

Dealing with Uncertainty: Divination During the Imjin War (1592–1598) as Recorded in O Huimun's *Swaemirok**

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O Huimun, a Joseon *yangban* who had never passed the civil service examination and consequently never been appointed to a government position, was travelling around Jeolla Province in 1592 when the first Japanese invasion of the Imjin War (1592–1598) occurred. From the outset of his travels at the end of 1591 until his return to Seoul early in 1601, O Huimun kept an almost unbroken daily record of his and his family's life experiences as they struggled to survive in the adverse conditions of wartime Joseon. One of the most salient features of the "Gabo illok" (Daily record of the lunar year 1594) section of the diary is O Huimun's frequent recourse to divination during the time when he and his family were taking refuge in Imcheon 林川 in Chungcheong Province and came into contact with Yi Bongnyeong, a divination official (*myeonggwagwan* 命課官) in the Office of Observance of Natural Phenomena (Gwansanggam 觀象監) of the Joseon government, who was also taking refuge there. In order to help us better understand the daily life and world view of a Neo-Confucian *yangban* in mid-Joseon times, this article examines O Huimun's frequent recourse to Yi Bongnyeong's divination in relation to health matters, his daughter's marriage and childbirth, his sons' prospects in the civil service examination, and general fortune telling.

Keywords: Divination, Imjin War (Imjin waeran), Jeongyu jaeran, war diaries, O Huimun, *Swaemirok*

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