

# Meeting the World through Eighteenth-century *Yŏnhaeng*\*

Jung Jae-Hoon

This article aims to reveal some trends and particularities of Sino-Korean (Chosŏn-Qing) relations through a close reading of eighteenth-century *Yŏnhaengnok*, records composed by Korean envoys on their visits to Qing China. In the eighteenth century, Korean Neo-Confucian orthodoxy reached its apogee, yet at the same time intellectuals were also looking beyond the confines of Neo-Confucianism for solutions to various problems. Also, the *Yŏnhaeng*, the official Chosŏn embassies to Qing Beijing, reveal a clear change in how the Chosŏn Koreans perceived the Qing. Such change was reflected in eighteenth-century *Yŏnhaengnok* (records of *Yŏnhaeng*). Prose began to replace poetry as the dominant mode and format of *Yŏnhaengnok*, and increasingly greater attention was given to Qing culture, institutions and urban trends over descriptions of sceneries and nature. They also reflect a heightened interest in Western science and technology as it could be found in Qing China.

By broadening intellectual and cultural horizons, the *Yŏnhaeng* brought about a number of changes in Chosŏn society. The import of Qing fortress-building technology, for example, greatly aided the construction of Hwasŏng, one of the largest state projects during the reign of King Chŏngjo. The growing interest in all aspects of Qing civilization lead to the popularization of Northern Learning (*Pukhak*) and evidential learning (*kojŭnghak*). These intellectual trends became an important background factor in the acceptance of new civilization in the nineteenth century.

**Keywords:** Records of Embassies to Beijing (*Yŏnhaengnok*), Qing culture, Hwasŏng fortress, Northern Learning (*Pukhak*), evidential learning (*kojŭnghak*)

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## Introduction

A culture emerges through its active interactions with other cultures, and such interaction was most conspicuous in two critical epochs in Chosŏn Korea. The first epoch is the transition from Koryŏ (918-1392) to Chosŏn (1392-1910), when the adoption of Chinese Neo-Confucianism provided the impetus for replacing Buddhist culture with a full-blown Confucian culture. This shift was the result of the Korean decision to abide by the newly-rising Ming over the declining Yuan in the midst of the Yuan-Ming transition. The decision was made possible in part by Korean scholars, active during the period of transition from Koryŏ to Chosŏn, who sought the systematic adoption of Zhu Xi Neo-Confucianism. Neo-Confucianism, brought in as a new form of culture and knowledge system, was the impetus for great cultural changes in Chosŏn Korea. The increased import of Neo-Confucian and encyclopedic texts as well as new technologies from China reflected the path Chosŏn Korea chose amidst the dynastic change in the Central Plain.

The Chosŏn state was founded both on Neo-Confucian thought and the model of the Ming state. The flowering of Korean culture during the fifteenth century can be explained by the stability of these new foundations. The *sarim* (rural Neo-Confucian literati), who became influential societal agents in the sixteenth century, sought to overcome the limitations of early Chosŏn Neo-Confucianism through a critical reconsideration of the overly state-centered Yuan and Ming Neo-Confucianism. This can be seen from many critical comments on past Neo-Confucian trends on the part of *sarim* scholars in their personal anthologies. In addition, after examining the existing form of Neo-Confucianism as well as new intellectual trends such as that of Wang Yangming, sixteenth-century Korean scholars decided to deepen and perfect Zhu Xi Neo-Confucianism.<sup>1</sup> Such trends intensified after the Japanese invasions of Korea and the Manchu invasions of Korea. After the Qing replaced the Ming in 1644, Chosŏn scholars even imagined their nation to be the center of Chinese civilization (*Chosŏn chunghwa* 朝鮮中華).<sup>2</sup>

The second epoch spans from the late seventeenth to the eighteenth century, and possibly into the early nineteenth century. Korean Neo-Confucianism

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1. Chŏng Chaehun [Jung Jae-Hoon], *Chosŏn chŏn'gi yugyo chŏngch'i sasang yŏn'gu* (Seoul: T'aehaksa, 2005).

2. Chŏng Okcha, *Chosŏn hugi chunghwa sasang yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Ilchisa, 1998); Yi T'aejin, "Chosŏn hugi taemyŏng ūirion ūi pyŏnchŏn," *Asia munhwa* 10 (1994).

reached its peak of power, guiding both the state and society during this time. At the same time, however, there were waves of self-criticism and impetuses for change vis-à-vis the dominant paradigm. Renewed emphasis on the study of ancient texts such as the Six Classics (*yukkyŏng*) was an internal effort of self-reflection, aiming to both expand the boundaries of Confucianism and change the previous overemphasis on Zhu Xi Neo-Confucianism. On the other hand, embracing and importing of Qing culture was a way of taking advantage of an external opportunity.

The main purpose of this article is to examine the importance of the *Yŏnhaengnok* 燕行錄 in these late Chosŏn transformations. *Yŏnhaeng* 燕行 refers to Korean envoys sent to Yanjing (today's Beijing). Although Korean envoys had frequented the Chinese capital since the Three Kingdoms period, *Yŏnhaeng* in the late Chosŏn period assumed new significance. As Chosŏn Korea was believed to have assumed a sort of self-sufficiency within the China-centered cultural sphere, the new world Korean scholars saw through *Yŏnhaeng* was startling. No longer traditionally "Chinese," Qing culture was a kind of world culture that even embraced Western culture.

Through such experiences, those who participated in *Yŏnhaeng* discovered new meanings in things familiar and became mesmerized by the new culture. The new culture moved them to experiment with new styles of writing, broadly changing the topics and subjects they wrote about. Therefore, the *Yŏnhaengnok*, as a written testimony of diplomatic voyages, reflected such changes. Its owners were now able to recognize the Korean culture they knew in different ways, and discovered ways and opportunities for self-metamorphosis.

Because all the *Yŏnhaeng* missions took an identical route to and from the Qing capital, the sceneries and places the *Yŏnhaengnok* authors wrote about were also similar. While their reactions were sometimes simply emotional, at other times they provide important clues to understanding changes. Natural sceneries such as those at Yiwulü Mountain, Shanhaiguan, and Rehe (present day Chengde), and places of culture and human activity including Catholic cathedrals, glass factories, and the city of Beijing itself, are useful indicators of what Koreans involved in *Yŏnhaeng* must have felt. Such changes became conspicuous by the eighteenth century. This article aims to examine such changes by comparing how experiences of the eighteenth-century *Yŏnhaeng* differed from those of the past. I want to examine how the Chosŏn Koreans encountered the new world through *Yŏnhaeng* by examining the scope and features of eighteenth-century *Yŏnhaengnok*, changes in the *Yŏnhaengnok* format, and changes in their self-consciousness.

## Scale and Features of Eighteenth-century *Yŏnhaengnok*

*Yŏnhaeng* (lit. “journey to Beijing”) refers to the Korean embassies traveling to the Qing capital Beijing and back in the late Chosŏn period. This term contrasts with the earlier term *choch’ŏn* 朝天, literally “going to the Celestial Dynasty,” which was used during the Ming period. The usage of the term *Yŏnhaeng* during the Qing dynasty therefore shows Korea’s reluctance to recognize the Qing dynasty, whose legitimacy was not as fully embraced as that of the Ming.

There were a number of different terms referring to the China embassies since early Chosŏn.<sup>3</sup> In general, the embassies during early Chosŏn could be categorized as *pugyŏng sahaeng* 赴京使行 (embassies to Beijing) or *Yodong sahaeng* 遼東使行 (embassies to Liaodong), and embassies in late Chosŏn could be classified as *pugyŏng sahaeng* or *Simyang sahaeng* 瀋陽使行 (embassies to Shenyang). *Pugyŏng sahaeng* could be further subdivided into *chŏrhaeng* 節行 (regular embassies) and *pyŏlhaeng* 別行 (irregular embassies).

Generally speaking, in the case of embassies to Beijing, the Chosŏn government sent four embassies to the Qing court every year: *chŏngjosa* 正朝使 for the Chinese new year, *sŏngjŏlsa* 聖節使 on the birthday of the emperor, *ch’ŏnch’usa* 千秋使 for the birthday of the crown prince, and *tongjisa* 冬至使 on the winter solstice, and the Qing government would reward the Korean envoys for their visits with gifts. The number of institutionalized annual visits was decreased from 1645 onwards, with only the institution of *tongjisa* remaining in place. Additional envoys were sent to the Qing capital on special occasions, resulting on average in a total of two or three embassies per year. There were a total of 474 Korean embassies to the Qing capital during the 238 years from the beginning of the Qing to the final year of the Tongzhi Emperor (1874). If we also include the combined embassies that traveled together but for separate occasions, there were a total of 870 Korean visits—yielding an average of 3.6 embassies per year. The number of trips is certainly not small, and an analysis of the embassies could reveal important aspects of the changing nature of *Yŏnhaeng*.

According to the *Kyŏngguk taejŏn* (National code), a *Yŏnhaeng* mission

3. Other terms frequently used for *sahaeng* are: *kyep’umsa*, *chumunsa*, *saŭnsa*, *ch’ŏnch’u chinhasa*, *sŏngjŏlsa*, *hajŏngsa*, *ch’ŏnch’u chŏlsa*, *ammasa*, *chŏrilsa*, *saŭn chinp’yosa*, *tŭnggŭksa*, *chinwisa*, *chinhyangsa*, *sagosa*, *chinhasa*, *napchingsa*, *kosaksa*, *ch’ŏnyŏ chinhŏnsa*, *tangin apsongwan*, *hŭmmun kigŏsa*, *chongmagwan apsa*, *chŏngjosa*, *chaejin’gwan*, *amnyŏnggwan*, *ammagwan*, and *chaejagwan*.

was typically made up of a *chŏngsa* 正使 (head of mission), *pusa* 副使 (assistant head), *sŏjanggwan* 書狀官 (recorder), *chongsagwan* 從事官 (assistants), and *chongin* 從人 (servants), and although we cannot be entirely certain about this, probably was composed of around forty individuals in early Chosŏn. The *tongjisa* mission in late Chosŏn, according to the *T'ongmungwan chi* 通文館志 (Record of the Bureau of Interpretation), appears to have been composed of around forty individuals as well.<sup>4</sup> The *chŏngsa* represented the embassy, and was selected according to the status and function of the mission. The *chŏngsa* represented the Chosŏn state as well as the other members of the embassy in the performance of rites. The *pusa*, as the assistant head of the embassy, was usually selected among experts of China-related affairs. To enhance the symbolism of the *chŏngsa*, the *pusa* was usually selected among those who had already accompanied a Yŏnhaeng mission before. The *sŏjanggwan* kept an account of records of the mission, and turned in a formal report to the king upon its return. With the king's approval, the submitted report was given to the Royal Secretariat (Sŭngjŏngwŏn) to make an official report. The extant *choch'ŏn ki* (Accounts of [visits to] the Celestial Court) and *Yŏnhaengnok* were most likely produced through the activities of the *sŏjanggwan*.

First-hand records of the embassies can be divided into public (official) records and private records. Public records are formal reports submitted by the embassy members. *Sasin pyŏldan* 使臣別單, produced by the Royal Secretariat upon the king's review, are representative examples.<sup>5</sup> Private records are unofficial recordings of the trip independently made by the embassy members, usually produced in individual collections of works. Various kinds of *Yŏnhaengnok* of late Chosŏn, ranging from simple travel essays to encyclopedic dictionaries, are generally private records. Exceptionally detailed private records appear to have been supplemented by related publications after the trip.

Although different in their purpose and methods of writing, private and public records are obviously related.<sup>6</sup> For example, public and private records both discuss the scenery, geography, and institutions of the places they passed by in the trip. Although records may differ in the level of detail and tone, the

4. "Pugyŏngsahaeng," *T'ongmungwan chi*, vol. 3.

5. The *Tongmun hwigo* 同文彙考, compiled and published during the reign of King Chŏngjo, is a collection of the abovementioned official records. The first edition of *Tongmun hwigo* was published in the twelfth month of 1788, four years after King Chŏngjo first ordered the compilation of diplomatic papers from the reign of King Injo.

6. Kim Kyŏngnok, "Chosŏn sidae sahaeng kwa sahaeng kirok," *Han'guk munhwa* 38 (2006).

interrelation between them is obvious. According to previous research, there are more than 85 extant examples of eighteenth-century *Yŏnhaengnok*. The next section will review the formats of eighteenth-century *Yŏnhaengnok*.<sup>7</sup>

### Changes in *Yŏnhaengnok* Formats

Compared to previous records, eighteenth-century *Yŏnhaengnok* display significant changes in their format. First of all, writers of pre-eighteenth century *Yŏnhaengnok* often expressed their experiences in a poetic format instead of prose. The three top officials of the embassy, *chŏngsa*, *pusa* and *sŏjanggwan*, were generally men of extensive literary training, and they often exchanged poems with Chinese officials they met with. They often left recordings of exchanged poems, and reproduced their thoughts and feelings during the trip in poems. Although they did write prose, they were mostly official records and documents required to be submitted to the state.

In the eighteenth century, however, there was a clear increase in the use of prose at the expense of poetry. There are several reasons behind the increased use of prose. First, there was a greater need to reevaluate the Qing for what it was. Although a tributary relationship had been established between the Qing and Chosŏn following the Manchu invasion of 1636, Chosŏn did not readily accept the Qing as the legitimate “Middle Kingdom.” Although defeated on the battlefield, Chosŏn Koreans often thought of the Qing as an enemy that would eventually be defeated, and even contended that Chosŏn was the true bearer of traditional Chinese culture. As Chosŏn recovered its self-esteem and pride in the realm of culture, Chosŏn literati sought to view the world from their own Korea-centered perspective.

A number of *Yŏnhaengnok* in classical Chinese prose were produced in the eighteenth century, and they often utilized various writing styles. Kim Kyŏngsŏn, for example, singles out three representative *Yŏnhaengnok* in his *Yŏmwŏn chikchi* 燕輶直指 (1832), and points out the characteristic features of their different formats of writing. According to Kim, Kim Ch’angŏp’s *Nogajae yŏnhaeng ilgi* 老稼齋燕行日記 uses *p’yŏnmyŏnch’e* 編年體 (annals style), Hong Taeyong’s *Tamhŏn yŏn’gi* 湛軒燕記 uses *kisach’e* 紀事體 (topically arranged

7. For eighteenth-century *Yŏnhaengnok*, see *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip*, ed. Im Chijung, 100 vols. (Seoul: Dongguk University Press, 2001); *Yŏnhaengnok sŏnjip poyu*, ed. Sungkyunkwan University Academy of East Asian Studies, 2 vols. (Seoul: Sungkyunkwan University Academy of East Asian Studies, 2000); Kim Hyŏnmi, *18-segi yŏnhaengnok ū chŏn’gae wa t’ŭksŏng* (Seoul: Hyeon ch’ulp’ansa, 2007), 24-26.

style), and Pak Chiwŏn's *Yŏrha ilgi* 熱河日記 uses *chŏn'gich'e* 傳紀體 (biographical form).<sup>8</sup>

*Yŏnhaengnok* written in vernacular Korean also appeared in the late eighteenth century. The Korean vernacular version of Pak Chiwŏn's *Yŏrha ilgi* is a representative example.<sup>9</sup> Experiences of *Yŏnhaeng* could now also be shared by women and those from the lower classes.

Changes can also be noticed in the self-consciousness of the writers. Most participants of *Yŏnhaeng* in the early eighteenth century were members of the Noron 老論 (Old Doctrine) faction. Their presence was especially prominent among the embassy's three top officials (*chŏngsa*, *pusa*, and *sŏjanggwan*), and they were often closely related by blood and schooling, making it easier for them to share and relate their experiences of the journey to the Qing court. The roles of the so-called *yukch'ang* 六昌 ("six Ch'angs," Kim Ch'angjip, Kim Ch'anghyŏp, Kim Ch'anghŭp, Kim Ch'angŏp, Kim Ch'angjŭp, and Kim Ch'angnip) from the Andong Kim family are particularly noteworthy. They formed one of the core groups among the so-called *kyŏnghwa sajak* 京華士族 (the capital elite) and were generally open and receptive in their attitudes to the outside world.

They played key roles in the emergence of the so-called *chin'gyŏng* 眞景 (True View) culture in eighteenth-century Korea. Breaking away from the traditional focus on Chinese landscapes, they reevaluated Korean nature and sceneries, and such perspective had an impact on the *Yŏnhaengnok*. The so-called Nongyŏn 農淵 group, intellectual followers of Nong'am 農巖 Kim Ch'anghyŏp and Samyŏn 三淵 Kim Ch'anghŭp, included *Yŏnhaengnok* writers such as Yi Ŭihyŏn, the brothers Cho Munmyŏng and Cho Hyŏnmyŏng, and Yu Ch'ŏkki. Although there are not too many new developments in early eighteenth-century *Yŏnhaengnok*, they were keen to establish "Chosŏn" as the unmistakable subject of their work by describing their emotions while observing actual landscapes.

While little change can be noted in terms of the development of this narrative voice in mid-eighteenth century *Yŏnhaengnok*, in the late eighteenth century a new trend appears. One of the most conspicuous changes was the increased participation of the embassy officials' sons and younger brothers. Such participation was already occurring by mid-eighteenth century—as can be seen from the cases of Kim Ch'angŏp, who accompanied his older brother Kim Ch'angjip, and Hong Taeyong, who accompanied his uncle. By the late eighteenth century, however, they also played an important role in producing

8. See the introduction of Kim Kyŏngsŏn, *Yŏnwŏn chikchi*.

9. Kim T'aejun, "Yŏlha ilgi han'gŭlbon ch'ulhyŏn ŭi ttŭt," *Minjok munhaksa yŏn'gu* 19 (2001).

*Yŏnhaengnok*. For example, impressive *Yŏnhaengnok* records such as Yu Tŭkkong's *Nanyangnok* 潯陽錄 and Yi Tŏngmu's *Ibyŏn'gi* 入燕記, both compiled in 1778, Pak Chega's *Pukhakŭi* 北學議, and Pak Chiwŏn's *Yŏrha ilgi*, were all written by these sons and younger brothers who accompanied the official members of the trip. They mostly had personal relationships with Yŏnam Pak Chiwŏn, and notable personalities include: Hong Taeyong, Yi Tŏngmu, Yu Tŭkkong, Pak Chega, Yi Sŏgu, Sŏ Yugu, Kim Maesun, and the brothers Hong Sŏkchu and Hong Kilchu.<sup>10</sup>

Together with the change of narrative voice, it is natural that the subject material also shows changes vis-à-vis previous *Yŏnhaengnok*. While early eighteenth-century *Yŏnhaengnok* focused on the landscape or traditional culture of China, *Yŏnhaengnok* from later parts of eighteenth century focused more on the cities and culture of the present.

Kim Ch'angŏp, for example, in preparation for his 1712 trip, received a book from his older brother Kim Ch'angjip on the famous mountains, rivers and historical remains along the route to Beijing, and a travel record from Yi Chŏnggu. He stopped by the so-called "three mountains" on his trip, Tianshan, Shouyangshan, and Yiwulŭshan, and left records on his trip to the mountains: *Ch'ŏnsan yugi* 天山遊記, *Ŭimuryŏsan yugi* 醫巫閭山遊記, and *Suyangsan (Ijemyo) ki* 首陽山(夷齊廟)記. He stopped by Shouyangshan and Ijemyo on his way to Beijing, and he stopped by Yiwulŭshan and Tianshan on his way back to Korea. As Tianshan was somewhat removed from the established route to Beijing, he took extra trouble to make his visit.<sup>11</sup> While Hong Taeyong could not visit Tianshan, he nevertheless stopped by Yiwulŭshan, Shouyangshan and Jiaoshan. By leaving behind their impressions of the places they visited, Kim Ch'angŏp and Hong Taeyong helped to turn these places into "interiorized spaces" that were familiar to all those who set out on the road to Beijing and were considered "must-sees."

By the late eighteenth century, however, the growing interest in cities and the culture of the present began to replace previous interest in nature and landscape.<sup>12</sup> Hong Taeyong's *Tamhŏn yŏn'gi* is a relevant example. Hong, instead of paying attention to the route to Beijing, focused more on the culture and institutions of Qing China. He wrote about the people he communicated with through writing, and gave detailed descriptions of Beijing, well-known

10. Yu Ponghak, *Yŏnam ilp'a pukhak sasang yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Ilchisa, 1995). They grew to exert influence upon nineteenth-century Korean politics as well as the intellectual community.

11. Kim Ch'angŏp, *Nogaje yŏnhaeng ilgi*, vol. 9.

12. Kim Hyŏnmi, *18-segi yŏnhaengnok ūi chŏngae wa tŭksŏng* (Seoul: Hyeon ch'ulp'ansa, 2007).

attractions in Beijing, clothes, weapons, machineries, Qing institutions and culture, thereby greatly expanding the subject matter of *Yŏnhaengnok*. Hong made detailed descriptions of Shenyang in particular, but the same also applies to his introduction of Beijing, in which he describes *Jingchengzhi* 京城制, *Wulongting* 五龍亭, *Taihedian* 太和殿, and *Taixue* 太學.<sup>13</sup>

Hong Taeyong also wrote about the *Honch'ŏnŭi* 渾天儀 (Ch. *Huntianyi*, armillary sphere) and the clock he saw at a Catholic church. While Kim Ch'angŏp also saw the *Honch'ŏnŭi* during his visit to the Qing *Hŭmch'ŏn'gam* 欽天監 (Ch. *Qintianjian*, Board of Astronomy), he displayed little interest in the object, claiming that it appears to be a discarded object.<sup>14</sup> On the other hand, Hong displayed open interest in different instruments he saw.<sup>15</sup> Regretting the general lack of interest beyond mere curiosity by his predecessors, Hong left extensive records on different instruments he witnessed at the *Kwansangdae* 觀象臺 (Ch. *Guanxiangtai*, observatory).<sup>16</sup> Hong visited a particular Catholic church four times to see its equipments for astronomical observations. He also left records on wagons, ships, and treadmills.

### Changes in Self-consciousness

As can be observed from the above-mentioned changes in the *Yŏnhaengnok* topics, simultaneous changes in writers' self-consciousness also occurred. Such changes were in fact natural, as discovering and writing on new topics could not occur without changes in writers themselves.

Generally speaking, the dominant topic envoys to China wrote on until around the sixteenth century was Zhu Xi Neo-Confucianism. For example, the main objects of attention for Hŏ Pong (1551-1588) in his *Choch'ŏn ki* were the Chinese private academies and Confucian shrines.<sup>17</sup> By contrast, early eighteenth century *Yŏnhaengnok* focused on scenic spots and places of historic interest. Even while visiting historical places such as *Zhennüimiao* 貞女廟 (shrine

13. Hong Taeyong, *Tamhŏnsŏ, oejip*, vol. 9, "Yŏngi:" 'Kyŏngsŏngje,' 'Oryongjŏng,' 'T'aehwajŏn,' and 'Taehak.'

14. Kim Ch'angŏp, *Nogaje yŏnhaeng ilgi*, vol. 7, Kyesa-nyŏn, 2nd month, 15th day (Seoul: Minjok munhwa ch'ujinhoe kojŏn kugyŏk ch'ongsŏ yŏnhaengnok sŏnjip 4, 1976), 400.

15. Hong Taeyong, *Tamhŏnsŏ, oejip*, vol. 9, "Yŏn'gi:" 'Kwansangdae' (Seoul: Han'guk munjip ch'onggan 248), 292.

16. Hong Taeyong, *Tamhŏnsŏ, oejip*, vol. 7, "Yŏn'gi:" 'Yup'o mundap' (Seoul: Han'guk munjip ch'onggan 248), 248.

17. Hŏ Pong, *Choch'ŏn'gi*, first volume, sixth month, 26th day, 1574.

celebrating chaste women) and *Yiqimiao* 夷齊廟 (Shrine for Shang loyalists Bai Yi and Shu Qi), the focus was largely on its landscape and scenery, not its historical significance and meaning. By the mid-eighteenth century, however, the focus shifted to Qing culture, institutions and civilization. Late eighteenth-century *Yŏnhaengnok* writers often wrote of Qing marketplaces, architecture, food, clothing, and appliances.

In addition, mid-eighteenth century *Yŏnhaengnok* display greater efforts towards understanding the structure and logic behind the Qing institutions and culture. Diverse and deep social intercourse between Koreans and Qing Manchus and Chinese are also in evidence. Such trends diversify and intensify towards the late eighteenth century.

Changes in self-consciousness can be spotted in a number of instances. First, the way Chosŏn Koreans perceive the Qing clearly changes in the eighteenth century. Until the early eighteenth century, sentiments of regret for the Ming remained significant among the Korean visitors. Kim Ch'angŏp, for example, expressed his feelings toward the Ming by visiting the home of Ming general Zu Dashou, who failed to effectively resist the Manchu invaders, and mused about Yuan Chonghuan's brave defiance in the face of submission.<sup>18</sup> He also expressed regret towards the fact that he was unable to visit Wansuishi (today's Jingshan), the place where the Chongzhen Emperor, the last emperor of the Ming dynasty, committed suicide.<sup>19</sup> His criticisms of Ming dilapidation and bad policy at his visit of Tu'ershan, a place assumed to have been a playground of the Ming royal family, also displays his feelings toward the Ming.<sup>20</sup>

By the mid-eighteenth century, however, a clear change in the perceptions toward the Ming and the Qing can be sensed. Hong Taeyong, for example, recognized that the Ming drove out the barbaric Yuan and recovered civilization. Hong also regretted that products of civilization, described in a traditional sense, could no longer be found in China. However, Hong also notes:

However, although the culture changed, the mountains and rivers (of China) remain the same. Although the clothes may have changed, the people are the same as before. How could one now visit the country to see the world and exchange

18. Kim Ch'angŏp, *Nogaje yŏnhaeng ilgi*, vol. 2 (Seoul: Minjok munhwa ch'ujinhoe kojŏn kugyŏk ch'ongsŏ yŏnhaengnok sŏnjip 4, 1976), 123 (12th month, 15th day, 1712).

19. Kim Ch'angŏp, *Nogaje yŏnhaeng ilgi*, vol. 7 (Seoul: Minjok munhwa ch'ujinhoe kojŏn kugyŏk ch'ongsŏ yŏnhaengnok sŏnjip 4, 1976), 289 (1st month, 25th day, 1713).

20. Kim Ch'angŏp, *Nogaje yŏnhaeng ilgi*, vol. 7 (Seoul: Minjok munhwa ch'ujinhoe kojŏn kugyŏk ch'ongsŏ yŏnhaengnok sŏnjip 4, 1976), 375 (2nd month, 9th day, 1713).

with other scholars about world affairs? Although they are barbarians, their prosperous presence in China for the past century proves that they ought to be reckoned with. If one says that “a gentleman should not step on the soil of barbarians and should not talk with those wearing barbarian clothes,” that person is parochial and close-minded.<sup>21</sup>

It is clear from the quote that his position signals a shift towards a more positive evaluation of the Qing. Later, Pak Chiwŏn goes even further than Hong:

Although it has only been four generations since the Qing became the owner of the world, they acquired and maintained both literary and martial arts. Moreover, the country has been worry-free for the past century. Such achievement is unprecedented in history. Looking at the foundations that were established and the constructions made on it, this must be divine will.<sup>22</sup>

As can be seen in the quote, he began to understand the Qing as the most successful state in China's history.

Such view of Qing also led to changes in self-perception. The concept of *Chosŏn chungghwa* (“Korea as the center of Chinese culture”), based on the denial of the Qing as the legitimate Middle Kingdom, could no longer be maintained in the light of this new appraisal. What Hong Taeyong declared in his *Ŭisan mundap* 醫山問答 is that the civilized-barbarian distinction is no longer meaningful.<sup>23</sup>

As positive appraisals of the Qing became dominant, Korean interests in Qing institutions and culture also began to increase. However, Qing institutions and culture also included elements of the West. Chosŏn Korean scholars not only engaged in purchasing texts and equipments on Western astronomy, calendar, mathematics and medicine, they sometimes visited Catholic churches and astronomical institutions of the Qing to observe the equipments and

21. Hong Taeyong, *Sanhaegwan cham'gin mun ŭl hanson ŭro milch'idoda* (ölbyŏng yŏnhaengnok), trans. Kim T'aejun and Pak Sŏngjun (Seoul: Tongbege ch'ulp'ansa, 2001), 21.

22. Pak Chiwŏn, *Kugyŏk Yŏrha ilgi*, “Kwannae chŏngsa,” ‘Hojil huji’ (Seoul: Minjok munhwa ch'ujinhoe, 1966).

23. “All beings with vitality are men, outstanding men who rule their countries are kings, and the entities that carefully protect their lands by building gates and deep moats are states, (. . .) How could there be a distinction between the inside and the outside in the eyes of Heaven? There is no difference between Chinese and barbarians in that they feel closer to their countrymen, raise their kings, protect their countries and feel positive about their customs. (. . .) Had Confucius gone overseas and lived amongst the barbarians, he would have used the laws of China to transform the barbarians' customs and established the way of Zhou outside (of China). That is why Confucius became a sage.” See Hong Taeyong, *Tamhŏnsŏ, oejip*, vol. 4, “Ŭisan mundap” (Seoul: Minjok munhwa ch'ujinhoe, 1974).

exchange opinions.<sup>24</sup>

However, such interest in Western science and technology was not always expressed in terms of admiration and acceptance. At times, the concept of *Chosŏn chunghwa* can be seen to influence the process of acceptance of Western science and technology. Qing institutions and culture were sometimes viewed as mere inheritances of ancient Chinese institutions and culture, and the calendar and mathematics of the West were seen as having their roots in China. Such methods of perception were attempts to understand the rapidly changing world on the basis of the traditional worldview.<sup>25</sup>

Such methods of understanding viewed China as the original source of new institutions and culture.<sup>26</sup> However, such a view could justify both further intensification of the importation of Qing institutions and culture in order to become a more fully “civilized” (sinified) nation as well as overall rejection of the foreign institutions altogether on the ground that they are mere imitations of the Chinese original. Such view appears to be influenced by a sense of pride amongst Koreans, the positive evaluation of Qing institutions and culture, and the fact that the Qing continued to occupy the heart of the East Asian world.

By the late eighteenth century, however, there were voices that sought to recognize the institutions and culture of the West as they were. Sŏ Hosu (1736-1799) is a representative example. He recognized via *Yŏnhaeng* that the Western calendar differs fundamentally from that of ancient China, and criticized the use of texts such as the *Zhouyi* (Book of Changes) to explain the calendar by pointing to erroneous predictions of eclipses made in Han and Tang era calendars.<sup>27</sup> He also recognized the fundamental difference between the mathematics of the West and traditional Chinese mathematics based on *Zhouyi*. Such approach marked the beginning point in distinguishing Qing and Western institutions and cultures. Recognition of the West as a separate entity now became possible.

Eighteenth-century *Yŏnhaeng* were therefore an opportunity for Chosŏn Koreans to view the world they lived in in a different way. Their perception of the Qing changed, and Qing institutions and culture were also seen in a

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24. Wŏn Chaeyŏn, *Sŏse tongjŏm gwa chosŏn wangjo ŭi taeŭng* (Seoul: Handŭl ch’ulp’ansa, 2003).

25. Kim Munsik, “Chosŏn hugi chisigin ŭi chaa insik gwa t’aja insik,” *Taedong munhwa yŏn’gu* 19 (2001).

26. No Taehwan, *Tongdo sŏgi ron hyŏngsŏng kwajŏng yŏn’gu* (Seoul: Ilchisa, 2005).

27. Sŏ Hosu, *Yŏnhaengi*, vol. 3 (Seoul: Minjok munhwa ch’ujinhoe kojŏn kugyŏk ch’ongsŏ yŏnhaengnok sŏnjip 5, 1976), 315-316 (8th month, 25th day, 1790).

different light. In the midst of this transition, elements of Western institutions and culture were also evaluated in a new light. Such new understanding came about in the midst of a widespread recognition that the Chosŏn system could no longer be maintained solely based on the Neo-Confucian political and social order. Recognition of *Pukhak* 北學 (Northern Learning, the study of Qing civilization) as potential catalyst for change in eighteenth century was one of many Chosŏn Korean efforts to renew their society.

### The Influence of Yŏnhaeng

The Yŏnhaeng had significant influence on eighteenth-century Chosŏn society. The most important impact was the direct reception of Qing culture and institutions. To give a concrete example, the embassies to Beijing influenced the construction of Hwasŏng, a major state-led project during the reign of King Chŏngjo (1776-1800). Chŏngjo sent the painter Kim Hongdo (b. 1745) to draw the Yŏnhaeng route. What is noteworthy in his paintings is that their detailed descriptions of brick-made fortifications in China were referred to for the construction of Hwasŏng.

This assertion can be backed up by the following passage:

[The King] met with ministers-without-portfolio Sŏ Myŏngsŏn, Yi Pogwŏn, and Yi Sŏngwŏn, Chief State Councilor Kim Ik, High State Councilors Yi Chaehyŏp and Ch'ae Chegong at the Imunwŏn.

They came to ask about the king's health and wellbeing. Yi Sŏngwŏn, as the head of the *tongjisa* mission, requested that he take on Kim Hongdo as a military officer and make an extra space in the embassy for Yi Myŏnggi. [This request] was accepted."<sup>28</sup>

According to the quoted record, Kim Hongdo and Yi Myŏnggi, although not part of the originally designated personnel, were added to the *tongjisa* embassy. Although there are no records of their activities in the winter solstice trip, it is almost certain that Kim Hongdo participated in this embassy.

A painting that is traditionally associated with the above-mentioned record is the *Hubul t'aenghwa* (Buddhist painting behind the sculpted icons) of the main hall in Yongjusa, Suwŏn (formerly Hwasŏng). Its origins are disputed, and opinion is divided as to whether it was done by Kim Hongdo, or whether

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28. *Ilŏngnok*, 8th month, 14th day, 1789 (the 13th year of King Chŏngjo's reign). An identical record also can be found in *Sŏngjŏngwŏn ilgi* on the same date.

it is a twentieth-century reproduction using Western artistic methods. However, recent research using fluorescence analysis and infrared light scanning has shown that this painting was indeed drawn in the 1790s by state painters, which could have included Kim Hongdo, Yi Myŏnggi and Kim Tŭksin and monks such as Sanggyŏm, through creative transfiguration of Western artistic methods.<sup>29</sup>

The problem is that the *Hubul t'aenghwa* of Yongjusa is not the only painting utilizing Western methods. The fact is that Kim Hongdo already learned much about Western methods and China through his participation in the 1790 *Yŏnhaeng*. How was such participation possible?

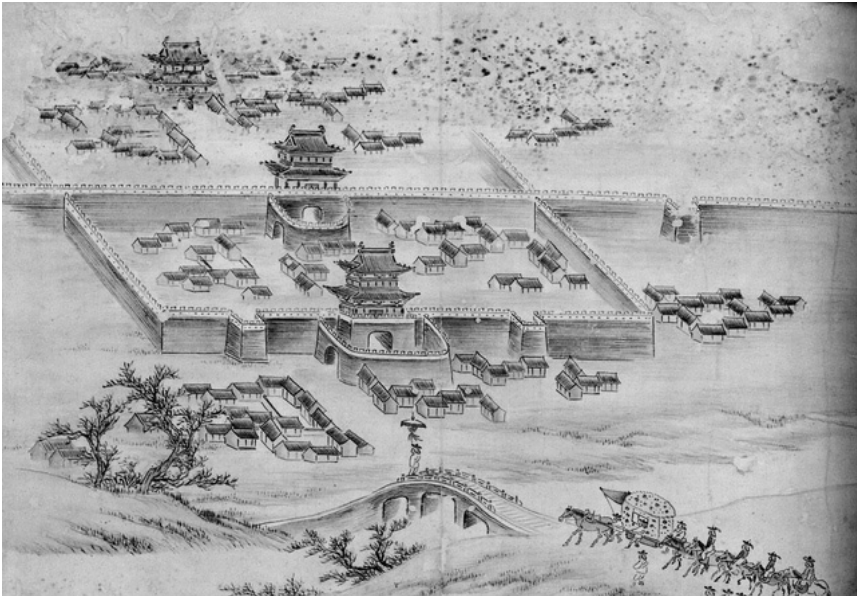
Although it is recorded that Kim Hongdo was added to the *tongjisa* trip at the request of Yi Sŏngwŏn, it is more likely that he was included at the request of King Chŏngjo. Kim Hongdo, as a painter employed by the Kyujanggak at the time, often produced paintings for King Chŏngjo himself. In the ninth month of the 12th year of King Chŏngjo (1789), a year before Kim Hongdo joined the *tongjisa* trip, Kim Hongdo was ordered by Chŏngjo to travel through nine counties with Kim Ŭnghwan to produce a painting of *Kŭmgangsŏn* (the Diamond Mountains). The inclusion of Kim Hongdo in the embassy reflects King Chŏngjo's intention of surveying Beijing directly to gather material for the construction of Hwasŏng.

Kim Hongdo made detailed drawings of places that could provide new and useful information to King Chŏngjo's project. Gates such as Chaoyangmen, Zhengyangmen, and Dongluocheng of Shanhaiguan were perceived as particularly noteworthy, and therefore were drawn in great detail. The 13th year of Chŏngjo was the year when the decision to move the grave of Sado seja (Chŏngjo's father) to Hwasŏng was made. The decision, made in response to the memorial of Kŭmsŏngwi Pak Myŏngwŏn, occurred a month before the inclusion of Kim Hongdo in the *tongjisa* trip.<sup>30</sup> With the imminent transfer of the grave, an increased interest in fortress-making in China appears natural. In fact, the appearance of the Hwasŏng walls greatly resembles Dongluomen of Shanhaiguan or Chaoyangmen of Beijing, and the decision to use bricks as the main building material also shows acceptance of Chinese method of building (see ill. 1 and 2).

The popularization and widespread circulation of Pukhak was also achieved through late eighteenth-century *Yŏnhaeng*. Early advocates of Pukhak were

29. Kang Kwansik, "Yongjusa hubult'aeng kwa Chosŏn hugi kungjung hoechwa," in *Misul sahak yŏnguhoe 2008-nyŏndo kaül chŏnggi haksul taehoe charyojip*.

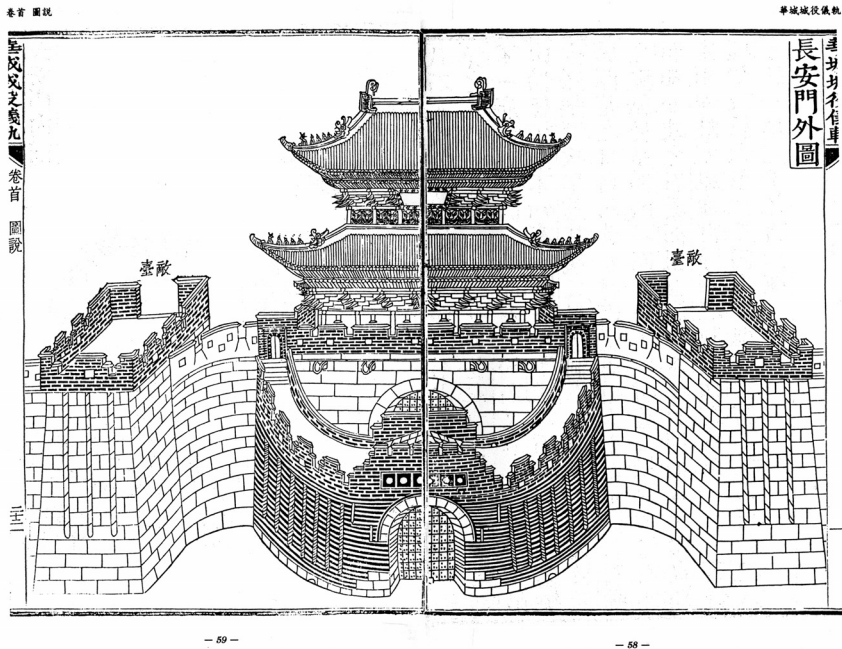
30. *Chŏngjo sillok*, 7th month, 11th day, 1789.



III. 1. A depiction of Shanhaiguan Dongluocheng (reproduced from *Yŏnhaengdo*, courtesy of Soongsil University Museum of Korean Christianity).

Hong Taeyong (1731-1783) and Pak Chiwŏn (1737-1805), and their successors, Pak Chega (1750-1815), Yi Tŏngmu (1741-1793), Yu Tŭkkong (1749-?), Nam Kongch'ŏl (1760-1840), and Yi Sŏgu (1754-1825), established Pukhak as an important current among Korean intellectuals. Kim Chŏnghŭi (1786-1856; penname Ch'usa) can be seen as a member of the next generation of *Pukhak* scholars.

Korean interest in currents of Qing scholarship began in the late eighteenth century. Qing *kaozhengxue* 考證學 (K. *kojŭnghak*; “evidential learning,” mainly the application of text-critical methods to various fields of study), which became an independent discipline by presenting itself as *hanxue* (“Han learning”) against the established *songxue* (“Song learning”), also began to attract Korean attention after the mid-eighteenth century. Of course, Korean scholars did not readily accept *kaozhengxue* as it was. A certain sense of alienation and distance can be felt even from the case of Hong Taeyong, a well-known Pukhak scholar. Although Hong faithfully introduced *kaozhengxue* to Korea, not only did he not mention it in his meetings and communications with Qing scholars in his 1766 (40th year of King Yŏngjo) *Yŏnhaeng*, Hong even tried to persuade the Qing scholars of the “correct” way of Neo-Confucianism.



III. 2. A drawing of the Chang'an gate of Suwŏn Hwasŏng (reproduced from *Hwasŏng sŏngyŏk iŭgwe*).

The perception that the publication of *Siku quanshu* ("Complete Library of the Four Treasuries") was a state effort to control thought, and the fact that Neo-Confucian texts from the Qing were not read, are examples of negative perceptions toward Qing scholarship. However, many Korean scholars also expressed great interest in Qing *wenzixue* ("etymology") and *Yinyunxue* ("phonological studies").<sup>31</sup>

Korean interest in Qing *kaozhengxue* intensified by the reign of King Sunjo (1800-1834). There were now clear indications that some scholars began to view publications such as *Siku quanshu* as a positive achievement. Sŏ Hyŏngsu (1749-1824), for example, wrote *Kihyo namjŏn* 紀曉嵐傳, in which he recognized Ji Yun (1724-1805) as an evidential scholar and defended Ji's scholarship.<sup>32</sup> Sŏ Yugu (1764-1833) also duly recognized the importance of the *Siku quanshu*.<sup>33</sup>

31. Yi Tŏngmu, *Ch'ŏngjanggwŏn chŏnsŏ*, vol. 56, "Yangyŏp kisam sago chŏnsŏ."

32. Sŏ Hyŏngsu, *Myŏnggo chŏnjip*, vol. 14, "Kihyo namjŏn."

33. Sŏ Yugu, *Kŏnhwa chibijip*, vol. 2, "Sangjung pumyŏnggo sŏnsaeng non kihyo namjŏn."

Although more orthodox scholars such as O Hŭisang (1763-1833) and Kim Maesun (1776-1840) expressed discomfort at the spread of *kaohengxue*, acceptance of evidential learning became an irresistible trend.<sup>34</sup>

*Kaohengxue*, or *kojŭnghak* to refer to it in its Korean application, easily became the most notable strand of *Pukhak*, and eventually assumed dominance by the reign of King Sunjo. Its popularity can be inferred from criticisms that *kojŭnghak* negatively influenced the scholars of the day to complacently enjoy scenery and paintings instead of carrying out scholarly discussions on statecraft and writing. This point was made due to the widespread trend of indiscriminate acceptance of Qing culture and products. The popularity and widespread circulation of even paltry artifacts from Beijing reveal the degree to which Qing culture was accepted in Chosŏn Korea.

The Korean intellectual response to *kojŭnghak* has been described as “Hansong chŏlch’ung” (“Han-Song compromise”). Already during the reign of Chŏngjo in the late eighteenth century intellectuals recognized the limitations of Zhu Xi Neo-Confucianism, and sought to resolve its limits using *kojŭnghak*. The philological vetting of Zhu Xi’s texts during the reign of King Chŏngjo and interest in etymology and epigraphy can be understood against the background of *kojŭnghak*. Such interests prepared the ground for a compromise between *Songxue* (“Song studies,” meaning Neo-Confucianism) and *Hanxue* (“Han studies,” meaning *kojŭnghak* in this case). Sŏng Haeŭng (1760-1839) and Nam Kongch’ŏl’s (1760-1840) recognition that both have merits and demerits clearly display these new tendencies.<sup>35</sup> Generally speaking, scholars working under King Chŏngjo can be seen as attempting to absorb elements of *kojŭnghak* to overcome the inherent limitations of Song Neo-Confucianism. Even in the process of acceptance, Korean scholars including King Chŏngjo sought to incorporate elements of *kojŭnghak* in the paradigm of the above-mentioned *Chosŏn chungwa*.

However, the gradual trend towards the all-round acceptance of Qing culture and products was unavoidable. Such trend is related to the findings of textual studies in the context of Qing “evidential learning.” The discovery that the canonical texts the Song scholars of Neo-Confucianism had relied on were in fact not authored by Confucius and Mencius as they had assumed, assailed the very foundations of Neo-Confucianism, and made criticism of Song

34. Yu Ponghak, *Chosŏn hugi hakkye wa chisigin* (Seoul: Sin’gu munhwasa, 1998).

35. Kim Munsik, “Chosŏn hugi kyŏnggi hakin ŭi hansong chŏlch’ungwon,” in *Chosŏn hugi kyŏnggak ŭi chŏnggae wa kŭ sŏngkyŏk* (Seoul: Sŏnggyungwan taehakkyo taedong munhwa yŏn’guwon, 1998).

scholarship inevitable. Of course, *sarim* scholars such as Hong Chikp'il (1776-1852) expressed strong disapproval of Qing scholarship after reading the works of Ruan Yuan.<sup>36</sup> Hong Sökchu (1774-1842) criticized Ji Yun for deviating from Zhu Xi orthodoxy. However, Hong's criticism that those who go to China become mesmerized by the glamour of China already shows how by his time the tables had turned.

The most popular area of *kojŭnghak* in Chosŏn Korea was epigraphy. Gu Yanwu's *Jinshi wenzi ji* 金石文字記 laid the foundations of this field, and Qian Daxin's *Qianyantang jinshi wenzi bawei* 潛研堂金石文字跋尾 and Wu Yi's *Jinshi sanba* 金石三跋 further developed it. Up to this point, however, epigraphy was still a mere method to ascertain studies of statecraft and history.<sup>37</sup> By the time of Weng Fanggang and Huang Yi, the field of epigraphy started to focus on the textual emendation of inscriptions. More than just a method to ascertain ways of statecraft, epigraphy became a philological exercise to shed light on the classics. As Sŏ Hyŏngsu began to import *hanxue* from the Qing, textual study (philology) began to separate itself from statecraft.<sup>38</sup>

As epigraphy began to be established as a field in its own right, its previous focus on statecraft rapidly diminished. This new trend was criticized by certain Korean scholars who believed that such transformation reduced its practicality. Such criticisms were not entirely effective, as Song Neo-Confucianism itself could not be the alternative.

Despite the limitations *kojŭnghak* inherently had in reforming society, *Yŏnhaeng* continued to exert its influence upon Korean society into the reign of King Kojong in the late nineteenth century. Kojong displayed the same open attitude towards new culture and institutions that those who participated in *Yŏnhaeng* did. For example, Kojong readily accepted policies of openness and *kaehwa* ("westernization"), as did Pak Chiwŏn in the *oech'i* ("foreign policy") section of his *Yŏrha ilgi*. The example of King Kojong shows that new perceptions and attitudes toward the outside world, produced through *Yŏnhaeng*, continued to influence Korean society at large, which searched to balance openness to the outside world with a self-respecting autonomy.

36. Hong Chikp'il, *Maesan sŏnsaeng munjip*, vol. 52, "chamnok."

37. Liang Qichu, *Ch'ŏngdae haksul kaeron*, trans. Yi Kidong and Ch'oe Ilbŏm (Seoul: Yŏgang ch'ulp'ansa, 1987).

38. Yu Ponghak, *Yŏnam ilp'a pukhak sasang yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Ilchisa, 1998), 123.

## Conclusion

Thus far, I have examined the changes that can be observed in eighteenth-century *Yŏnhaeng*. Most importantly, eighteenth-century *Yŏnhaeng* can be distinguished from previous examples by the more open and tolerant attitudes and perceptions of those who participated in the embassies and their reevaluation of Qing culture and institutions.

For Chosŏn Koreans, who mostly had been complacent and content with their place in the China-centered world order, *Yŏnhaeng* was a new method of engaging the larger world. The larger world these men encountered through *Yŏnhaeng* was new. The Qing displayed a magnificent new culture of its own, created through a transformation of traditional Chinese culture, and allowed the display of Western culture that was available in Beijing.

The formats of the *Yŏnhaengnok* were influenced by these changes in perceptions. Prose began to outnumber poetry, and greater attention was given to Qing institutions, culture and urban trends. Western science and technology, introduced via the Qing, also became objects of great attention.

A great number of changes appeared in Chosŏn through the new findings of *Yŏnhaeng*. The import of Qing fortress-building technology greatly influenced the construction of the brick-made Hwasŏng fortifications, one of the largest state projects of King Chŏngjo's reign. *Yŏnhaeng* also greatly influenced the Korean intellectual community by introducing and popularizing *Pukhak* and *kojŏnghak* as well as establishing the framework for the greater acceptance of foreign culture and institutions in the nineteenth century.