

(朝鲜建国始祖檀君, The Founding Ancestor of Korea, Tangun) (Pyongyang: Chaoxian waiwen chubanshe, 1994): these included the excavation report on Tangun's tomb, as well as eighteen articles offering interpretations of the Tangun myth, and so on. They seem to offer irrefutable evidence, but their goal is to provide food for thought.

101. Edward H. Carr, *What Is History?* With a new introduction by Richard J. Evans (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2001), 24.

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A Stranger in a Neighbor's Home

Western Missionaries in Beijing, as Seen by
Korean Envoys in the Mid-Qing Period

Abstract: Among extant documents of the Choson kingdom pertaining to the emissaries who traveled to Qing-era Beijing to offer New Year's greetings or pay tribute, there are many materials concerning Western Catholics in China, Japan, and Korea in the period from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries, covering especially their activities in Beijing. From these materials, we can see the Korean literati's curiosity toward and observation of Western nations and Catholics, their interaction with contemporary Beijing missionaries, as well as the evolution of the literati's attitude toward Western Catholics. Through the "Taoxieni zouwen" (討邪逆奏文, Memorial on Heresy), which Choson presented to the Qing court at the turn of the nineteenth century, we can see clearly that Western Catholics' efforts to proselytize in Korea via China met setbacks following the "Sinyu Persecution" of 1801. The interactions between these different ethnicities, nations, and religions not only help us understand the history of exchange between Eastern and Western cultures, but also demonstrate the differing attitudes and strategies that the East Asian countries of Japan, China, and Korea adopted to deal with Catholic missionaries and, furthermore, allow us to analyze the political and cultural disparities which informed these dissimilarities.

According to the Western calendar, it was already early 1802 by the latter end of the sixth year of the Jiaqing reign (1796–1820). In accordance with precedent, the

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Choson kingdom of Korea sent an emissary to offer New Year's greetings to the great Qing empire. He hurried to arrive in Beijing prior to New Year's Day. The emissary of this year was named Cho Yun-dae 曹允大. Aside from the usual annual presents and letter of greetings, in this incidence he also carried a report that the new king of Choson had written for the Qing emperor. Copied in Yi Man-su's 李晚秀 (1752–1820) "Yu-cha jip" (輶車集, Carriage Collections),¹ this report was entitled "Memorial on Heresy." It noted that, within the past few years, a group of "villainous agitators, advocating the study of the West," had emerged and gathered many followers, from the capital to Chŏlla-to province. "Calling themselves either priests or religious believers and changing their names, each was appointed to a certain rank." They were reminiscent of the Yellow Turban Army or the White Lotus Society of ancient China. In the third month of that year (1801), the Seoul government intercepted and seized the group's correspondence and heretical documents disseminating Catholicism, and conducted large-scale raids and arrests. The heretical documents were written by Chŏng Yag-jong 丁若鍾. Several upper-class literati also participated in these activities, including Yi Byok 李燮, Yi Sŭng-hun 李承薰, Chŏng Yag-yong (1762–1836), Chŏng Yag-jeon 丁若詮 (1758–1816), and others. To demonstrate the severity of the matter, the report also mentioned a Chinese person, Zhou Wenmo of Suzhou, Jiangnan (1752–1801): "The so-called Zhou Wenmo met with someone on the border and disguised himself as a courier. Hiding by day and acting by night, he snuck into the national capital and lay hidden for many years serving as their rebel leader." It was alleged that he instigated the people of Choson to collaborate with the foreigners and sought to destabilize the Choson kingdom.

The Yi Choson dynasty was fairly shocked by the domestic and foreign collusion between Westerners and the people of its own nation, as well as people of the Qing empire. They believed they must let the Qing government know the severity of the matter. However, the Koreans did not foresee that, only a few days after the memorial had been presented to the Qing court, and before the emissary had even offered his New Year's greetings, the Qing government unconcernedly returned the memorial and, furthermore, reprimanded the Korean emissary. The Qing court high-handedly dismissed the information they shared regarding Korean traitors and collusion with Westerners in Beijing, saying casually:

The capital city has always contained places where the Westerners reside. Simply because the foreigners have habitually mastered the calendar, we allow them to make their conjectures and hold offices in the Bureau of Astronomy. They are never allowed to have contact with outsiders. These foreigners sailed across the seas to come to the capital. They are known to be law-abiding, and there has been no report of private proselytizing for the past one hundred years. Likewise, no person has been enticed to practice their religion. The king of Choson's claim that the heretic Kim Yu-shan 金有山 and others came to the capital to disseminate their religion is certainly absurd. As for the agitators hidden in that country obtaining heretical documents and circulating them widely, as well as

the event itself, there is not a word of truth in this. These words are fabricated and particularly incredible.²

After having lain quiescent for three years, this issue became famous overnight. The Jiaqing emperor, who had recently managed, with difficulty, to handle the cases of He Shen (1746–1799) and Hong Liangji (1746–1809), and the chaos of the White Lotus Rebellion (1796–1804) with moderate fairness, was perhaps unwilling to stir up turmoil, or perhaps still confident that he could deal with the Westerners. Therefore he did not believe, and was perhaps unwilling to, that the presence of Western missionaries in the capital would give rise to trouble. Although the Qing empire had increasingly restricted the religious activities of Western missionaries in China beginning in the Kangxi reign (1661–1722), throughout the Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong reigns, up to the Jiaqing reign, the Qing had not prohibited Catholicism so strictly as had Japan, which sought to defend its cultural purity through wide-ranging efforts. Nor had they experienced internal strife and clashes as had the Choson kingdom, which was panic-stricken by a political crisis caused by religious uprisings. On the contrary, they very tolerantly allowed the Western missionaries to live in the four churches of Beijing and did not impede their movements or their efforts to make friends.

Through their emissaries who paid tribute or offered New Year's greetings to Beijing, the Choson people gradually came to know of Western Catholicism. It could be said that these "emissaries to the capital" were the most important channel by which Western knowledge and Western religion spread to Choson.³ In examining the records within *Yŏnhaengnok** from the late seventeenth to the late eighteenth centuries, this hundred-year period truly encompasses a great number of records on the contact between Choson visitors to Beijing and the Western missionaries.

New Encounters with a Foreign Country

They Truly Are a Different Kind of People

Beginning in the first half of the seventeenth century, the gradual fall of the Ming dynasty and the abrupt rise of the Qing empire created a great deal of activity in northern China. Choson was squeezed between their former benefactor and the new overlord. Facing these difficulties, they were forced to feign compliance: on the one hand, they copied out sea routes to demonstrate their fealty and pay tribute to the Ming dynasty; on the other, they soothed the Qing empire with gentle words

*The *Yŏnhaengnok* (燕行錄) is a compilation of records kept by the people of Choson on their travels in Ming and Qing China. The name could be roughly translated as *Records of Travels in Yan* (Yanjing [燕京] being the ancient name of the Chinese capital, Beijing).—Trans.

and flattery. With great difficulty, they finally managed to stabilize their western borders. Unbeknownst to them, the eastern land across the sea was not tranquil either. Ever since Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536–1598) invaded Choson with his army, that eastern neighbor, which had gradually been united by the Tokugawa clan, had covetously eyed Choson. It used every means at its disposal to again watch and assess the Korean peninsula, and sought to establish a foothold on the mainland.

The year that the Manchu Qing empire captured the Ming regime (1644), Tokugawa Japan's campaign to completely ban Catholicism had already entered its final stages. In that year, Nagasaki executed the last Chinese Catholics, as well as the last Christian missionary in Japan, Mancio Konishi (1600–1644). The next year (1645), the Japanese crossed the Tsushima Strait, nominally to search for Catholic fugitives, and repeatedly probed the Korean people for reports. In that year, an official named Sǒng I-sǒng 成以性 received orders to accompany official emissary Grand Prince Inpyeong 麟坪大君 (of the Yi line, 1622–1658) and secondary emissary Chǒng Se-gyu 郑世規 to China, to pay New Year's greetings. En route, they received an official report arriving from the rear, which stated that the Japanese, "must enter Choson territory, in the name of the party of our traitor minister Jesuit Munejado 宗文[門]. We are willing to accept a small barge and track him ourselves. Moreover, we wish to obtain maps of the far and near islands, and cause emissaries by sea to search and explore all the islands, and send daily reports to Japan." The idea of entering a neighboring country to conduct searches, demanding maps of that country, and forcing that country to search also and make reports seems like arrogant commands of a suzerain state to its vassal. The Choson people, who had always recognized the Ming (or Qing) dynasties as their suzerain state, and despised the Japanese, were of course very surprised. The Choson kingdom declined Tōchi Nawa's 藤智繩 request. However, they were somewhat uneasy, as the shadow of the war a few decades before still loomed over them, and they were troubled in their hearts.⁴

However, Japan's strict ban on and persecution of Catholicism piqued the curiosity of the Choson people with regard to Catholicism and Westerners. Although the Choson people had gradually received knowledge of the Western world through China, beginning in the late Ming dynasty, and were aware of Catholicism, the Western calendar, Western weapons, and so on prior to the mid-seventeenth century, they had not especially cared. After all, these were remote foreign countries, and what they had or did not have was of no significance to Choson. However, Japan's strict prohibition of the religion and their arrest of followers conversely stimulated the Choson people to learn about the fate of the Western countries and Catholicism after entering Japan. The people of Choson, upon whose minds the memory of the humiliation of Hideyoshi's invasion was engraved, discovered previously nonexistent sympathies for the Jesus faction, whom the Japanese shogun had pursued and captured. Perhaps because of these sympathies, when the Choson emissaries arrived in Beijing, they were all motivated by their curiosity to make a special trip to see this "Catholicism." After all, what did it look like?

Between the Shunzhi (1643–1661) and Kangxi reigns, the four churches of Beijing (one to each cardinal direction) gradually opened up. Records of encounters with Westerners gradually increased within the journals of Choson's emissaries on their "travels in Yan." In first encounters with strangers, generally one's first impression arises from appearances: with regard to these foreign countries and foreign religions, what the Choson people noticed first were their magnificent, sumptuous churches. In the fifty-first year of the Kangxi reign (1712), Kim Ch'ang-öp 金昌業 (1658–1721) and Ch'oe Tök-jung 崔德中 arrived in Beijing and paid a special visit to the Catholic church near Xuanwumen.⁵ Later, Cho Yǒng-bok 趙榮福 (1672–1728), Yu Ch'k-ki 俞拓基 (1691–1767), Yi I-myǒng 李頤命 (1658–1722), Kim Sun-hyeop 金舜協 (1693–1732), Yi ūi-hyǒn 李宜顯 (1669–1745), and Han Tǒg-hu 韓德厚 successively arrived in Beijing during the period from the end of the Kangxi reign to the Yongzheng reign. One after another, they all made special trips to see the Catholic church.⁶ They not only took note of the gorgeous and magnificent appearance of the Catholic church, but also exclaimed with admiration over the exquisite Western paintings. Some even thought that the reason why the Westerners could paint such vivid three-dimensional figures was because they possessed the power of *yin* and *yang*, "thus they could paint *yin* and *yang* onto a canvas, and this was the result." The Choson emissaries not only met the "deep-eyed, tall, curly-bearded, long-jawed" Jean-François Cardoso (1676–1723), Joseph Suarez (1656–1736), Ignace Kogler (1680–1746), Jean Mourao (1681–1726), and Xavier Ehrenbert Fridelli (1673–1743), but also received them as guests in their own "Jade River Hall," completely ignoring the restrictions set by the Qing empire. They even felt that, "although [the Westerners] wear the clothes of the Northern barbarians . . . their manner of expression is particularly elegant." Aside from accepting the gifts that the Westerners presented to them, such as telescopes, snake-stones, stone mirrors, paintings, brocade silks, and so on, they also received a large amount of written materials that had been banned by the Qing empire and by Japan, such as *Wanwu zhenyuan* (The True Origin of All Living Things), *Bi wang* (Setting One Free from Illusions), *Sanshan lun xueji* (Studies of the "Three Mountains" Theory), and *Zhuzhi qunzheng* (On Divine Providence) (1629). In their curious eyes, these things were all very fresh:

[The Westerners] presented three large scrolls showing the script of their country: the shape of the characters is like to neither Sanskrit nor Japanese, and we cannot understand it. On every page there are drawings, representing the likeness of the imperial palace, the city, people, birds, and beasts; there are thirty lines of detailed script on each page, all printed on white paper; the shading of color has depth, just as if it were copied; it is extremely detailed and ingenious, and not even China can imitate it; likewise, we cannot explain the people and animals.

Of course, through repeated contact, the Koreans gradually learned of the religious doctrines of Western Catholicism. They became familiar with the West's "Jesus" and "Mary."⁷ They also heard that Catholicism seemed to "be reasonable and similar to the [Confucian doctrines] 'Golden Mean' and 'Greater Learning.'"⁸

However, they still did not understand and, indeed, were barely aware of the doctrines of Catholicism. They merely recognized that Catholicism was somewhat different from Buddhism and Daoism. Only after the Choson people read *The True Origin of All Living Things* and *Setting One Free from Illusions* did they mostly realize that “[as for] the so-called true origin of all living things, Heaven is the origin of all living things, and [God] rules in heaven as the correct principle; [as for] ‘dispelling fantasies,’ the followers of Buddha’s chants of ‘Amitabha’ are truly meaningless—how can this be sufficient for one to be thrown into Hell or ascend to Heaven? This is unparalleled absurdity; once it is refuted this becomes clear.”⁹ Thus they wrote, “Generally speaking, the teachings of the Westerners argue clearly against Buddhism. The worship of ancestral tablets, going to heaven, and the correct principle are also heretical.” They also wrote, “The teachings of the Westerners place Heaven above all. Not only are they diametrically opposed to Confucianism and Daoism, they also reject the two teachings of the ancestors and Buddhism, and consider themselves to be superior.” Another writer noted, “Catholics: it is unknown what era they appeared in, and they themselves say only that Heaven’s mandate is not false. They reject Daoism and Buddhism as heretical doctrine. The bookshop has not heard of this book. I do not know whether their religion has the door to enlightenment.”¹⁰

The Koreans had had a cultural shock. They vaguely felt that these people and their ideologies were out of the ordinary and differed from all the figures in their historical experience and memory:

In short, although China is large, there are not necessarily many of this type of people. Generally speaking the people of this country all have a capable appearance, blue eyes and sharp noses, thin, red lips, and a curved beard and moustache. Truly, they are a different class of people.

Viewing Another’s Trouble with Indifference

Observing the Western Scene in Beijing

In the Qing empire, the fate of Catholicism faced a series of vicissitudes. During the Kangxi and Yongzheng reigns, it was first met with tolerance, and then with suppression. In the sixtieth year of the Qianlong reign (1795), most likely due to over-confidence, the Qing again adopted the method of mixing severity with kindness in their attitude toward the Westerners. Aside from prohibiting the proselytizing of Catholicism, the Qing did not concern itself overmuch about their other activities in Beijing. However, the Western missionaries were restricted to studying the calendar system and painting. While they were allowed to paint pictures in the palace or hold positions in the Bureau of Astronomy, they were prohibited from pursuing their original purpose: missionary work.

To the Western missionaries, who earnestly wished to spread their teachings in China, this prohibition was likely very distressing and caused them some

difficulties. However, the curious Choson emissaries were completely indifferent to these circumstances. Their curiosity initially lay not in religion. Aside from the exquisite collections of astronomical instruments, they were originally most interested in the beautiful and unusual paintings. During the Qianlong reign, an endless stream of Choson emissaries toured the Catholic church and used every means at their disposal to strike up conversations with the Catholic missionaries, even going so far as to privately exchange gifts with them. They were primarily motivated by curiosity. The Choson emissaries’ first impression of this foreign civilization was still based on appearances; they were most amazed by the murals on the walls of the Catholic churches, which caused them to greatly admire the Westerners’ skill in painting:

The spirits revered by their country had been painted on all four walls, in one thousand attitudes and ten thousand forms—it is indescribable. Aside from human figures, there is every sort of strange and ingenious instrument, so natural that they seem real. Only after detailed examination can one see that they are painted, truly strange.¹¹

The interior of the church is vast, and all four walls are. The artistry of the paintings shows spirit—these are truly the most wonderful paintings in all the world. . . . those who name the Westerners’ paintings marvelous are not alone.¹²

On the walls are painted the figures of palaces, lofty mountains, birds and beasts, flowers and plants, and miraculous activities. It appears to be a scene of nature.¹³

However, during this period, the Koreans gradually learned more about the Westerners’ belief in Catholicism, and began to realize that this was, after all, a civilization that differed entirely from China. In the twentieth year of the Qianlong reign (1755), a Choson emissary, whose name is now unknown, carried on a written correspondence for some time with Augustin de Hallerstein (1703–1774) of the Bureau of Astronomy. On the twenty-first day of the first lunar month he went to pay a visit to the Catholic church, and then penned the following passage:

In the West, there are large and small countries, distant from China by over 90,000 *li*. The people of their nation see the Chinese as “Eastern foreigners.” . . . they appear honest and sincere, and their countenance is pure white. Those residing in Beijing tie up their hair like a cap, but in society they cover their hair and go barefoot. Moreover their behavior, deep eyes, and big noses make them rather similar to Russians.¹⁴

However, this emissary still did not understand Western Catholicism. He believed it was a type of foreign “Daoism,” noting that the Westerners “had resided across the sea since ancient times and did not know Confucianism and Buddhism; thus they only valued Daoism. The travelers who came to Yan were all Daoist types. From childhood on they did not eat meat, did not marry, and conscientiously cultivated discipline.” In the thirty-ninth year of the Qianlong reign (1774), however,

another Choson emissary heard from a Chinese student named Zhang Yuanguan that, "Matteo Ricci was originally a person of the Western regions. His teachings were similar to the [Buddhist] lama's; a little different from Buddhism, but also different from Catholicism. The principles of Catholicism are incomprehensible, but Ricci's teachings are easy to understand. Unfortunately, they are not permitted in China." It is likely that this Zhang Yuanguan had recently adopted Buddhism, and did not fully understand the Catholic Jesuits. A few days later, he added, "The lama has other scriptures and good prescriptions, and forbids murder, similar to Buddhism. The method he used in Mongolia and the Hui regions were most clever, so we must carefully consider these beliefs. In Ricci's Western writings he spoke of temperament, unlike the absurd Catholicism. Catholicism does not accept Buddhism and does not bow to the correct god. Also they do not make the five sacrifices to the ancestors."¹⁵ The Choson emissary recorded all his statements as the truth.

However, there were others who gradually came to understand. For instance, Hong Tae-yong 洪大容 (1731–1783) and a few other Choson emissaries already had a more profound grasp of Catholicism. In his conversations with missionaries, Hong Tae-yong inquired, "[If] Confucianism esteems the five cardinal relationships, Buddhism esteems emptiness, and Daoism esteems tranquility," then what is the aim of Catholicism? Augustin de Hallerstein answered as follows: "God's teachings instruct people to love the all-comprehending God above and love others as one loves oneself." Hong also inquired: "God refers to the Emperor of Heaven—does this exclude other deities?" Hallerstein responded: "This is like to Confucius's teachings, that we must sacrifice to Heaven in winter and Earth in summer so as to serve the Emperor of Heaven; but it has nothing to do with what the Daoists speak of as the Jade Emperor." Hallerstein added, "Does not the *Shijing zhu* (Book of Songs, Annotated Version) speak of the rule of the Emperor of Heaven?" The above conversation seems to constitute the beginnings of more substantial inquiries into Catholicism.¹⁶ Although this discussion seems to go no further, Hong Tae-yong was still somewhat moved when he witnessed old Chen, a fifty-nine-year-old Shanxi merchant who "earnestly studies Western learning and has gone to worship at the Temple of Heaven at each of the five night watches for over thirty years; and in spite of bad weather he did not dare deviate." However, on reviewing the matter, he could not help giving voice to certain doubts. He felt that Catholicism, like Buddhism, urged people to "kowtow and recite scriptures, so as to be fortunate in the future afterlife," and "encouraged people not to foster evil intentions, and to speak from one's heart." However, the teachings of Confucius likewise taught people to do good works. Why then was it especially necessary to convert to this foreign religion? Hong, who sincerely believed in the doctrines of Confucianism, could not understand the reasoning on this point. Though they were unable to understand it, they did know that this was a different world: "In considering it, the Western countries are truly a separate universe."¹⁷ However, although they had intuitively realized that this was a "separate universe," they were still extremely curious. After all, this was still a distant religion. Even if it was heresy, it was only causing trouble

in the Qing empire. The Koreans were indifferent to the troubles of their neighbor. In their eyes, it was simply a curious and novel Western scene.

Curiosity and Good Impressions

The Gradual Decay of Friendship

From the Qianlong reign to the Jiaqing and Daoguang periods, the writings of the Choson emissaries record contact with a number of Western missionaries in Beijing. Aside from Ignace Kogler and [Hallerstein], Antoine Gogeisl (1701–1771), Joseph Bernardus d'Almeida, Alexander de Gouvea, [Reberio], Dominicus J. Ferreira (?–1824), [Serra], and others also made an appearance.

Nominally, the Qing empire banned casual contact between Choson emissaries and Western missionaries. However, despite this ban, the curious Koreans often took it upon themselves to visit the churches. The foreigners, who were devoted to missionary work, also frequently took the initiative to interact with these diplomatic envoys from the Qing empire's eastern neighbor. The two parties not only carried on a written correspondence, but also exchanged gifts. During the above-mentioned Kangxi and Yongzheng reigns, the Choson emissaries repeatedly received all sorts of gifts and books from the missionaries. As such a courtesy demands reciprocity, the emissaries responded in kind. In the twentieth year of the Qianlong reign (1755), a Choson emissary, who traveled to Beijing to pay tribute for the New Year, visited the Catholic church bearing gifts and also called upon Hallerstein. They "engaged in friendly conversation for some time. The sun had already set before [the emissary] took his leave and returned home." The next day, in accordance with Eastern etiquette, Hallerstein sent a representative to present gifts in return, which the emissary accepted. On the front cover of the customary list of gifts was written "An Enormous Honor." On one side of the inner cover was written "In cautiously observing the proper rites, we do not dare act on our own. We sincerely thank you and wish you good fortune," while on the other was written, "We have respectfully prepared and have the honor to send four foreign paintings, four Luzon fruits, two snake-stones, and one foreign mirror."¹⁸ In the thirtieth year of the Qianlong reign (1765), the thirty-five-year-old Hong Tae-Yong and Yi Tök-sŏng 李德星 again visited Hallerstein and Antoine Gogeisl. They first delivered gifts and letters, and Hallerstein and Gogeisl quickly responded with invitations. The latter employed a calligrapher to pen the invitations, the inscription on which read, "Honored sirs and dependents, I, Hallerstein (and Gogeisl) do obeisance." The emissaries wrote in response, "We receive [the invitation] with thanks" in reciprocation of the courtesy, and furthermore quickly arranged a time to meet.

Through the frequent exchange of visits and written correspondence, the people of Choson truly began to understand that "there is more beyond the horizon," and that there was another world outside of China. This caused the Koreans to have a favorable impression of these foreign countries. As several scholars have already

noted, some elements of Western learning and Western faith were disseminated to China's eastern neighbor via this exchange. This includes the division of diseases into three categories, as in Western hospitals; the division of education into a certain number of subjects, as in Western schools; Western customs of apparel, diet, residence, and behavior; the West's astronomical observations of the earth and the heavenly bodies; and, of course, Catholic doctrines relating to worship and faith. Some even inquired why Catholicism could not spread to the Choson kingdom. These new, previously unseen and unheard-of things caused the Choson government to also be curious with regard to the strangers in its neighbor's home. In the thirty-ninth year of the Qianlong reign (1774), when the Choson emissary Ōm Su 嚴璠 returned to the Choson capital from Beijing, the Choson king specially inquired for news of the Catholic missionary Hallerstein: "His majesty said: 'Did you note whether the Westerner Hallerstein was yet alive?' His humble minister replied: 'Three emissaries went to visit the Catholic church, but Hallerstein became infuriated by the large number of people. He locked himself up deep within and did not come out. Therefore we saw only the Catholic place of worship and then returned.'"¹⁹

Why did Hallerstein make an excuse not to see the Choson emissary pay his New Year's tribute? At present it is not clear. Was he actually vexed by the large numbers of Choson visitors, or had he been warned by the Qing court not to privately entertain foreign emissaries? This is very difficult to determine, but just at this juncture, perhaps because Catholicism truly spread to Choson at this time, the Koreans' vaguely good opinions of the Westerners were finally rescinded.

Close Contact Ultimately Leads to Tremendous Changes

In the winter of the forty-second year of the Qianlong reign (1777), Kwŏn Ya-sin 權若身, Chŏng Yak-chŏn, Chŏng Yag-yong, Kwŏn Sang-hak 權相學, and other scholars met at the Zouyu Temple 走魚寺 on Yingzi Mountain 鶯子山 to discuss philosophy. When the famous scholar Yi Byok 李穰 (1754–1786) heard the news, he rushed there that very night. The group discussed Heaven and Earth, human nature, and other doctrines for ten days running. Their discussions also touched upon the Jesuit works on astronomy, the Western calendar system, and religion that Korean emissaries to Beijing had brought back with them, including *Tianzhu shiyi* (The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven) [1603], *Xingli zhenquan* (True and Complete Explanation of Nature and Principle) [1767], and *Qi ke* (Seven Conquests) [1615], among others. Consequently, these new Western doctrines became the focus of their discussions. Later, in 1784, Chŏng Yag-yong's brother-in-law and Yi Byok's younger sworn brother, the twenty-seven-year-old Yi Sŏng-hun 李承熏 (1756–?), went to Beijing's South Church and met with Alexander Gouvea. He was baptized by the Jesuit priest Louis de Grammont. Laden with many religious works, crucifixes, and Catholic paintings, he returned home. Upon his arrival in his native country, he not only disseminated the doctrines of Catholicism, but also

baptized Kwŏn Il-sin, Yi Byok, and a number of other scholars. He also expanded to a second social stratum, engaging in genuine proselytizing work among the common people.

In literary theory it is often said that to appreciate beauty, one requires distance. Indeed it is true that when the Koreans did not understand the Westerners very well, their vision seemed blurred, and the other party appeared to exhibit a hazy beauty. However, under close scrutiny, the Westerners appeared more like a scourge. Before Catholicism spread to the Choson kingdom, the king and ministers of Choson were all fairly interested in it. However, when Catholicism truly arrived in Choson, and when it began to take root among the two classes of scholars in Choson, the situation was entirely different. It began in 1785. Yi Sŏng-hun and his followers had been informed against for their enthusiastic proselytizing activities. On the surface, they "repented and reformed," and temporarily achieved exemption from punishment. However, Yi Sŏng-hun, Chŏng Yag-yong, and others as before traveled everywhere lecturing on the scriptures and disseminating religious doctrines. Moreover, their disciple Yun Chi-cheong 尹持忠 conducted his mother's funeral rites according to Western customs. In the Choson kingdom, which firmly adhered to *Zhuxi jiali* (The Family Rituals of Zhu Xi), he not only did not wear the traditional mourning garments, but also refused to accept the traditional condolence calls, thus causing public opinion to seethe with indignation. Ultimately the clash between this new religion and the old traditions incited a fierce conflict in the fifty-ninth year of the Qianlong reign (1794). The new religion suffered a deathblow. The upper classes, who adhered to the teachings of Zhu Xi, emulated Tokugawa Ieyasu of Japan in implementing severe injunctions against these religious believers, who violated Confucian ethics and converted to a foreign religion. In the eleventh lunar month of that year, the devout believers Yun Chi-cheong and Kwŏn Sang-yon 權尙然 were executed. It is said that, upon arriving at the execution ground, they were asked whether or not they were willing to do earthly worship of their ancestors' sacred wooden tablets and forsake this foreign religion. They responded in the negative, loudly crying out the names of Jesus and Mary, and were subsequently executed. This was the so-called Sinyu Persecution. In precisely the twelfth lunar month of that year,²⁰ the aforementioned Zhou Wenmo of Suzhou, China, (also known as Jacques Vellozo) again received orders from Bishop Gouvea of Beijing. He traveled along the northeast tributary route, wearing Korean dress, and passing as a member of a group of tributary emissaries. He crossed the northern border into the Choson kingdom and again began the arduous work of disseminating Catholicism.²¹

At that time, the Choson kingdom had suffered political unrest. During this period, the literati were divided into several factions, including the *Noron* (Old Doctrine), *Soron* (Young Doctrine), *Namin* (Southerner), and *Pukhakp'a* (Northerner) factions. Among these, political power was largely concentrated in the hands of the Old Doctrine and Young Doctrine factions. The Southerner faction splintered further into sects led by Ch'ae Che-gong 蔡濟恭 (1720–1799) and

Hong Yi-ho 洪義浩. A number of the Catholic believers, including Yi Sŭng-hun, Chŏng Yak-chŏn, and Chŏng Yag-yong, were members of the Ch'ae sect of the Southerner faction. At one point, they had commanded the trust of the king, but did not wield much in the way of real power. The lesser Northerner sect, which was appended to the Old Doctrine and Young Doctrine factions, had even less power. The Old Doctrine sect, which held power at that time, was split into the "Shipa" (Clan of Expediency) and the "Byeokpa" (Clan of Principle). These clans mutually competed for hegemony. The year 1800 marked the passing of the old King Chŏngjo, and the eleven-year-old King Sunjo ascended the throne. However, real power lay in the hands of Queen Dowager Chŏngjo, who ruled from behind the throne. During this time, the political regime was controlled by members of the Clan of Principle. The handful of Korean Catholics ultimately suffered a devastating attack the following year (1801), due to their support for an opposing political faction.

As mentioned above, in the fifth year of the Jiaqing reign, the Seoul government of Choson seized the "heretical correspondence and documents of the party of heresy" and subsequently carried out large-scale raids, arresting and killing Catholic followers. In the first lunar month of that year, Queen Dowager Jeongsun promulgated a decree which strictly prohibited religious activities. In the tenth lunar month of the following year, she issued another proclamation entitled "King Sunjo, Sinyu [1801]: Discussion of Heretical Documents." This proclamation chastised Yi Sŭng-hun point by point for following the party of Yanjing emissaries to Beijing, purchasing a heretical book, and joining the foreign church to become the disciple of the foreigners; Chŏng Yag-yong, for leading his entire family onto the path of heresy and causing his brothers to suffer hardship along with him; and Kwŏn Chol-sin 權哲身, for causing all his relatives by marriage to be possessed by the devil and inciting them to rebel. Similarly, the proclamation denounced Ch'ae Che-gong, a backstage supporter of this group: for saying that, in his eyes, he had no country; for viewing those who opposed the Catholic teachings as his enemies; and for fostering a rebel faction. The proclamation went on to say that the principles of Catholicism were both deceitful and shallow, while the conduct of its followers was secretive and bewitching: "They prattle cleverly, imitating the most vulgar elements of Buddhism and worshipping imaginary spirits, similar to the sect of shamanism." The proclamation further noted that the Catholics deceived the world and deluded the people with the purpose of eroding and destroying proper moral relations: "These heretics, without father or ruler, destroy ethical relations. They proceed counter to the principle of enlightenment through education, and regress to the state of barbarians or beasts."²² According to statistics, over 300 people were executed or imprisoned during this spate of religious persecution: among these, Kwŏn Chol-sin, Chŏng Yag-yong, Yi Sŭng-hun, and several others were beheaded, while Chŏng Yag-yong, Yi Chi-hun, and others were sent into exile.

The most serious charges against them may have been that they not only staged an armed rebellion, but also sought military assistance from the Westerners to

topple the Choson kingdom. According to the Choson government, a number of letters that Korean Catholics had written to foreigners were intercepted. One read, "Send word to every nation of the far West, requesting them to come to the Eastern seas, with 100 warships and 50,000 or 60,000 elite troops; to come bearing their devastating weaponry, such as artillery; to make their way without delay to our shores, and annihilate this nation." Another letter read: "Send in a man of the religion, to move here and open shop within our borders; he shall serve as a channel for communications and shall guide us through the steps of our plan."²³ This "plan" is a reference to what Hwang Sa-yŏng 黃嗣永 called the "silk letter." In this 10,000-character silk manuscript, which was originally to be sent to Bishop Gouvea, Hwang Sa-yŏng not only vented his grievances to the foreign priests, but also made six proposals. These included: sending people of Choson to the Beijing Catholic churches as teachers of the Korean language, so as to facilitate missionary work; asking the pope to write a letter to the Qing emperor, requesting that the latter compel the Choson kingdom to allow entrance to missionaries; instigating the Qing empire to annex Choson and causing the Qing emperor to marry a woman from the Choson royal family, so that Catholicism would have as legitimate a position in Choson as it did in the Qing empire; and even requesting the Westerners to dispatch troops to force Choson to accept Catholicism; along with other extremely "presumptuous" suggestions.²⁴ The Choson government also claimed that Zhou Wenmo, of Suzhou, China, who surprisingly acted as a servant of the Western Catholics, organized followers to plot rebellion and stage an armed revolt in Choson, until he gave himself up to the law in the fifth lunar month of the sixth year of the Jiaqing reign (1802) and was executed. At this time, Choson described the activities of these Catholic followers as an international plot involving three parties: the Qing empire, Choson, and the Westerners. The Choson government claimed that these activities were not only a subversion of state power, but also a subversion of civilization. These people

insulted Heaven and the sages, betrayed their ruler and scorned their father, neglected the sacrificial rites, and destroyed their ancestral temples. In the words of Tang Ak 堂岳, the fools deceived and deluded themselves; they adopted the method of baptism and banded together in a rebel faction; they concealed secret books, which were similar to the art of Daoist prophecies; they associated with large numbers of the weaker sex and conducted themselves as do the birds and beasts; calling themselves Catholic Fathers or religious followers, they changed their names and each was assigned a rank; like the Yellow Turban or White Lotus traitors, they sought each other out in secret and recklessly incited public riots.

A genuine crisis gave rise to a nervous mentality. This nervous mentality generated internal fear, and this fear cleanly swept away all previous good opinions of the Western missionaries and rendered the relationship between the Eastern neighbor and the Westerners instantly tense.

Epilogue

Ill Will and Lifelong Enmity

We have returned to the beginning. In early 1802, the Choson kingdom sent emissaries Cho Yun-dae 曹允大 and Sō Mi-su 徐美修 to Beijing, along with the report, "Memorial on Heresy." If we were to speculate as to the feelings of the Choson government, we might imagine that, on the one hand, Choson was probably anxious that the Qing empire might be displeased with the involvement of Zhou Wenmo of China; on the other hand, Choson wished the Qing emperor to understand the severity of Choson's crisis. However, since this unrest had not yet spread to the Qing empire, the members of the Qing court, high and low, universally disbelieved this report, and therefore, as mentioned above, issued a sternly worded memorial and a careless response.

At the outset, the Jiaqing emperor and his ministers were somewhat indifferent toward the Choson people's panic-stricken state, feeling that the Choson people were making an unwarranted fuss. However, historical trends are far stronger than people. In the tenth year of the Jiaqing reign (1805), the case of the Italian missionary Adeodato di Sant'Agostino (1760–1821) occurred in the Qing empire's own territory: the latter secretly passed letters written in Western characters and a Chinese map to Chinese believer Chen Ruowang. The people of the Qing empire were, however, more shocked by his confession: the Catholic acknowledged that all the priests of the four churches had, in the past, traveled to other provinces to do missionary work; furthermore, there were many Catholic believers in Beijing. This episode of foreign collaboration finally caused the Qing court to become as nervous as its eastern neighbor. Therefore, the empire's ban on Catholicism gradually became stricter. First, an imperial edict was promulgated, strictly prohibiting Westerners from printing books for the purpose of proselytizing.²⁵ At the same time, the empire issued its "Xiyang tang shiwu zhangcheng" (Regulations on the General Affairs of the Western Churches), which restricted the movements of missionaries. Subsequently, a memorial to the emperor requested that the private purchase of medicinal herbs be banned in the four Beijing churches, advocating that the Catholics be prevented from "buying rare objects and secretly distributing evil medicines."²⁶ The memorial further requested that the provincial education commissioners, who were responsible for publicizing information, each compose a notice to advise the public. This notice would "explain all the advantages and disadvantages in a comprehensible way, so that the farmers and peddlers can all hear and be moved; it shall be delivered to every county magistrate and printed, and posted widely in every city and village, to ensure that it is known in every household."²⁷

Ultimately, in the early nineteenth century, the Choson kingdom and the Qing empire completely closed their doors to the missionaries, including both the external gateway to their nations and the internal door to their hearts, and instituted an unprecedentedly strict ban on their proselytizing activities. However, this was only

a temporary phenomenon. A few years later, the foreigners destroyed the Korean and Chinese blockade with their powerful ships and artillery—if you close your national gate, I will force it open—just as Japan was forcibly opened after having closed off the country. Sixty years later, in the fifth year of the Tongzhi reign (1866), a Choson emissary, who was acting as the assistant to the official emissary Yu Hu-jo 柳厚祚, witnessed an entirely different scene in Beijing. At this time, following the Opium War, missionaries were not the only Westerners in the Qing capital of Beijing, and the Westerners no longer solely resided in the Catholic churches:

There were Western embassies, and four Westerners appeared after I passed, but my people are forbidden to enter, by order; therefore, I was not permitted to go in and visit. The Westerners who went strolling on the street all had yellow eyes and sharp noses; also they could ride horses. The women, however, were dressed plainly, similar to the clothes of our women, and they carried children as they went, as is common.²⁸

This, of course, is a story for later.

Notes

1. Yi Man-su 李晩秀, "Yu-cha Jip" (輜車集, Carriage Collections), in *Yōnhaengnok chōnjip* 燕行錄全集 (The Yōnhaengnok, a Complete Collection), ed. Im Ki-jung 林基中, vol. 60 (Republic of Korea, Dongguk University, Department of Korean Literature, 1992), 533–40.

2. January 30, 1802, *Qing zhongqianqi xiyang tianzhujiao zaihua huodong dang'an* (Records of the Activities of Western Catholics in China in the Early to Mid-Qing Periods), vol. 398, ed. China Primary Historical Archives (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2003), 819.

3. With regard to this point, in the past Yamagushi Tadashi's 山口正 *Shinchō ni okeru zaishi ōjin to Chosen shishin* (清朝に於ける在支歐人と朝鮮使臣, Europeans and the Korean Envoys in Qing China) had a detailed discussion, quoted from Urakawa Wasaburō's 浦川和三郎 *Chosen junkyoshi* (朝鮮殉教史, A History of Religious Martyrdom in Korea) (Ōsaka: Zenkoku shobō, 1973), 28–30.

4. Sōng I-sōng 成以性 (1595–1664), "Yōnhaeng ilgi" (日記, Yeon Haeng Diaries), in *Yōnhaengnok chōnjip*, ed. Im, vol. 18 (Seoul: Dongguk University, Department of Korean Literature, 2001), 149. [The passages below that quote from *Yeon Haeng Rok Jeon Jip* all refer to this edition, and are not individually marked.]

5. Kim Ch'ang-ōp 金昌業, *Yōnhaeng ilgi*. Im, *Yōnhaengnok chōnjip*, vol. 32, 110–11.

6. Yu Ch'ōk-ki 俞拓基, *Chisujae yōnhaengnok* (知守齋燕行錄, Observation of Fasting: *Yōnhaengnok*), *Yōnhaengnok chōnjip*, vol. 38, 96–97, and 105–6. Cho Yōng-bok 趙榮福, "Yeon Haeng ilgi," *Yōnhaengnok chōnjip*, vol. 26, 91. Also see Kim Sun-hyeop 金舜協, "Yeon Haeng Rok," *Yōnhaengnok chōnjip*, vol. 38, 357, 367. Han Tgō-hu 韓德厚, "Sūngjikong yōnhaeng ilgi" (承旨公燕行日記), *Yōnhaengnok chōnjip*, vol. 2, 533. Yi Ŭi-hyōn 李宜顯 (1669–1745), "Imja Yōnhaeng jap-sik" (壬子燕行雜識, Yeon Haeng Miscellany, 1732), collected in "Gyeongja Yeon Haeng Jap Sik" (庚子, Yeon Haeng Miscellany, 1720/1780), *Togok chip* (陶谷集), vol. 30, *Yōnhaengnok chōnjip*, vol. 2, 516. With regard to Choson emissaries' visits to Catholic churches in Beijing, see Huang Shijian, "Chaoxian yanhanglu suoji de Beijing tianzhutang" (Records of Beijing Catholic Churches in Korea's Yeon Haeng Rok), in *Dongxi jiaoliu shilungao* (History of the Exchange Between East and West) (Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1998), 407–24.

7. "Jesus is one of the names of God: God created Heaven, Earth, and all living things,

without beginning or end, form or boundaries. In the year of *gengshen* (the year 0), during the reign of Emperor Ai of the Han dynasty (0), a child was born of the Virgin Mary of Nazareth. He was named Jesus, and he resided in this world thirty-three years before his death; after being dead for three days, he was resurrected; after three days of life, he ascended; the true corpse was resurrected and then ascended to Heaven. For seven days, God was incarnated on Earth and then ascended to Heaven." Kim Sun-hyeop, "Yõnhaengnok," *Yõnhaengnok chõnjip*, vol. 38, 426–27.

8. Yi õi-man 李宜万, "Ip Sin Gi" (入沈記, Records of Entering Shenyang), *Kasan chõnsõ nongũn yugo* (家山全書衣隱遺稿, A Comprehensive Volume on My Native Country: Posthumous Manuscripts), vol. 20, *Yõnhaengnok chõnjip*, vol. 30, 217.

9. See Kim Sun-hyeop, "Yõnhaengnok," *Yõnhaengnok chõnjip*, vol. 38, 376–77.

10. See Kim Sun-hyeop, *Ibid.*, 359; and Yi õi-hyõn, "Imja Yõnhaeng jap-sik," "Togok chip," vol. 30, *Yõnhaengnok chõnjip*, vol. 2, 516.

11. Yi Ch'i-bo 李喆輔 (1691–?), "Jeongsa (丁巳) Yõnhaeng ilgi" (Yõnhaeng Diaries, 1737), *Yõnhaengnok chõnjip*, vol. 37, 474.

12. Anonymous, "Yõnhaeng ilgi" (1755), *Yõnhaengnok chõnjip*, vol. 39, 58.

13. Yi Chae-hak 李在學 (1745–1806), "Yeon Haeng ilgi," recorded in "Chip'õ yugo" (芝圃遺稿, Iris Garden Manuscripts); see *Yõnhaengnok chõnjip*, vol. 58, 187–88.

14. Anonymous, "Yõnhaeng ilgi," (1755), *Yõnhaengnok chõnjip*, vol. 39, 58.

15. Anonymous, "Gyeongjin Yõnhaengnok" (Yõnhaengnok, 1820), *Yõnhaengnok chõnjip*, vol. 62, 141, and 149–50.

16. Hong Tae-yong, "Hallerstein and Gogeisl's mundap" (刘鲍问答, Discussion with Hallerstein and Gogeisl), "Tamhõn yõngi" (湛軒燕記), *Yõnhaengnok sõnjip*, vol. 1, 243.

17. Anonymous, "Yõnhaeng ilgi," (1755), *Yõnhaengnok sõnjip*, vol. 39, 60.

18. *Ibid.*, 62.

19. Õm Su 嚴璿 (1716–1786, "Yõnhaengnok," *Yõnhaengnok sõnjip*, vol. 40, 292–93.

20. It is said that earlier, in 1791, Bishop Gouvea of Beijing sent the Macao-born Chinese Father Wu Yuehan to Choson. However, the latter did not receive any support and was forced to return home.

21. Zhou Wenmo once attempted to convert the wife of Prince Sanggye (nephew of King Chõngjo), Madame Song, and her daughter-in-law, Madame Sin. Madame Song became a firm believer. She was the grandmother of King Ch'olchong, who took the throne in 1849.

22. "Sunjo Silrok" (純祖實錄, The Records of Sunjo), vol. 2, 4.

23. See the above *Memorial on Heresy*. In July of 1802, Bishop Gouvea of Beijing, who personally dispatched Zhou Wenmo to the Choson kingdom, received a letter, which spoke of the brutal persecution of Catholicism in Choson over the last two years, naming thirty martyrs, and announcing the proclamation of a ban by the regent Queen Dowager. According to the writer of the letter, in October of the previous year, a believer had been dispatched to report to the bishop on the state of the persecutions and to request that more Catholic priests be sent. However, the messenger was arrested by local authorities while attempting to cross the border and was sent back to the capital under escort. He was beheaded, along with two other firm believers, and a letter that was sewn into his clothing was unfortunately confiscated. This was the "silk letter" that is mentioned below.

24. It is said that the "silk letter" can still be seen in the pope's classical Chinese collections, and the passages quoted therefrom in the aforementioned "Memorial on Heresy," which Choson later presented to the Qing court, are by no means complete.

25. *Shangyu dang* (Archives of Imperial Edicts) (May 20, tenth year of the Jiaqing reign [1805]) admonished the people to "read the books of the sages and observe the Confucian relationships; Buddhism and Daoism are not to be believed, and still less the Western teachings." The edict also asserted that believing in Catholicism amounted to "betraying one's benefactor and adhering to heresy. Such a one shall be despised by humanity." This passage

is quoted in Zheng Ji, "Qingdai qianqi dui tianzhujiao cong kuanrong zhengce dao jinjiao zhengce de zhuanbian" (The Evolution of Policies Toward Catholicism in the Early Qing Period, from Tolerance to Prohibition), *Lishi yu zongjiao* (History and Religion) (Taipei, Furen University, 1992), 324–25.

26. *Qing zhongqianqi xiyang tianzhujiao zaihua huodong dang'an*, ed. China Primary Historical Archives, vol. 2, 832, 840, and 852–55.

27. *Ibid.*, vol. 3, 1074. For information on the situation of Catholic missionaries in China during this period, see: Xu Zongze, "Zhongguo tianzhujiao chuanjiaoshi gailun" (Outline of the History of Catholic Missionaries in China) (Tushan yinshuguan, 1938), reprinted in *Mingguo congshu* (Series on the Republic of China) (Shanghai shudian, 1990), 266–67. I also saw in the catalogue a reference to the academic dissertation of Chen Liting, "Cong rong jiao dao jin jiao: qing zhengfu dui tianzhujiao zhengce de zhuanbian (1644–1820)" (From Tolerating Religion to Banning It: The Evolution of the Qing Government's Policies Toward Catholicism), Department of History at Taiwan Normal University, 2000. Unfortunately I was unable to read it.

28. Anonymous, "Yõnhaeng ilgi," *Yõnhaengnok sõnjip*, vol. 75, 351.