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IN BEIJING

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Perceptions of the West in Chosŏn Travel Accounts – Chosŏn Encounters with the ‘West’ in Beijing

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My research over the past few years has mainly focused on Chosŏn’s mediated encounters with the West in Beijing through close examination and analysis of travel accounts known as *yŏnhaengnok* (燕行錄, ‘Journals of Travel to Beijing’) of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

With the discovery of new worlds through expeditions and voyages, cultural exchange and encounters between East and West began to flourish since the eighteenth century, which are well documented in travel accounts. Chosŏn Korea was the last among East Asian countries to encounter Western culture and civilization directly, and her earliest exchange with the West was in effect mediated by a third party, Qing China, as it took place in a contiguous zone, the Catholic (Jesuit) missions in Beijing. Mediated encounters with the West through the *Yŏnhaengsa* (燕行使), or ‘Royal (Chosŏn) Envoys to Qing’, began in the seventeenth century and peaked during the eighteenth century. While Chosŏn’s relations with Qing in the seventeenth century was characterized by hostility and estrangement, by the eighteenth century both kingdoms made concerted efforts to make peace and be reconciled with one another. Under these political circumstances, diplomatic envoys of both countries visited each other frequently,¹ and both kingdoms displayed a relatively open attitude towards cultural exchange and Western Learning (*Sŏhak* 西學)² during this time.

While the Chosŏn dynasty’s first contact with Western Learning occurred in the seventeenth century, it was during the eighteenth century when it began to be explored and introduced to Korea more actively. Such contacts with Western Learning were carried out through the Chosŏn envoys’ regular visits to the Catholic missions in Beijing. Since the reign of Emperor Kangxi (1662-1722) of Qing, the Catholic missions became a popular visitor’s site for Chosŏn envoys

¹ One source cites the number of visits by Chosŏn envoys to China to be 579. See Im Ki-jung, ed., *Yŏnhaengnok yŏn’gu* [Study of travel journals to Beijing] (Seoul: Ilchisa, 2002).

² ‘Western Learning’ or *Sŏhak* refers to the study of Western culture, including Western thought, religion, ethics, science, and technology, which was introduced into Korea from the Chinese Ming and Qing dynasties in the 17th and 18th centuries. In a narrow sense, *Sŏhak* sometimes refers only to the study of Western religion and ethics during this period. The term is also used to refer to Roman Catholicism, or Ch’ŏnhak (天學, ‘Heavenly Learning’). In my research, ‘Western Learning’ is generally used to signify both the religion and scientific technology of the West. Where distinctions are to be made, I refer to different terms such as ‘Western religion’ and ‘Western technology’ based on Ro Taehwan’s distinctions in his study, “19segi chŏnban sŏyang insik ūi pyŏnhwa wa sŏgi suyongnon” [Changing Recognition of the West and the Theory of Accepting Western Technology], *Hanguksa yŏn’gu* 95 (1997).

travelling to Beijing, and this trend flourished during the reigns of Emperors Yongzheng (1723-1735) and Qianlong (1736-1795).³ Through their visits, the envoys encountered various new 'Western' items including armillary spheres, compasses, telescopes, Western paintings and maps, as well as alarm clocks, pipe organs, fountain pens, matches, spectacles (glasses), cigars, wine, and sponge cakes.

In contrast to the eighteenth century, the nineteenth century saw increasing factional strife and the ruling powers take a stronger stance against Catholicism to maintain political order in Chosŏn, which led to Catholic Persecutions. Following the Chinsan Incident (珍山事件)⁴ of 1791 and the emergence of *sedo* politics (form of nepotism), the Chosŏn government began to adopt a hostile approach to Western Learning, and visits to the Catholic missions were prohibited. Hence, by the mid-nineteenth century Chosŏn envoys' mediated encounters with the West were limited to the Russian Diplomatic Office in Beijing.

The *yŏnhaengnok* accounts from these periods contain detailed information on the Chosŏn envoys' visits to Beijing, and they attest to Korea's most intimate (albeit mediated) contact with Western civilization during this timeframe. It is believed that these accounts also had a great influence on subsequent developments in *sirhak* (實學, 'Practical Learning')⁵ in the late Chosŏn period. Based on the *yŏnhaengnok* accounts of the eighteenth century, envoys expressed particular interest in Western astronomy, the Gregorian calendar system, and Western paintings in the Catholic churches. Among items of interest during visits to the Russian Diplomatic Office in the nineteenth century included the crucifix, Russian mirrors, and cameras.

As the *yŏnhaengnok* are not official records but private travel journals written by literati officials during their trips, they are noteworthy for their inclusion of candid reactions (astonishment and wonderment) and personal reflections on how to understand and negotiate difference. It is through a close examination and analysis of these personal expressions that we might begin to explore and understand perceptions of 'the other'.

I will summarize my research to date, which presents the context of the visits, content of

³ It is stated in the "Yup'o mundap" (劉鮑問答), of the *Tamhŏn yŏn'gi* (劉鮑問答):

"During the reign of Emperor Shen Zong (神宗) of the Ming dynasty, Matteo Ricci (利瑪竇, 1552-1610) arrived in China and contact with Westerners began.... Within the city the Emperor had four Catholic churches (四堂: the East, West, South, and North Catholic churches) built and the missionaries lived there, calling it Ch'ŏnsangdae (天象臺). As a result, Western learning began to flourish and those who knew astronomy came to describe their technology. [...] Since the reign of Emperor Kangxi (康熙), when the Chosŏn envoys travelling to Beijing came to a Catholic church, they asked to see it. Westerners were delighted to meet them, showed them the peculiar images (paintings) of God (神像) and strange instruments, and also presented Western-made objects to them. Therefore, the envoys wanted to receive gifts and enjoyed the strange sights, making it a rule to visit the churches every year. [...] Yu Songnyŏng (劉松齡) and P'o Wugwan (鮑友官), specialists in maths, stayed at the South Catholic church. The South Catholic church was furnished more magnificently than the other churches, so the Chosŏn envoys frequented it."

⁴ The Chinsan Incident, which took place in Chinsan, Chŏlla Province in 1791, refers to an occurrence in which members of the literati named Yun Chich'ung and Kwŏn Sangyŏn (Yun's cousin) implemented Catholic rituals during a funeral, while also burning the ancestral tablet for their mothers and refusing to engage in Confucian mourning rituals. The Chosŏn government ordered the local governor of Chinsan, Sin Sawŏn, to arrest and torture these two literati, and then executed them for having corrupted social morals and ethics, and for adhering to the heretical tenet of refusing both one's ancestors and the king (*mubu mugun* 無父無君), actions which clearly violated Confucian tradition. This occurrence is perceived as the only instance of Catholic persecution to transpire prior to the onset of the nineteenth century in Chosŏn.

⁵ *Sirhak* or 'Practical Learning' refers to a school of thought that advocated a practical or 'scientific' approach to statecraft with emphasis on reform, and criticized ritual-oriented Neo-Confucian formalism. See Michael C. Kalton and Oaksook C. Kim, *The Four-Seven Debate: An Annotated Translation of the Most Famous Controversy in Korean Neo-Confucian Thought* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1984).

exchange (forms of Western culture which the Chosŏn envoys encountered), and reactions / reflections of the writers. I will then offer suggestions for future research, and questions related to how the personal reflections conveyed in the *yŏnhaengnok* accounts could be analyzed and appraised to negotiate / deal with difference and represent perceptions of ‘the other’.

1) “The Experiences of Visiting Catholic Churches in Beijing and the Recognition of Western Learning Reflected in the Journals of Travel to Beijing.”

The Review of Korean Studies Volume 9 Number 4 (December 2006): 11-31.

This article aims to understand the contact made between Chosŏn envoys and Western missionaries in the Catholic churches in Beijing, and their perceptions of one another through a close examination of select *yŏnhaengnok* accounts from the eighteenth century.

The *yŏnhaengnok* journals written by Chosŏn envoys have been systematically collected over time, and it is believed that most of them have been found and catalogued.⁶ There are about 100 different *yŏnhaengnok* journals from the eighteenth century, and among them nineteen journals contain entries related to the Catholic missions in Beijing.⁷ Of these, the *Iram yŏn’gi* (一菴燕記) by Yi Kiji (李器之) and *Ŭlbyŏng yŏnhaengnok* (乙丙燕行錄) by Hong Taeyong (洪大容) contain the most detailed descriptions of Western culture.

The envoys at the time were most interested in Western astronomy, the Gregorian calendar system, and Western paintings. Their interest in astronomy and the calendar system reflected an urgent need for a thorough understanding of the Western calendar system, as the implementation of the Current Standard Calendar (*sihŏllyŏk* 時憲曆) used in China and Korea at the time was reformed on the basis of the Gregorian calendar system earlier. Interest began in the seventeenth century when, in 1648 (26th year of King Injo), prior to Chosŏn adopting the Current Standard Calendar, there was a difference between the systems used in Korea (*Chosŏn ryŏk* 朝鮮曆) and Qing (*sihŏllyŏk*) in establishing a leap month. A few years later, after adopting Qing’s Current Standard Calendar system, Chosŏn envoys learned its principles at the Imperial Observatory (欽天監) in Beijing and imported a Western almanac. By 1708 (34th year of King Sukjong), Chosŏn understood the new system correctly and came to calculate and produce its own almanac. However, it was incomplete because the calculation of solar and lunar eclipses (日月蝕) and the astronomical calculation based on the five planetary movements (五星算法) were not correctly reflected. Therefore, learning the exact principles of the Western calendar system was one of the important missions of the envoys travelling to Beijing,⁸ and Chosŏn’s interest in

⁶ There are about 500 *yŏnhaengnok* journals that have been discovered and identified, and they have been compiled as a single volume entitled, *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip* (Complete Collection of the Journals of Travel to Beijing). This anthology is edited by Im Kijung and was published by Dongguk University Press in 2001. Since this publication, the Institute for Korean Literature of Dongguk University found omitted data and published a bibliographical introduction. See Institute for Korean Literature, Dongguk University, *Kukhak kojŏn: Yŏnhaengnok haeje* [Korean Classics: Bibliographical Introduction to the Journals of Travels to Beijing] (Seoul: Yūsŏng Munhwasa, 2003).

⁷ See Table 1 in Appendix I. Approximately one-fifth of the journals in Table 1 contain entries about the Catholic churches in Beijing.

⁸ See Chŏng Sŏnghŭi, *Chosŏn hugi ūi ujugwan kwa yŏkpŏp* [Cosmological Views and the Calendar System in the Late Chosŏn Dynasty] (Seoul: Chisik Sanŏpsa, 2005).

Western Learning focused on the field of astronomy – especially in astronomical observation instruments such as the armillary sphere (渾天儀) and telescopes (千里鏡) – and the calendar system. Many records can be found in the eighteenth century *yŏnhaengnok* accounts about these subjects, including discussions with missionaries about the differences between the East and West’s calendar system.⁹

In addition to astronomy and the calendar system, the Chosŏn envoys were very much captivated by the Western paintings for their vivid and realist style, especially the portraits of Jesus which were always displayed on the north wall opposite the church entrance. Most envoys recorded their impressions of the paintings, many of which were described as showing contrast through the use of perspective and shade, and being accurate portrayals of figures and objects, in contrast to Eastern paintings.¹⁰ Most of the envoys had strong impressions and mixed reactions about the religious paintings,¹¹ though their shared sentiment was one of surprise and wonderment at their close resemblance to life or realistic depiction of figures and objects. Moreover, the vivid colors and lack of blank space were noted as markedly different to East Asian paintings, which made use of absence or blank space to convey serenity and order. In his *Sŏngho sasŏl*, Yi Ik reported that “most of the envoys travelling to Beijing bought Western paintings and had them hung on the wall,” suggesting a generally positive reception of them by the Koreans, in spite of mixed reactions.

If Chosŏn envoys appreciated the paintings for their aesthetic quality, the Western missionaries believed that these paintings were a good means to inform their guests about Catholicism, Western civilization and customs. In the first half of the eighteenth century, Western missionaries in Beijing were very interested in Chosŏn and wished to build Catholic churches in Korea. They provided a warm reception to the Chosŏn envoys,¹² and tried to share

⁹ Among these, one example is found in Yi Kiji’s *Iram yŏn’gi*. On the 26th day of the tenth month, Yi Kiji visited the South Catholic church and discussed the differences in astronomy and calendar systems between the East and the West with the missionaries Ignatius Kögler (蘇霖), Joseph Suarez (戴進賢) and Zhang An Duo (張安多). Concerning solar and lunar eclipses, Yi asked whether solar and lunar eclipses were related to the morality of the ruler, as according to the traditional idea in the East of *chaeigwan* (災異觀) or *chaeiron* (災異論), which signified unusual astronomical phenomena as being closely related to the ruler’s political successes and failures. Accordingly, astral observations were regarded as an important duty of the court, which was emphasized all the more with the practical need for accurate forecast of climate in an agricultural society. Kögler replied that extraordinary phenomena such as solar and lunar eclipses are not related to human affairs, but occur according to the principle of astronomical movements. In another entry, after closely examining a Western armillary sphere, Yi Kiji concludes that the (Western) theory that the heavens and earth are round (天圓地圓說) is undoubtedly true, and indicates that there are considerable errors in the traditional interpretation of Eastern astronomy and its calendar system.⁹ Based on this, Yi then asks how Western astronomy might interpret the idea of *chaeigwan* (unusual astronomical phenomena and its relation to the ruler’s reign) and explain the principles of the sexagenary cycle based on the twelve directions and twenty-eight constellations in East Asian astronomy. In other words, Yi Kiji objectively accepted the accuracy of Western astronomy and expressed exceptional interest in its principles, conveying his open-mindedness.

¹⁰ For examples, see Appendix II.

¹¹ For examples, see Appendix III.

¹² For example, Yi Kiji notes in his *yŏnhaengnok* that on his visit to the South Catholic church on the 10th day of the twelfth month in 1720, Western missionaries received him warmly, serving him wine and sponge cake, and asked him about the capital city of Chosŏn and its distance from Beijing, showing a map closely resembling the topography of Korea. On the 28th day of the same month, Yi visited the West Catholic church and met with four missionaries who talked about the Catholic doctrine, pointing out that all people in the world are born as brothers and sisters under the Lord of Heaven. One of the missionaries told the interpreter Chŏng Taehyŏn, about his hope of constructing a Catholic church in Chosŏn, to which Chŏng replied that he would need governmental permission to build a church. Yi was also presented with a copy of the *Ch’ŏnju sirŭi* (天主實義, ‘True Principles of Catholicism’).

their faith. However, there were different reactions among the Chosŏn envoys.¹³ Though there were differing views, the envoys generally seemed to have understood the ‘Lord of Heaven’ roughly in the same light as the ‘heavenly god’ or ‘Supreme Being’ of Confucianism, and to regard the Christian concept of heaven and hell to be comparable with the Buddhist law of cause and effect. Although many envoys took a reluctant or even negative attitude toward the Western religion, they admitted the superiority of Western objects and devices. It appears that most of them perceived the West from the viewpoint of what is known as ‘*Tongdo Sŏgi*’ (東道西器) or ‘Eastern morality and Western instruments’.

In the second half of the eighteenth century, there appears to have been a change in the Western missionaries’ attitude toward and reception of the Chosŏn envoys. Hong Taeyong notes in his *yŏnhaengnok* that when Yi Tŏksŏng went with him to visit the Catholic church as an official of the Office of Astronomy to learn about the Western calendar system, he became indignant and left because the missionaries did not explain the system well and treated them unkindly, whereas they had “treated us with good food and presented many gifts from the West only a few years ago.”¹⁴

By the end of the eighteenth century, the government kept the envoys from visiting the Catholic churches in Beijing after the Chinsan Incident (1791), the first persecution of Catholics in Chosŏn. The missionaries in Beijing were aware of this fact, which is confirmed in the *Muo yŏnhaengnok* by Sŏ Yumun who travelled to Beijing in 1798. He notes, “When we arrived at the church, the church-keeper said, ‘Why are you here if your government keeps the envoys from visiting the church?’”

2) “The Literati Elites’ Perception of Western Learning during the Early 19th Century – With a special focus on Kang Hobu’s <*Sangbongnok*>.”

Papers of the British Association for Korean Studies 12 (2007).

This study makes use of one of the *yŏnhaengnok* journals compiled during the early nineteenth century to analyze the Chosŏn literati’s perception of Western Learning during the eighteenth and nineteenth century. The *Sangbongnok* (桑蓬錄) written by Kang Hobu (1690~?) is a work that addressed Chosŏn literati’s interest in Western civilizations and Western Learning. The journal accounts were originally written by Kang during his trip to Beijing in 1727. Therefore, this account can be more precisely described as a travelogue compiled during the first half of the eighteenth century. That being said, the specific manner in which this work was compiled helps to provide useful insight into Chosŏn literati’s perception of Western Learning during the early nineteenth century. Worried about the safety and well-being of his widowed mother, Kang Hobu paid her a visit after learning that he had been selected at the age of 38 to

¹³ See Appendix IV.

¹⁴ *Ŭlbyŏng yŏnhaengnok*. Another example is taken from an account by Ŭm Su (嚴壽) who went to Beijing as a deputy envoy in 1773. Upon his return to Chosŏn, King Yŏngjo inquired as to whether Ŭm had met the missionary Hallerstein, whereupon Ŭm replied, “The senior envoy, deputy envoy and secretary went to the Catholic church together. Hallerstein was angry with there being many attendants with the senior envoy and did not come out to meet us. We just visited the enshrined areas of the church.” (Ŭm Su *Yŏnhaengnok*)

take part in the *Yŏnhaengsa* which left for Beijing in 1727. At that time, his mother asked him to record all the things he saw and heard during his trip to Beijing. In 1741, some thirteen years after his journey to Beijing, Kang Hobu produced a Korean version of the records he had originally compiled in classical Chinese during his trip to the imperial capital. As a result, classical Chinese and Korean versions of the *Sangbongnok* were produced. However, the Chinese version of the *Sangbongnok* which survives today is not the original version. According to the preface to the extant Chinese version, the book had to be translated back into Chinese based on the Korean version of the *Sangbongnok* because Chŏng Suyŏn, a friend of Kang Hobu's, had unfortunately borrowed the original version then misplaced it.¹⁵ This Chinese version was translated by Kang Hobu's great grandson, Kang Chaeŭng. The inclusion of the inscription “崇禎甲申後九十七年己亥” makes it clear that this translated version was produced in 1839 (5th year of King Hŏnjong). In this regard, the Chinese version of the *Sangbongnok* includes numerous inscriptions, especially as pertains to the names of people and places, which were written in the native Korean script *Hangŭl*. This unique compilation process has made the *Sangbongnok* an invaluable source in terms of the study of the history of the Korean language, as well as of that of translation. In addition, pertinent insight into the Chosŏn literati's perception of Western Learning during the nineteenth century can be gleaned from this particular version as a result of the fact that Kang Chaeŭng also included his own opinions on some of the important entries.

The recently uncovered *Sangbongnok*, which consists of 12 volumes in 6 books, has quickly come to be regarded as the main literary work produced as part of the *yŏnhaengnok* series compiled during the eighteenth century.¹⁶ Furthermore, the inclusion of additional entries by Kang Chaeŭng has resulted in this particular version of the book coming to be seen as a very useful tool with which to conduct comparative studies on the literati's perceptions of Western Learning between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The different views between Kang Hobu, as presented in the eighteenth century version, and Kang Chaeŭng, as presented in the nineteenth century copy, can be summarized as follows.

- **Western paintings**

–Kang Hobu was so astonished at the realistic manner in which people and objects were depicted that he professed to understanding why others had referred to Western paintings as ‘divine works’.¹⁷ While the great majority of *Yŏnhaengsa* envoys of the eighteenth century

¹⁵ *Sangbongnok* Vol. 1, ‘編述四養齋桑蓬錄序’

¹⁶ Ko Un'gi, “*Sangbongnok*”, *Yŏnhaengnok haeje* (燕行錄解題), Institute of Korean Literature, Dongguk University, 2003

¹⁷ “All the paintings were so vividly and colorfully described that it almost looked if the images in the paintings were in fact alive. While an image of Jesus had been painted in the middle of the church's northern wall, the standing image of a beautiful lady had been rendered on its western wall. The vivid manner in which her hair ornament was depicted as drooping to one side as the lady cradled her hair with her hand made it hard to believe that she was just an image from a painting.... On our way towards the entrance to the Western person's place of residence, we came across a wall painting on the inner gate which described a dog whose body appeared to be half thrusting out from the gate as he imposingly growled at any human which dared approach. All of us assembled at that time believed the dog to be alive. ... Herein lies the reason why Western paintings are referred to as divine works ... Great ability is obviously required to produce such paintings. Although it really looked as if a spirit had been incorporated into the painting, I was unable to figure out how this had been brought about. I was therefore forced to conclude that this was the work of a magical and talented ghost.” (*Sangbongnok* Vol. 7)

were mostly interested in astronomy and the calendar system, it was Western paintings that made the biggest impression on Kang Hobu.

–Kang Chaeŭng’s reaction to Western paintings was highly negative, affected by the hostile attitude towards Catholicism during his time.¹⁸ He could not understand Catholic followers who refused to renounce their religion, even if such a refusal led to execution. He conjectured that a ‘capricious ghou’ had been embedded in the Bible which caused people to become delusional, and he used Western painting styles as an example to support his idea. He viewed the realistic style found in Western paintings as having been caused by the presence of a ‘ghoul’ embedded in the paintings which rendered people delusional.

- **Astronomy and the Calendar System**

–Kang Hobu, in his Korean version of 1741 (which contains some entries that were not in the original 1727 version), expressed his acceptance of the fact that the earth was indeed round and that humans lived in various regions all over the globe. This was a marked departure from the traditional notion of *huayi* (華夷, civilized-uncivilized worlds) in which China was perceived as the center of the universe.¹⁹ Kang also went to great lengths to describe how the highly-advanced nature of Western astronomy had allowed it to resolve astronomical issues for which traditional East Asian astronomy had been unable to find a proper answer. However, he also stressed the fact that it was difficult for him to accept the hypothesis that the galaxy was in fact an aggregation of stars. In other words, Kang Hobu adopted a very open-minded attitude towards the possibility that Western astronomy was in fact superior to the East Asian variety. In addition, he described the spread and growing respect for Western theories in China, while also highlighting the fact that many Chosŏn people also respected and adhered to these theories.²⁰

–Kang Chaeŭng maintained that although he could not determine which calendar system was in fact superior, some 200 years had passed since the introduction of the Current Standard Calendar without any glaring errors having been uncovered to date. As such, he regarded the Current Standard Calendar as being based on an excellent system.²¹

¹⁸ “I have heard that Westerners somehow appropriated the gods’ painting skills for themselves, and that as a result, anybody who sees a Western painting begins to question whether the image they see before them in the painting is actually alive. This belief has been further reinforced by my perusal of an entry found in Sayang chaegong’s records pertaining to his encounter with Western paintings while visiting a Catholic church in Beijing. This cannot be attributed to the ingenuity of the painting style alone. In my opinion, there is a special ghou’ embedded in the paintings which cannot be understood based on logic. Anyone who learns the tenets of Catholicism sees their minds become delusional, and this regardless of whether they were originally wise or foolish people. Perhaps this is because the simple language and characters found in these books are supplemented by a certain kind of ghou’ whose very existence is rooted in its ability to make people unable to process things in a logical fashion? I fear that the same kind of ghou’ also animates the Western painting style. All in all, this is a very frivolous and capricious phenomenon.” (*Sangbongnok* Vol. 7)

¹⁹ “The earth is round like a ball and floats in empty space, and there are humans living all over the globe in various regions of this world.... The high degree of advancement achieved by Western Learning is such that it has been able to explain principles of the universe and planets which people had heretofore been unable to comprehend. I do not feel uneasy or have any doubt about these facts.... However, I was very surprised to learn that the galaxy was not composed of energy, but rather of an aggregation of stars.” (*Sangbongnok*, Vol. 7)

²⁰ *Sangbongnok*, Vol. 7. After having revealed his own opinions on Western painting, astronomy, and the Catholic doctrine, Kang Hobu proceeded to delve into the debate that emerged amongst Chosŏn literati elites over Western astronomy and the calendar system; or more precisely the debate between Kim Sijin and Nam Kŭkkwan over the introduction of the Qing dynasty’s Current Standard Calendar.

²¹ “Generally speaking, the customs and civilizations of barbaric nations cannot be compared to those of Chinese Civilization

• **Catholicism (Western Religion)**

–Kang Hobu understood the doctrine of Catholicism as being based on the abandonment of human desire and the becoming of a mountain god through the finding of the proper Way or *to* (道) –this would seem to refer to the belief that a person who carried out good deeds will be admitted to Heaven.²² In other words, he perceived the doctrine of Catholicism to be a combination of the Buddhist quest to remove human desires and the Taoist notion of a mountain god. Like his fellow envoys who perceived Jesus as an entity similar to the Confucian ‘Supreme Being’, and the concept of heaven and hell as being akin to the Buddhist notion of cause and effect, Kang Hobu’s perception of Catholicism was very much in keeping with the general perception possessed by other Chosŏn elites who lived during the eighteenth century.

–Kang Chaeŭng, in one particular entry, wrote that while his failure to read any books on Catholic doctrine meant that he in essence knew very little about Catholicism, he could not bring himself to understand how this doctrine bewildered the public to the point where they were willing to die in its name. Kang Chaeŭng completed the translation of the *Sangbongnok* in the very year in which the Catholic Persecution of 1839 (*Kihae saok* 己亥邪獄) occurred, not long after the *Sinyu saok* (Catholic Persecution of 1801). At the time of the *Kihae saok*, Kang wrote another entry in which he described what he had heard about Catholicism. This latter entry belies a much more balanced understanding of Catholicism than in the past, attributing the massacre as a plot by ruling factions to maintain political power.²³ Kang Chaeŭng also stressed that the Bible did not feature any fundamentally flawed principles, promoted the doing of good deeds, and that the Catholic commandments were similar to those found in the Buddhist Scriptures. He also added, however, that the theory that one would go to Heaven after death, much like the theory of *Sarvajna*, led people to become delusional.²⁴ As such, he argued that the reason why people were ready to die for their

(中華); moreover, it is only natural that the morals and learning of modern generations cannot measure up to those of ancient people. However, with regard to crafts and technologies, some implements invented by later generations have indeed exhibited more complex and ingenious attributes. Although the calendar system was invented by ancient sagacious people, as it is actually based on mathematics, it is, much like mind reading (*simsul*, 心術) and the study of the Way (*tohak*, 道學), in fact not related to the manner in which the world is ruled (世道) ... When Kim Sijin wrote the *Yŏkbŏppyŏn* (曆法辨) and Kang Hobu compiled his *yŏnhaengnok*, Catholicism had yet to take root in Chosŏn. Therefore, they could focus their energy on debating the merits of earth-related theories. .. However, from the early period of King Sunjo’s reign onwards, Western Learning began its indomitable spread into Chosŏn, with everyone, from the *sadaebu* class all the way to the literati elites and commoners, finding themselves swept up, almost as if it were a mighty wave or powerful wind, by this new philosophy. Although the government subsequently introduced measures which strongly prohibited individuals from coming into contact with Western Learning, with any individual found to be in violation of the law immediately executed, such individuals never regretted having done so, and this even if their action meant potential death. The prisons were full of such people. About a hundred people have since then died because of this Western religion.” (*Sangbongnok*, Vol. 7)

²² “The Lord, who is said to emanate from a Western nation, is referred to as Jesus Christ (耶穌). The name Jesus means the savior of the world in his native language. Those who revere him identify him as a foreign saint and regard him as the God of Heaven. They call him the Lord. ... The doctrine of this religion is based on the notion of purity in that it emphasizes the need to make efforts to remove desire and greed and to find the right way (道) so as to become a mountain god (神仙). This religion appears for the most part to be a combination of the principles of Sŏndo (仙道, Mountain Taoism) and Puldo (佛道, Buddhism).” (*Sangbongnok*, Vol. 7)

²³ *Sangbongnok*, Vol. 7.

²⁴ *Sangbongnok*, Vol. 7

religion was because they believed in life after death. Likening the current spread of Catholicism to a giant wave, he conceded that even the most air-tight of prohibitions could not impede its progress. To this end, he maintained that it would be more desirable to permit the spread of Catholicism-related books, allow the general population to freely read these books, and induce discussions amongst prestigious scholars so that the people could see for themselves the misguided principles and reasoning on which this religion was based.

It is evident through the *Sangbongnok* that Kang Hobu viewed Western Learning in a positive light, which yields insight into his scholarly and open-minded approach. Such an approach can be found in his work, but also in other *yŏnhaengnok* accounts by other Chosŏn literati during the eighteenth century. However, with the government's severe suppression of Catholicism, a complete change in attitude towards Western Learning emerged in the nineteenth century, which affected the views of later generations including Kang Hobu's great-grandson. Kang Chaeŭng generally viewed the customs of Chinese civilization and traditional morals and learning as being superior to those of Western civilization, though he later found himself admitting that in terms of craft and technology, Western civilizations appeared to be more advanced than East Asia. While he recognized the excellence of the Current Standard Calendar based on the Western calendar system, he mitigated this assessment by stressing the fact that this system was in reality a mere technology that had no bearing on the study of *sedo* (世道, manner in which the world is ruled). As such, Kang Chaeŭng believed that although East Asian nations could adopt Western technologies, East Asian morals and customs remained superior to Western ones.

However, Kang Chaeŭng even found himself beginning to seriously reassess the veracity of this line of reasoning after having witnessed the Catholic Persecution of 1801 (*Sinyu saok*). The absence of such threats during the eighteenth century meant that scholars such as Kim Sijin and Kang Hobu could focus on relatively more mundane questions such as those pertaining to the calendar system and other earth-related theories. While eighteenth century literati viewed Western Learning with an open-mind characterized by a genuine interests in various fields, this attitude underwent a profound and negative change during the early nineteenth century as Catholicism, which had been but one of many fields of interest during the eighteenth century, began to be an all-encompassing concern. While the use of Catholic persecutions by the *sedo*-politics oriented government of Chosŏn was one major factor for this change in attitudes, the serious abuses of the feudal system during the final stages and the inability of the neo-Confucian order to respond to the spread of Catholicism can be regarded as having been a more salient factor in explaining this sudden change in perceptions.

3) "The Western Learning Shown in the Records of Envoys Traveling to Beijing in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century Focusing on Visits to the Russian Diplomatic Office." *The Review of Korean Studies* Volume 11 Number 1 (March 2008): 11-27.

This study reviews the final stage of mediated encounters of Chosŏn envoys with the West in Beijing based on travel accounts from the first half of the nineteenth century. There exist about

sixty records of envoys visiting Beijing in the nineteenth century, among which about forty were records from before the enthronement of King Kojong in 1864. This article focuses on the travel records of envoys that had travelled to Beijing until the reign of King Ch'öljong, or those before 1863.

In addition to the difficult political situation caused by internal discord and ongoing Catholic persecutions, Western ships began to frequently anchor off Chosŏn, arousing a sense of crisis. In addition, the declining Qing dynasty prohibited Western religion, which caused many trade conflicts with the West. Under such conditions, the only place Chosŏn envoys could make contact with Western civilization in the first half of the nineteenth century was at the Russian Diplomatic Office in Beijing. As direct contact with the West increased after the middle of the nineteenth century when the Chosŏn dynasty opened her ports, Korean envoys' mediated contact with Western civilization through Qing became considerably less frequent.

At the turn of the nineteenth century when Catholicism, refusing patriarchal authority and Confucian rituals, rapidly spread its religious influence, the Chosŏn government perceived the Western religion to be a great threat to the existing Neo-Confucian order and ruling system. With the monopolization of political power by the Noron ('Patriarch' or 'Old Doctrine') faction and Taewŏn'gun's isolation policy, Catholicism was no longer considered as a minor heretical religion, but as an officious ideology dangerous enough to subvert the government, with the Western powers as its supporting force.

Starting with more frequent appearances of Western ships on the shores of Chosŏn, many Western countries began to advance to East Asia and tried to compel East Asian countries to open their ports for trade. The harder the Chosŏn dynasty suppressed Catholicism and fought for seclusion, the more the West wished to enter. The anchoring of Western ships on the shores of Chosŏn Korea in the first half of the nineteenth century served as occasions of encounter, and was recorded in the *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* (Veritable Records of the Chosŏn Dynasty) and *Oju yŏnmun changjŏn san'go* (Random Expatiations of Oju). British ships anchored on the shores of Chungch'ŏng Province twice, once in 1816 and once in 1832, and, the ship that anchored at Kodaedo, Hŭngju in 1832 officially asked for trade.²⁵ Chosŏn took Great Britain's approach for trade seriously and sent an envoy to inform Qing of the incident. For this reason, it seems that the *Yŏnhaengsa* envoys at the time had a good understanding of Great Britain's stance and position among Western countries. For instance, Sŏ Yuso who visited Beijing in the winter of 1822 wrote about Great Britain in his *yŏnhaengnok* as follows.

Great Britain is located farther away than any other Western country, and is 100,000 *li* from China by sea. British people are all very quick and fierce and like to loot. Neighboring countries are afraid of her. Among her natural products is a fragrant tree,

²⁵ .In 1816, a British ship anchored at the port of Maryangjin, Pŏnhŏn, Ch'ungch'ŏng Province and looted livestock. In 1832, a British merchant ship belonging to the East India Company anchored and asked for trade at Kodaedo, Hŭngju, Ch'ungch'ŏng Province. An official note informing Qing of this incident was sent. The governor of Hŭngju was dismissed. In 1840, a Western ship anchored at Cheju and looted cattle and horses. The governor of Cheju was dismissed. In 1845, another Western ship anchored at Cheju. In 1846, a French ship anchored at Oeyŏndo, Hŭngju, and sent a note of protest over the martyrdom of three French priests, Imbert, Chastan and Maubant, who had been prosecuted during the Catholic Persecution of 1839.

which is very solid with a smooth grain. It is used to build houses and ships, and is extremely durable and does not decay, which is why it is known as ‘an indestructible tree.’ The land is vast with a large population of people, and it is the strongest country beyond the West. Also, British people are good swimmers and in water they move as swiftly as wild ducks.²⁶

The *yŏnhaengnok* accounts by Sŏ Yuso amount to sixteen volumes. They contain precise records of the Chinese system, topography, and the origin of place names. In volume 14, he describes a total of 168 foreign countries. It is interesting that Sŏ distinguished Great Britain from other Western nations, describing it as ‘the strongest country beyond the West’. The recognition of Great Britain as a nation independent from the collective notion of ‘Western powers’ followed the example of the Board of Rites of Qing at the time.²⁷ Aside from Great Britain, Sŏ Yuso identified many of the Western countries simply as ‘large Western country’ or ‘small Western country.’ Regarding one ‘large Western country’, he describes it as a ‘whole different world that is brilliant in astronomy and music, worships the ‘Lord of Heaven’, rich in natural resources, and which has established the principles of benevolence, righteousness, propriety and wisdom.’ But he goes on to explain that the reason why this ‘large Western country’ has excelled in astronomy, maths, and music is due to the transmission of ancient Chinese culture and civilization in their land, which they inherited, maintained and developed well over time.²⁸ This suggests that Sŏ Yuso’s perception of the West stems from a Sino-centric worldview which maintains that the origin of Western civilization essentially derived from China.²⁹

With the decline of the Qing dynasty and her enormous loss from trade with the West at the turn of the nineteenth century, China prohibited the spread of Catholicism.³⁰ The accumulated social contradictions caused by the import of opium led to the Opium War in 1840, and Qing’s internal discord gradually restricted the Chosŏn envoys’ contact with Western civilization. In the first half of the nineteenth century, as negative perceptions of Western Learning spread, it is presumed that the envoys travelling to Beijing avoided contact with Western culture. Thus, travel accounts from the first half of the nineteenth century rarely contain records on Western Learning, and the only records that do so are from visits to the Russian Diplomatic Office.

The first treaty between Qing and Russia, who had first approached the East at the beginning of the seventeenth century, was the 1689 Treaty of Nerchinsk, which regulated the freedom of trade between Chinese and Russian peoples. Since this Treaty, the commercial corps of Russia conducted their trade in Beijing. A group of two hundred Russian merchants visited Beijing by land every three years and stayed and worked there for eighty days. During their stay, the

²⁶ *Yŏnhaengnok* Vol. 14.

²⁷ Ro Taehwan, “19segi chŏnban Sŏyang insik ūi pyŏnnhwa wa Sŏgi suyongnon” (Changing Recognition of the West and Reception of Western Technology), *Hanguksa yŏn’gu* 95 (1997).

²⁸ *Yŏnhaengnok*, Vol. 14.

²⁹ Ro Taehwan, “Chŏngjo-dae ūi sagi suyongnon ūi ‘Chungguk wŏllyusŏl’ ūl chungsim ūro” (Study of Accepting ‘Sagi’ - Focusing on the ‘Theory of Chinese Origins’), *The Korea Academic Journal* 25 (1999).

³⁰ Reported by Yi Chŏngni as cited an entry under the sixth year of King Hyŏnjong’s reign (25th day of the third month in 1840) in the *Chosŏn wangjo sillok*.

supervision of the Board of Military Affairs of Qing was very strict, and trade conflicts between Qing and Russia continued. The Russians were made to reside at a site known as Hoedonggwang (會同館) in Korean, and at the turn of the nineteenth century, it became the Russian Diplomatic Office.³¹ The reason why Chosŏn envoys travelling to Beijing frequently visited the Russian Diplomatic Office was because Russia was viewed differently from other ‘Western’ countries by Chosŏn,³² and it was the only place to have contact with Western culture because of the prohibition of visiting Catholic churches. As such, while there was a church inside the Russian Diplomatic Office, Chosŏn envoys hesitated or declined to go inside, though there are records of visits to the church in certain *yŏnhaengnok* accounts³³.

Among ‘new’ Western cultural items that they encountered, the Chosŏn envoys were especially taken back by the crucifix. In *Puyŏn ilgi*, Kim Rosang describes the scene as follows.

Upon opening the curtain and entering inside, there is a dead man hanging on the wall opposite. There is a cross-shaped wooden panel on which a man is nailed at the head, legs and arms. It looks like the punishment of tearing a person tied to a cart. The skin of the man is white. His skin, flesh, nails, and hair look real and I can’t tell whether the bare body is real or not. Red blood spills out and drips down from the nailed areas, from head to toe. It was as if he had died a few moments ago and his body is still warm. I felt ill and was unable to look at it straight. (25th day of the sixth month in 1828)

Looking at the crucifix – a man nailed to a cross and bleeding – the envoys wondered why it was enshrined and worshipped as an image of a god. When Kim Rosang asked this question, the guide answered that it was Jesus Christ who was punished with death.³⁴ Upon hearing this, Kim came to understand why the believers of the Western religion in Chosŏn were not afraid of punishment. Though by this time Catholicism was strictly prohibited and its believers, when found, were sentenced to death, it had been a mystery as to why Catholics did not renounce their faith even in their last moments.³⁵

³¹ For further information about the establishment and management of the Russian Diplomatic Office in Beijing, see Chŏng Hyejŏng, “19segi Chosŏn sahaeng Kim Kyŏngsŏn ūi Pukkyŏng ch’ehŏm kwa oeguk chŏngbo ihae” (The Experiences of the Chosŏn Envoy Kim Kyŏngsŏn in Beijing in the Nineteenth Century and Understanding Information on Foreign Countries). *Chungguksa yŏn’gu* 37 (2005).

³² In *Yŏnwŏn chikji* (26th day of the twelfth day in 1823), Kim Kyŏngsŏn described that Russians were a variant of Mongols as they were known as the ‘barbarians with a big nose’. In *Yŏnhaeng ilgi* (23rd day of the first month in 1863), Yi Hangŏk stated that “As Russia is situated to the west of the ocean, Western countries are its neighbors. It is the largest country in the world and the people and customs are almost the same as those of the West.” Thus, the Chosŏn envoys regarded Russia as a variant of Mongolia or a neighboring country of the West.

³³ *Yŏnwŏn chikji*, *Simjŏngo*, *Puyŏn ilgi* and *Yu Hŏnsok-nok*. In the last work, its author, Kang Siyŏng did not leave any detailed record, but simply stated that there was a hall with an image of a god and that he did not go inside. In *Yŏnwŏn chikji*, Kim Kyŏngsŏn describes in detail the façade of the church building, and concludes, “In general, as Russia is situated near the West and worships the religion, they say that Russia imitates the Western system and enshrines the statue of the Lord of Heaven.”

³⁴ Pak Saho who travelled to Beijing six months after Kim Rosang asked the same question, but received a completely different answer – that it might be a Russian prince murdered in China or the body of Matteo Ricci. Pak Saho did not know what to believe, which is expressed in his *Simjŏngo* (3rd day of the first month in 1829).

³⁵ For example, Kang Chaeŭng, wrote in the *Sangbongnok*: “Since the period of King Sunjo, Catholicism became popular and the gentry as well as foolish commoners, irrespective of gender, became followers of the faith. It cannot be understood how Catholicism inspires people to be brave even in their last moments. They do not renounce their belief, not one bit.”

Other items of interest was the mirror, which was a ‘new’ object that was being imported and used in Chosŏn at that time, and the camera. On 28 January 1863, the Chosŏn envoys, Yi Hangŏk, Pak Myŏnghong and O Sangjun, had their photos taken for the first time at the Russian Diplomatic Office. Yi Hangŏk left a precise record in his *Yŏnhaeng ilgi* on the process of taking and printing photographs – a concept and technology which he was unable to fully understand.³⁶ Photography was a product of modern scientific technology and increasingly became a significant merchandise of Western imperialism in the nineteenth century. While photography was introduced to China and Japan during the 1840s, it was not until Chosŏn opened her ports that she had contact with its technology on a full scale³⁷

³⁶ “When I was getting my picture taken I wasn’t allowed to move, so was unable to examine the camera carefully. When Pak Myŏnghong and O Myŏngjun were about to have their pictures taken and the photographer went inside for a while, I the lifted the drape, lowered my head in, and looked into the camera. Pak Myŏnghong, who was sitting in front, appeared upside down on the lens of the camera. How extraordinary! What kind of magical device is this? Was it like chanting a spell, that would then transform the world?”

³⁷ Chu Hyŏngil. *Sajin maech’e ūi sut’ong ūl t’onghae pon 19segi mal Han’guk sahoe ūi sigak munhwa e taehan yŏ’ngu* (A Study on the Visual Culture of Korean Society in the Late Nineteenth Century). *The Korean Journal of Journalism & Communication Studies* 47:6 (2003).

Suggestions for Future Research

1) A translated collection of all *yŏnhaengnok* accounts that make reference to (contact with) Western culture and civilization would be a valuable contribution to the field [translation here means from classical Chinese to modern Korean]. All accounts referring to the Catholic mission in Beijing and an index of all Western books and materials that had been translated into classical Chinese (漢譯西學書) at the time should be of priority.

2) Cultural exchange between East and West were made through ship travel. Since the late eighteenth century, Western ships anchored on the coasts of Korea, which became occasions of exchange and contact with the West. Records and accounts referring to these instances also deserve further attention and research.

3) There is evidence which suggests that a group of Jesuit missionaries had travelled around the northeast region of China, close to Chosŏn territory, to plan their mission in China at the instruction of the Emperor of Qing. Paektusan (Mount Paektu 白頭山), which is situated in this area (bordering Korea and China) was deemed a sacred mountain site by both Chosŏn and Qing. It is believed that accounts and information from the missionaries' journey were documented and reported, which deserve attention and research to explore how this area (around Liadong) and Paektusan were described and viewed by Westerners.

Questions to Consider (re: power of discourse and representation)

- How could the personal reflections conveyed in *yŏnhaengnok* accounts be analyzed and appraised to present perceptions of 'the other'? How can 'difference' be negotiated in determining and analyzing mutual perceptions?
- Were the authors of the *yŏnhaengnok* accounts re-enacting discursive tropes that had orientated the traveller before their trips and encounters?
- To what extent did *yŏnhaengnok* accounts, based on encounters with the 'West' in a contiguous zone, serve as discursive modalities (discourses) to the late nineteenth century Korean travellers to Europe and America who began to experience Western culture and civilization firsthand?

APPENDIX I

Table 1 <Catholic Churches Mentioned in *Yŏnhaengnok* of the Eighteenth Century>³⁸

Date of Departure	Journal Title	Author	Position	Catholic Church Visited	Remarks
Nov. 1711	<i>Yeonhaeng ilgi</i>	Min Jin-won	Deputy Envoy	No mention of visiting	
Nov. 1712	<i>Nogajae yeonhaeng ilgi</i>	Kim Chang-eop	<i>jaje gungwan</i>	South Church	Mentioned the portrait of Jesus Christ, astronomical instrument & alarm clock.
Dec. 1712	<i>Yeonhaengnok</i>	Choi Duk-jung	Military Attendant	No mention of visiting	
July 1720	<i>Yeonhaeng jabji</i>	Lee Yi-myeong	Senior Envoy	South Church	Three envoys visited & discussed astronomy & calendar.
July 1720	<i>Iram yeon-gi</i>	Lee Gi-ji	<i>jaje gungwan</i>	South, East & North churches	Wrote <i>Seoyang hwagi</i> & <i>Honui-gi</i> .
Nov. 1720	<i>Gyeongja yeonhaeng jabji</i>	Lee Eui-hyeon	Senior Envoy	Passed in front of the South Church	Regretted not visiting the church.
Oct. 1727	<i>Sangbongnok</i>	Kang Ho-bo	Deputy Envoy	South Church	Mentioned the portrait of Jesus Christ & the alarm clock.
July 1732	<i>Imja yeonhaeng jabji</i>	Lee Eui-hyeon	Senior Envoy	South Church	Three envoys visited.
July 1732	<i>Yeonhaeng ilnok</i>	Han Deok-hu	Recorder	No mention of visiting	
Nov. 1755	<i>Yeonhaeng ilnok</i>	Anonymous	Military Attendant (?)	South Church	Met Yu Song-yeong.
Nov. 1760	<i>Bugwonnok</i>	Lee Sang-bong	<i>jaje gungwan</i>	East church	Mentioned the statue of Jesus Christ & the theory of Catholicism.
Nov. 1765	<i>Simhyeon yeongi Eulbyeong yeonhaengnok</i>	Hong Dae-yong	<i>jaje gungwan</i>	South & East churches	Met Yu Song-yeong & Po Wu-gwan.

³⁸ The *yŏnhaengnok* containing records of the Catholic churches from 1649 to 1876 are in Wŏn Chaeyŏn's book, *Sŏse Tongchŏm kwa Chosŏn wangjo ūi taeŭng* [The Western Forces' Advancement toward the East and Confrontation of the Chosŏn Dynasty] (Seoul: Handŭl Ch'ulp'ansa, 2003). The table contains those journals from the eighteenth century plus supplementary ones that had been omitted in Wŏn Chaeyŏn's book. The supplementary ones are marked with an asterisk.

Table 1 (Continued)

Date of Departure	Journal Title	Author	Position	Catholic Church Visited	Remarks
Nov. 1773	<i>Yeonhaengnok</i> *	Eom Suk	Deputy Envoy	South Church	
June 1780	<i>Yeolha ilgi</i>	Park Ji-won	<i>jaje gungwan</i>	South Church	Wrote <i>Buggyeong-cheonjudanggi & Yanghwa</i> .
Oct. 1787	<i>Yeonhaengnok</i>	Yu Eon-ho	Senior Envoy	Did not visit	Deputy envoy and recorder visited a church.
May 1790	<i>Yeonhaeng giyu</i>	Seo Ho-su	Deputy Envoy	Did not visit	Regretted not visiting.
Nov. 1791	<i>Yeonhaengnok</i>	Kim Jeong-jung	Military Attendant (?)	Passed in front of the South Church	
Oct. 1798	<i>Muoyeon haengnok</i>	Seo Yu-mun	Recorder	Did not visit	Recorded Chihyeong's visit to a church

NOTE: The table is as it is found in the original article, which uses the Revised Romanization system.

APPENDIX II

18th Century Chosŏn Envoys' Reflections on Western Paintings in the Catholic Churches in Beijing (in relation to style and technique)

In *Iram yŏn'gi* (22nd and 27th day of the ninth month; and the 10th, 22nd, and 24th day of the tenth month, 1720), Yi Kiji notes that in addition to viewing all the religious art work in the South church, he read five books on Western painting and a missionary presented him with seven paintings as gifts. In response to the details of the art work, he remarks,

The pictures of animals, insects and fish look alive. Ten different kinds of even minute creatures such as butterflies and bees are painted on the wall, whose shapes and colors are drawn very realistically. Their mouths, eyes, coats and brows are drawn so realistically that one can tell what kind of insects or creatures they are at a glance without looking for a list of descriptions. As one opens up a (picture) book, it looks as though an insect or fish will jump or fly out of the page and one could grasp it with both hands.

In *Ŭlbyŏng yŏnhaengnok*, Hong Taeyong states,

I entered through a big gate and there is another gate westward leading to the inside. At the east side, there is a neat wall of bricks with a door half open and houses vaguely in the distance. I asked Sepal about that. He laughed and said that it was not a real door but a picture on the wall in order to show the artistic skills to onlookers. Doubtingly I approached the wall, and found that the door was not real but painted on the wall. This was enough for me to imagine the artistic (paintining) skills of the Western people.

Most of the men paid attention to the conspicuous styles of Western painting, their sharp perspective and contrast. In *Yup'o mundap*, Hong Taeyong notes,

They are experts in the use of perspective and original colors in drawing the appearance and shades of streams and valleys, the light and dimness of smoke and clouds, and the vacant space of the skies. It is said, 'The delicacy of Western paintings is due to ingenious arrangement and proportional allotment derived from (the principles of) maths.'

Hong indicates that this perspective derived from advanced Western mathematical technology, understanding that the stereography contrasting light and darkness appropriately, together with the use of perspective is the merit of Western style of painting. Yi Sangbong noted, "As (the paintings) were drawn by *yin* and *yang* and vividly represent artistic endeavor, seen from far away they look as though they are alive and moving," and Pak Chiwŏn similarly stated, "They look as though they are alive, breathing and moving, and show lightness and darkness spontaneously while the distribution of *yin* and *yang* are properly executed."

APPENDIX III

18th Century Chosŏn Envoys' Reactions to Western Religious Paintings in the Catholic Churches in Beijing (in relation to content and meaning)

Kang Hobu's reaction to a portrait of Jesus in the South church:

The portrait is beautiful, brilliant and vivid. It looks like a living man. The delicate nature of the painting is indescribable. This must be why the world refers to Western paintings as 'works of God' (神品). But in my view, the man in the picture assumes a somewhat ghostly air, as do the beasts and the birds. Such is the skill of the painting. The picture looks so dreamy and mysterious yet I can't describe how or why. Truly it is the talent of a ghost. (*Sangbongnok*, 29th day of the twelfth month, 1727)

Yi Ŭihyŏn's reflections regarding a painting in the South church:

Heaven is depicted so high that it can touch the stars in the sky. There are illustrations of the sun and the moon, the heavenly bodies and the stars, as well as numerous evil spirits (devils) (陰鬼) on the walls, so it resembles the Hall for the Dead (十王殿) in a Buddhist temple. (*Imja yŏnhaeng chapchi*, 1732)

Sŏ Yumun's detailed reflections on the paintings of Jesus and missionaries on both sides of the wall in the South church:

In the middle over the north wall, there is a portrait of a girlish figure with parted hair falling down to the right and left sides, with open eyes looking up at the sky. The figure's demeanor reflects infinite thought and concern. This is the so-called 'Lord of Heaven' (天主). The figure and clothes are afloat in the air, and where it stands looks like a shrine or cavernous enclosure. At first glance, it looks like a statue, but up close I discovered it was a painting, of a girl around thirty years of age, whose complexion is sallow and upper eyelids are very dark – perhaps because they are cast upwards. The figure wears long, wide-sleeved clothing with conspicuous lines between the pleats and gussets, which look as though they are moving. It is indeed a very strange style of painting. In front of the piece, there is an incense burner and fragrant incense sticks that burn endlessly, and by the wall to the west of the portrait there is a big chair and a cushion with a picture of a dragon on it, all adorned and splendid. I wonder who sits there? It is a seat fit for an emperor, but not for a commoner.

[...] There is a portrait of a woman with a child in her arms. The child looks surprised with its eyes wide open, and the woman looks concerned as she holds the child. An old man is afraid of something and prays with his hands gathered together. There is a woman taking care of a sick child, and above her there is a white bird spurting out something white onto her forehead with its wings wide open. In the sky, there are clouds on every side and countless children push their heads through the clouds and look as though they might fall. An old man extends his hands towards the heavens and pretends to catch them if they fall. Seen from a few steps away (i.e., taking in the whole scene), there is no way of understanding the spirit of the characters through the picture whatsoever. Strange and enrapturing, the longer I stayed (and looked at the painting), I found myself in bad spirits. (*Muo yŏnhaengnok*, 11th day of the first month, 1799)

APPENDIX IV

18th Century Chosŏn Envoys' Reactions to Catholicism

- Yi Ŭihyŏn, a senior envoy, was sent copies of Catholic catechisms – *Samsan nonhak* (三山論學記) written by the Italian Jesuit missionary Giulio Aleni (艾儒略, 1582-1649), and *Chuje kunjŭng* (主制群證) by Joannes Adam Shall von Bell (湯若望, 1591-1661). *Chuje kunjŭng* explained Catholicism in relation to the universe and the structure of the human body, which was accepted as a medical book by Chosŏn intellectuals. Nevertheless, Yi Ŭihyŏn had a negative perception of the Western religion stating, “Catholicism focuses on serving Heaven, goes against Confucian ethics, rejects Ch’an and Buddhism, and regards itself to be superior among other beliefs.” (*Togok chip* 陶谷集 fascicle 30)
- Yi Yimyŏng, a senior envoy in 1720, tolerated Catholicism, stating in his letter to Joseph Suarez and Ignatius Kögler that Catholicism is not very different from Confucianism in its emphasis on revering the ‘Supreme Being’ (上帝) and making efforts to restore purity and virtue, and that the story of Jesus’s birth is somewhat similar to that of the Buddha and the Christian concept of hell is comparable to the Buddhist concept of cause and effect. (‘A Letter Sent to Westerners, J. Suarez and I. Kögler’ 與西洋人蘇霖戴進賢, *Sojaejip* 疎齋集 Vol. 10).
- Yi Sangbong, who traveled to Beijing in 1760, presented a more objective stance, trying to state what he observed (facts) rather than make any personal judgment on Catholicism in his *Pugwŏnnok* (北轅錄): “The ‘Lord of Heaven’ is the so-called creator and is similar to a spirit in Confucianism. Westerners don’t respect Confucianism, Buddhism and Taosim but respect only the ‘Lord of Heaven’, thanking Him for every breath. In other words, they respect Him as an emperor, and love and depend on Him as their parents.”
- Hong Taeyong, who travelled in 1765, viewed Catholicism as a heretical religion similar to Buddhism and perceived it in negative terms: “The main principles of Catholicism is to revere Heaven, as a Buddhist would revere the Buddha; advise people to offer worship morning and evening; do good and seek blessings. As its teachings generally differ from the ways of the Chinese sages and are heretical, it is not a religion worthy of consideration.” (*Ŭlbyŏng yŏnhaengnok*, entry on the 7th day of the first month in 1766)