics of War Termination in the United States and Japan, 1945</i> (Cornell University Press, 1988); Kenneth B. Pyle, <i>Japan in the American Century</i> (Harvard University Press, 2018) (*Chapters 2 and 3).
Military Historians	Edward Drea, <i>In the Service of the Emperor: Essays on the Imperial Japanese Army</i> (Nebraska University Press, 1998); Richard B. Frank, <i>Downfall: The End of the Imperial Japanese Empire</i> (Random House, 1999).
Racism's Relevance	John W. Dower, <i>War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War</i> (Pantheon, 1986); Ronald Takaki, <i>Hiroshima: Why America Dropped the Atomic Bomb</i> (Little, Brown, 1995).
Primary Sources & Testimonials	Michael Kort, <i>The Columbia Guide to Hiroshima and the Bomb</i> (Columbia University Press, 2007); John Hersey, <i>Hiroshima</i> (Vintage, 1989).

What is brought up but does not receive an in-depth analysis is the question of whether the Hiroshima decision led to the liberation of Asian people from Japanese war crimes and whether it should be justified in this light. In a couple of places in the book, Pyle shows his acknowledgment of this controversial issue: He cites one Chinese student's term paper that for Asians, the question is not the reasons for the decision of the bomb's use but its effect as punishment of the Japanese atrocities against Asian people (p. 7); He quotes Hasegawa's interview that when Japan is rendered as a victim, we must not forget the nation is also responsible for war crimes (p. 121). However, this inquiry is generally out of the scope of this book, which primarily aims to provide historical accounts of why the American political leaders reached the Hiroshima decision and of how historians—American or Japanese who write in English—have taken diverse views.

While Pyle believes historians' duty is to provide as truthful as possible historical accounts to instigate a free dialogue among a community of scholars, he admits historians cannot be completely free of subjective biases. In this reviewer's opinion, the blind spot that this book fails to

cover is the historical meaning of the Hiroshima decision to Japan's Asian neighbors. For the author, the Hiroshima decision is an issue for primarily American and Japanese audiences. As a corollary, throughout his book, Japan plays the role of victim, for whose cultural reproduction in the long postwar period the image of destroyed Hiroshima has played the central part. This perspectival orientation resulted in the non-inclusion of a large volume of recent studies that reveal the politics of memory involved in the history of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings.⁶ This omission may be inevitable because one book cannot cover all relevant topics. However, a historical study that subjects the Hiroshima decision only to the US-Japan relations would not help explain the similar tragic events in World War II such as forced labor and "comfort women," as these had complex international contexts that transcend any bilateral relations.

Still, the publication of Pyle's book is timely. As the author stresses, the Hiroshima decision is one of the most controversial historical disputes between the US and Japan. In the immediate aftermath of the decision, the American public largely supported the use of the A-bomb against the Japanese cities for an earlier ending of the war. While the US public opinion has been after several decades altered to become more critical of the bomb's mass killing of non-combatant civilians, they are still reluctant to accept the demand for a formal US apology. In 1996, when Japan moved to inscribe the Hiroshima Peace Memorial as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, which it eventually succeeded, the US made clear its opposition.⁷ On the other hand, most of the Japanese have consistently refused to accept the explanation that the A-bombing of Hiroshima was absolutely necessary to force a Japanese surrender and to

⁶ The memory politics of the Hiroshima bombing, see "Chapter 5 The Bombed: Hiroshimas and Nagasakis in Japanese Memory" in John W. Dower, *Ways of Forgetting, Ways of Remembering: Japan in the Modern World* (The New Press, 2012). This book is also included in Kenneth Pyle's recommended reading list on the Hiroshima Decision but without a description of its main arguments and findings (p. 250).

⁷ "US opposed Hiroshima memorial's inscription on UNESCO list: records," *Yonhap News Agency*, May 12, 2016, <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20160512009200315>.

avoid unnecessary deaths in both countries. Nonetheless, when it comes to formal conversations between governments or public organizations, the Japanese stop short of pursuing US responsibility any further.

The controversy continues today. In response to President Barack Obama's visit to Hiroshima in 2016, then-president candidate Donald Trump said, "Fine. Just as long as he doesn't apologize," as emphasized by Pyle in this book (p. 10). Shortly after the publication of Pyle's book, in October 2024, *Nihon Hidankyo*—short for The Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations—was awarded the 2024 Nobel Peace Prize "for its efforts to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons and for demonstrating through witness testimony that nuclear weapons must never be used again."⁸ Just two days later, the White House officially announced President Biden's congratulatory remarks, yet without hinting that the US caused the everlasting suffering.⁹ This silent avoidance means that the Hiroshima decision is likely to be a continuous historical issue for dispute between the US and Japan and among all the neighboring nations involved in this entangled history—*Nihon Hidankyo* officially acknowledges that the organization includes Korean atomic bomb victims as well.¹⁰ For those who want to know how the Hiroshima decision and its historiographical discussions have unfolded, *Hiroshima and the Historians* is the book to start with.

⁸ The Nobel Prize website, accessed December 15, 2024, <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/2024/press-release/>.

⁹ The White House website, accessed December 15, 2024, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2024/10/13/statement-from-president-biden-congratulating-nobel-peace-prize-winners/>.

¹⁰ "Peace Prize Representative Nihon Hidankyo, 'Korean victims fight together against anti-nuclear,'" *YTN*, December 10, 2024, https://m.ytn.co.kr/en/news_view.php?key=202412102310275948#return.



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