ABSTRACT

My dissertation entitled “From *Sanguo zhi yanyi* to *Samgukchi*: Domestication and Appropriation of *Three Kingdoms* in Korea” shows how a ‘Chinese’ work of fiction has become an enduringly popular Korean work since its importation in the sixteenth century. In this context, my thesis encompasses a comparative exploration of the influence of the *Sanguo zhi yanyi* (Romance of the Three Kingdoms; hereafter *Three Kingdoms*) as reflected in premodern and contemporary Korean culture and literature. The domestication and appropriation of *Three Kingdoms* today can be attributed, in part, to a relentless modification and re-creation of its contents in the forms of numerous translations, adaptations, and revisions that have reflected sociopolitical and ideological agendas in Korea.

I also clarify how the sociopolitical and ideological changes in Chosŏn Korea accelerated the reception and dissemination of *Three Kingdoms* by illuminating in particular how the Chosŏn rulers utilized the Neo-Confucian values in *Three Kingdoms* to maintain and strengthen Korea’s identity as the sole cultural and spiritual successor of the Great Han-Chinese empire after its collapse in 1644.

*Three Kingdoms*’ status in Korea has been much higher than that of a Chinese classic; it remains the most widely read of all novels in modern Korea. Moreover, authors like Chang Chŏng’il do not hesitate to define *Three Kingdoms* as a national novel of Korea. It is virtually impossible for a modern Korean to lead a life divorced from *Three Kingdoms*.

My dissertation shows that these phenomena did not appear suddenly in the twentieth-century Korea. Rather, they are the result of domestication and appropriation of *Three Kingdoms* that has steadily progressed for centuries; the novel has been relentlessly re-interpreted in terms
of Korea’s socio-political and cultural context. My dissertation elucidates the cultural politics that contribute to making *Three Kingdoms* into a national novel of Korea.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I feel tremendously indebted to many people for the completion of this dissertation, which has come a long way from its emergence to its final completion. Dr. Ross King planted the seed when he suggested that I make *Three Kingdoms* in Korean culture the subject of my dissertation. From 2003, I began to present papers at academic conferences on the influence of *Three Kingdoms* in Korean culture. Since then, I have realized that there are a great many ardent fans of *Three Kingdoms* and its adaptations the world over. By the spring of 2005, I had completed earlier drafts of two chapters of this dissertation.

However, it has turned out to be too ambitious and wide-ranging a task for me to cover the realms of Chinese premodern literature, and those of premodern and modern Korean literature, while also encompassing some aspects of comparative literature and Japanese culture. Moreover, cultural products related to *Three Kingdoms* kept pouring out, even as I was writing my dissertation. That new sources are piling up is a happy situation for the researcher, but updating what has already been written has become an impossible task. On the other hand, extant research on the dissemination of *Three Kingdoms* in premodern Korea and colonial Korea remains comparatively meager, which has posed another difficulty.

When dating the first importation of *Three Kingdoms* into Chosŏn Korea, I have tried a relatively new methodology: examining references on *Three Kingdoms* in the collected works of the literati in the late Koryŏ and early Chosŏn periods. I expected to find evidence that the literati knew about the novel long before 1569. However, most references I found also happen to be mentioned in official histories of China. I thus could not rule out the possibility that Chosŏn literati gained the relevant knowledge from either source: Chinese official history or the novel.
Considering that more complete online databases of the collected works of the literati of Koryŏ and Chosŏn are being updated as I write these lines, I hope that this approach, with some modifications to enhance accuracy, will lead to some breakthrough in the near future.

In the spring of 2009, an earlier version of this dissertation finally came out and there were requests for revisions. In addition to responding to those requests, I have added a chapter on *Three Kingdoms* in the colonial period.

In addition to proposing the dissertation topic, Dr. Ross King has provided many suggestions and directions for this work and recommended valuable sources of which I was hardly aware. I also thank him for enlarging my vision and providing coherent answers to my questions. I owe particular thanks to Dr. Catherine Swatek, whose penetrating questions taught me to question more deeply. She has been a generous mentor and an unsparing critic of my work. She taught me interesting issues regarding premodern Chinese fiction and directed me through many discussions. She has also made meticulous suggestions for editorial changes to this dissertation. I also thank Dr. Alison Bailey for her input and advice, especially her suggestion to compare Ezra Pound to Korean translators of *Three Kingdoms* and her detailed and insightful suggestions on how to improve this dissertation. Professor Hegel also read my dissertation thoroughly and provided invaluable suggestions, one of which on the editions of *Three Kingdoms* saved me from an embarrassing error. I have tried to accommodate his insightful comments as much as my ability has allowed, and thank him for his concern. Dr. Bruce Fulton shared his insights on modern Korean literature and writers. Through meeting with the writers-in-residence that he invited to UBC, I was able to grasp better the picture of writing practices of Korean writers to some extent.
I offer my enduring gratitude to my friends and students, who have inspired me to continue my work in this field. Jieun Kim helped with the format of the dissertation. Chen Lei’s mother and the officers at the Lin’an long-distance bus station saved me from the embarrassing occasion when I nearly lost my laptop computer in which my manuscript was saved. Dr. Patricia Mirwaldt at UBC Student Health Services provided me with helpful advice when I was both physically and mentally vulnerable. Son Juyeon and Paik Seungjun helped me locate sources at Korea University Library. I also thank Han Jihee, Imm Jun-hyuk, Chae Boyoun, Sohn Bong-gi, Li Tingting, and Song Hong for their help and friendship. Special thanks are owed to my parents, who have supported me throughout my years of education, both morally and financially. I also thank my son Yemyung (Ruiming) for giving me another reason to finish this work. I am grateful for the support of the Korea Foundation, the Daesan Foundation, the UBC Faculty of Graduate Studies, the UBC Centre for Korean Research, and the Academy of Korean Studies, whose fellowships provided financial support for this dissertation at various stages.

Again, if this dissertation ever sees the light of day, it is all thanks to my teachers and friends, to whom I am deeply indebted. Without them, its completion would not have been possible. Finally, any errors in this dissertation are my responsibility.
DEDICATION

To Koo Kyung-ae, my mother
1 Introduction

Scholars of Korean literature, whether they study premodern or modern literature, often come across the subject of the *Sanguo zhi yanyi* 三國志演義 (Romance of the Three Kingdoms; hereafter *Three Kingdoms*). Such encounters tend to be more or less embarrassing, since it is difficult to envisage that, in the study of Korean literature, references to, citations, adaptations, and parodies of, one single literary work would have been made so often and so repeatedly for hundreds of years. Students of Korean literature sooner or later come to realize that, for a comprehensive approach to the literature, history, and philosophy of Korea, an understanding of *Three Kingdoms* is more than essential.

*Three Kingdoms* has been hugely influential in every aspect of Korean culture, and in the formation of “Korean-ness,” over the past four hundred-odd years. Putting to one side its impact on history, philosophy, and politics, in the realm of literature alone, *Three Kingdoms* had established itself as Korea’s most popular story by the late Chosŏn period in both the rental book circulation and woodblock print book markets. Moreover, it was the most printed and circulated metal movable type novel during late Chosŏn and the Japanese colonial period (1910-1945). *Three Kingdoms* is also the single most translated foreign literary work in Korea; from the Japanese colonial period until 2004, more than 180 Korean translations of *Three Kingdoms* appeared.² Lastly, yet more importantly, *Three Kingdoms* still remains a steady bestseller in

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¹ I have requested from the copyright holders permission to use the images included in this dissertation and have deleted all images whose permission is pending.

² According to Yi Yŏngtae (139-40), the number of *Three Kingdoms* translations (both complete and abridged versions) published in Korea from 1920 to 2004 reached 183 in number. See Yi Yŏngtae, “Samguk chi han’gugŏ yŏkpon sŏmun koch’al,” Ŭmun yŏn’gu 34.2 (Summer 2006): 137-160.
modern Korea, and is also one of the most popular and steadily re-produced cultural products in the field of animation, manga, and computer games.

Therefore, we can say with confidence that if one fails to understand properly the massive and accumulative impact of *Three Kingdoms* over the past five centuries in Korea, one is not likely to achieve a profound understanding of the history, politics, philosophy, and literature of Korea; besides which, one would fail to understand both the traditional and contemporary cultural interplays between China, Korea, and other East Asian countries, without a sufficient appreciation of *Three Kingdoms*.

Aside from the above-mentioned aspects, the very fact that a single literary work has maintained its popularity among people of all generations and literate classes for the past five centuries, and that its readership is steadily increasing as I write this dissertation, reinforces the necessity for profound study of *Three Kingdoms* in Korea.

However, studies endeavouring to explain the secret of *Three Kingdoms*’ popularity from a chronological and historical viewpoint have been disappointingly meager. Yi Kyŏngsŏn’s *Samgukchi yŏn’ŭi ŭi pigyo munhak-chŏk yŏng’gu* (A Study of ‘Three Kingdoms,’ Based on Approaches from Comparative Literature), published in 1976, was a pioneering work. It still remains a remarkable in-depth study of the importation of *Three Kingdoms* into Korea and its influence on several famous Korean novels.

Since Yi’s work was published, dozens of scholarly essays on the subject of *Three Kingdoms* in Korea have been published, mostly by Korean scholars. However, no monograph-length study significantly surpassing Yi’s work has appeared for the past three decades.

If we turn to studies conducted in non-Korean languages in the relevant areas, one can realize that very little substantial research has appeared. In 2005, the first non-Korean language
Ph.D. dissertation on *Three Kingdoms* in premodern Korea was published in German: Andreas Mueller-Lee’s “Die Rezeptionsgeschichte des chinesischen Romans „Drei Reiche in Korea.” Mueller-Lee's dissertation focuses on historical references to *Three Kingdoms* in Korean records; it provides textual analysis of the relevant subjects, utilizing collected works (*munjip* 文集) and historical resources available on digital databases. It is a comprehensive study mostly about the premodern references to *Three Kingdoms* in Korea; Mueller-Lee also provides a lengthy bibliography of Korean references to *Three Kingdoms* with brief introductions to some important sources. A section on Zhuge Liang in Korea in Chapter 3 of this dissertation was published separately in English recently.³

Jinhee Kim’s short essay on *Three Kingdoms* in Korea is the only available study in English⁴, but it is thin in substance as well as short in length. Moreover, her article is full of confused or incorrect claims regarding some very basic facts on the subject.⁵

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⁵ To list but a few among the numerous errors in Kim’s paper, firstly, she sometimes confuses the historical record (*Sanguo zhi* 三國志; *Chronicle of the Three Kingdoms*) with the novel (*Sanguo yanyi* 三國演義; *Three Kingdoms*) (Kim, 146 and passim). Kim even tries to attribute the novel to Chen Shou 陳壽, the famous historian who wrote the *Chronicle of Three Kingdoms*, also transcribing his name as Chin Su as if he were Korean. Moreover, she falsely translates the Korean translation of the *Chronicle of the Three Kingdoms* as *The Correct Version of “The Romance of Three Kingdoms”* (Kim, 150). As for
Acknowledging the current situation that studies (especially in Western languages) endeavouring to explain the secret of *Three Kingdoms*’ popularity have been meager, I devote my dissertation to clarifying the enduring importance and popularity of *Three Kingdoms* from a chronological and historical viewpoint.

More specifically, this dissertation explores one facet of Chinese fiction in the late imperial period (sixteenth to nineteenth centuries) by focusing on the circulation and reception of the dissemination of *Three Kingdoms* in Korea, she also interprets the first official reference to *Three Kingdoms* in the *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* (Veritable Records of the Chosŏn Dynasty) to be evidence that “*Three Kingdoms* was translated into the vernacular script, [by 1569] since apparently the *commoners* had access to it” (my emphasis). Apparently, King Sŏnjo (r. 1567-1608) discussed some details of the novel at the royal court with Chang P’ilmu 張弼武 (Military Commissioner of North Hamgyŏng Province 咸鏡北道兵馬節度使) in 1569, and then was criticized by Ki Taesŭng 奇大升 (1527–1572; Royal Secretary (sŏngji 承旨) and Reader in the Office of the Royal Lectures (sidokkwan 侍讀官) for this. However, it is absurd at best to regard a king, a high general, and king’s secretary as commoners. Scholars agree in general that Korean translations of *Three Kingdoms* started to appear at a much later date, and that few Korean commoners were equipped with the knowledge of classical Chinese, which in fact facilitated rapid dissemination of the novel among the aristocratic yangban literati upon its importation. For further details, see Chapters 3 and 4 of this dissertation.

Kim also provides an erroneous estimation that Yi Mun’yŏl’s translation of *Three Kingdoms* has sold more than one million copies (Kim, 147), reducing the sales record to less than a mere 10% of the actual number of copies sold (Yi’s translation had sold some 14 million copies by 2002 when Jinhee Kim wrote the essay on *Three Kingdoms* in Korea). Kim’s other assertions concerning the reception, dissemination, and popularity of *Three Kingdoms* in Korea also appear absurd and amateurish at best, and do not reflect any notable academic findings.
Three Kingdoms in Korea. Of course, Three Kingdoms have been hugely important within China, where it has been avidly read and studied by scholars since its appearance in 1522, but it also achieved classic status in short order in Korea, Japan, Vietnam and other areas within the Chinese cultural sphere. Moreover, this popularity shows no signs of abating. Three Kingdoms remains one of the most widely read of Chinese novels; this has been particularly true in Korea, and never more so than in modern Korea. Yi Munyŏl’s translation of Three Kingdoms (date of publication: 1984) alone has sold some 17 million copies (and counting), making it the #1 Korean best-seller of all time; needless to say, numerous other translations and adaptations of Three Kingdoms also circulate in the Korean book market. We can say with confidence that the readership of this work has become the single most significant and influential factor for modern Korean literary culture. For this reason, although this study of Three Kingdoms begins in Korea with the Chosŏn dynasty (1392-1910), it carries into the contemporary period, as well.

How were the classic works of Chinese fiction (of which Three Kingdoms is one example) disseminated into Korea, and how were they translated, printed and circulated in Chosŏn Korea? To answer these questions, the second chapter elucidates the importation and dissemination of Chinese fiction into premodern Korea--first during the Koryŏ dynasty (918-1392), but more importantly during Chosŏn Korea (1392-1910). As examples of those Chinese fictional narratives most influential in premodern Korean literary society, I investigate works such as Taiping guangji 太平廣記 (Extensive Records from the Reign of Great Tranquility), Jiandeng Xinhua 剪燈新話 (New Stories to Trim the Lamp By), and Three Kingdoms. I also examine how xiaoshuo 小說 fiction was resisted/accepted by the meritocratic Korean yangban 兩班 literati and how it influenced the development of Korean fictional narratives.
The third chapter focuses specifically on how *Three Kingdoms* was disseminated into Korea, and how it was printed and circulated in Chosŏn Korea. It is a commonplace for Korean scholars to claim that after it was first introduced in the sixteenth century, this work exerted a pervasive and powerful influence on Korean literature and literary culture for nearly 500 years, as more than 200 editions of it were published in both semi-Classical Chinese and vernacular Korean translations. Nonetheless, the amount of substantial research devoted to explaining the novel’s enduring popularity or to spelling out the precise nature of its influence on Korean literature is disappointingly meager. Thus, the first sections of the second chapter examine how this novel could flow into Korea almost concurrently with its publication in China, and how its reprints published in Korea and widespread circulation impacted both literary trends and the development of book markets in Korea.

I also seek in Chapter 3 to clarify how premodern Korea’s historical/political background facilitated Korean literati’s readiness to receive *Three Kingdoms*. First, as a case study of its reception among the literati in the early stage, I explore the early reception of *Three Kingdoms* into Chosŏn dynasty Korea by investigating references to the novel in the collected works of eminent literati and in historical records. I then clarify how sociopolitical and ideological changes in early- to mid-Chosŏn Korea accelerated the reception and dissemination of *Three Kingdoms*.

The latter sections of Chapter 3 examine how Guan Yu, a famous general in the novel, became an authentic Korean hero guarding Korea’s national integrity against foreign invaders. The emergence of Guan Yu as a national hero of Korea is one remarkable example of how the localization of heroes in *Three Kingdoms* was accomplished in Korean folk narratives, and how *Three Kingdoms* as a whole came to be appropriated by Korean readers and writers. I also show
how Guan Yu, as the guardian and benefactor of Korea, and as a righteous and chivalrous figure with strong martial prowess, served the state ideology properly in terms of employing the Korean commitment to Neo-Confucian orthodoxy, helping maintain Korea as an exemplary Sinicized state.

Chapter 4 focuses more profoundly on those aspects of the sociopolitical and ideological background of mid- to late-Chosŏn Korea which facilitated reception and dissemination of Three Kingdoms. I illuminate how the Chosŏn rulers utilized the Neo-Confucian values in Three Kingdoms to maintain and strengthen Korean identity as the sole cultural and spiritual successor of the Great Han-Chinese Ming empire after its collapse in 1644. Despite the fact that the Chosŏn court highly discouraged and sometimes even banned reading of fictional narratives from China, readership of Three Kingdoms was often strongly encouraged by rulers who tried to identify themselves with the rulers of the state of Shu-Han in the novel, through claims of exclusive political and historical legitimacy based on Neo-Confucian terms, and through opposition to foreign invasions and heresy in particular. I demonstrate how the heroes of the novel and the Neo-Confucian values they represent were officially treasured by the rulers of Chosŏn Korea, and how the state-institutionalized reading of the work manipulated the dichotomy of good and evil/legitimacy and heresy/culturally Han-Chinese and barbarian among the ever-increasing Korean readers of the novel.

In Chapter 5, I examine the readership and circulation of Three Kingdoms in Korea during the Japanese colonial period (1910–45) with regard to the critical social changes in that era, which include modernization, development of printing technology, and cultural influences from Japan and the West. I also treat some relevant aspects of the circulation of novels in vernacular Korean (including works created in vernacular Korean and works translated into
vernacular Korean) during the period from the 1850’s to 1950’s with an emphasis on translations of *Three Kingdoms* in that period. I demonstrate that the colonial period can be viewed as a transitional period for *Three Kingdoms*, as it underwent a change in status from a Chinese classic to a modern colloquial, and increasingly Korean novel.

Finally, Chapter 6 examines *Three Kingdoms’* enduring popularity, as reflected in contemporary Korean popular culture and literature. The ever-increasing popularity of *Three Kingdoms* today can be attributed, in part, to the relentless modification and re-creation of its contents by Korean authors for whom the novel functions as a yardstick for measuring prestige with readers of all generations. The success of Yi Munyŏl’s translation of *Three Kingdoms* is a case in point. Since its first publication in 1988 it has gone through 90 printings and sold some 17 million copies. Recently (in 2003 and 2004, respectively), Hwang Sŏgyŏng and Chang Chŏng’’il have published translations of the novel that criticize the conservative ideological bias of Yi’s translation, but the remedies they offer to correct this bias differ significantly. Hwang sets out to restore the “authentic” *Three Kingdoms* that first appeared five centuries ago, thereby reconstructing an orthodox “Korean” edition of the novel, while Chang, influenced by deconstructionists such as Derrida, seeks to dismantle the hegemonic Han Chinese-centered ethnocentrism and masculine bias that he finds imbedded in mainstream translations such as that of Yi Munyŏl. Highlighting various means by which non-Han peoples (including Koreans) have been repressed, marginalized, and “Other”-ized in the novel heretofore, Chang “domesticates” the *Three Kingdoms* text by means of a strategy of “ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values” (Venuti, 1995). Whether conforming to or rebelling against the dominant ideology of contemporary Korean society, such modern translations amount to
rewritings of the *Three Kingdoms* designed to reflect the philosophical and/or historical views of their Korean authors.

Having elucidated the cultural politics that have made *Three Kingdoms* into a national novel of Korea, I conclude my thesis with an examination of the five-stage progress of *Three Kingdoms* readership, a key to comprehending the secret of its ever-increasing popularity.

The above-mentioned arrangement of chapter divisions entails a certain amount of overlap in both analytical commentary and illustrative matter. While such overlap seems unavoidable to some extent, I have tried to keep it to a minimum. When identical works or passages are discussed in more than one context (Ki Taesŭng’s petition being an example), it is frequently their distinct aspects or significances that I seek to discuss or highlight, in order to clarify certain central points from a range of issues and illustrations.

Throughout my dissertation, I seek to contribute an original case study that illuminates the interplay between traditional Korean and Chinese literary cultures and between traditional literary cultures in an East Asian context.
The Importation and Dissemination of Chinese Fiction and Its Influence on Fictional Narratives of Chosŏn Korea

2.1 Importation of Chinese Literary Works into Premodern Korea

“Let’s go out and buy books.”

“Go out and buy what books?”

“Buy the Zhao taizu feilong ji 趙太祖飛龍記 and Tang Sanzang Xiyou ji 唐三藏西遊記.”

“If you are going to buy something it would be as well to buy the Four Books or Six Classics: having read the writings of the sage Confucius you will surely comprehend the principles of the Duke of Zhou. What do you want with that sort of popular tale (pinghua 平話)?”

“The Xiyou ji is lively. It is good reading when you are feeling gloomy. Tripitaka led Sun Xingzhe to Chechi guo 車遲國, and they had a contest in magic powers with Boyan daxian 伯眼大仙. Do you know (that one)?”

“Tell it, and I’ll listen.”

“When Tripitaka went to fetch scriptures …”6

The dialogue above appears in the Pak t’ongsa 朴通事 (Interpreter Pak), a popular manual of colloquial Chinese for Korean learners first published in the fourteenth century.7 In his comprehensive study of the development of Xiyou ji narratives, Glen Dudbridge asserts that

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6 Translation quoted in Dudbridge, 180; I have converted Wade-Giles transcription into pinyin.

7 See Liang Wuzhen, ‘Nogŏltae’ ‘Pak t’ongs’a’ yŏn’gu, 28-36.
“the oldest versions of Pak t’ongsa and Nogŏltae 老乞大 (another Chinese textbook for Korean learners often used alongside Pak t’ongsa), probably also the bulk of the materials in their later versions, derived from the fourteenth century—perhaps even the period before 1368, which marked the end of Yuan rule in China.”⁸ Pak t’ongsa is composed of a large number of short and independent dialogues, both in the colloquial Chinese of the Yuan period and in Middle Korean, covering various activities. Two of the Pak t’ongsa dialogues refer to Tripitaka’s pilgrimage to fetch scriptures; the one introduced above begins with a discussion on buying books—among them a copy of Tang Sanzang Xiyou ji—and then retells a complete episode from the story. With the stories of Tripitaka introduced in Pak t’ongsa, there can be little doubt that the earlier editions of Xiyou ji had already been introduced to Koryŏ by the fourteenth century.

In fact, the importation of Chinese books into Korea has a much longer history than the example mentioned above. By the time of the Three Kingdoms period in Korea (early fourth to late seventh century), Confucian classics and historical texts had been imported to Korea. Envoys, merchants, and students visited China frequently, and they did not return home without purchasing important recent books in China. As for xiaoshuo 小說 (fiction), we are not sure which was the first work introduced to premodern Korea, but by the mid-Koryŏ period both the Taiping guangji 太平廣記 (Extensive Records from the Reign of Great Tranquility) and the Soushen ji 搜神記 (In Search of the Supernatural) were circulating widely among the literati.⁹

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⁸ Dudbridge, 62. See also Liang Wuzhen, 23-8 and Chŏng Kwang, Wŏnbon nogŏltae 原本老乞大, 4-12.

⁹ Full citations of these works will appear later in the dissertation and titles of books will only be translated the first time they appear.
The Hallim pyŏlgok 翰林別曲 (Song of the Academicians;1216), a representative kyŏnggich’e ka written by young members of the Hallim (Academy of Letters), is a good example showing what kinds of Chinese literary works were popular among Koryŏ scholars, as well as reflecting general Sino-Korean literary trends during that period.

Hallim pyŏlgok, Stanza I

Yu Wŏnsun’s prose, Yi Illo’s verse,

Yi Kongno’s parallel style;

Yi Kyubo the chŏngŏn and Chin Hwa of Hallim:

Rhyming rivals race the brush!

Yu Ch’unggi’s policies, Min Kwanggyun’s exegesis,

Kim Yanggyŏng’s Shi and Yuefu poetry.

Oh! The sight of their examination hall!

How would that be?

Scholar Kŭm Ŭi’s jade sprouts and disciples,

Scholar Kŭm Ŭi’s jade sprouts and disciples.

Oh! Starting with me, how many are they?

Stanza II

唐漢書 莊老子 韓柳文集
Histories of Tang and Han, the *Zhuangzi* and *Laozi*,

Works of Han Yu and Liu Zongyuan;

Anthologies of Li Bo and Du Fu, collected works of Li You

Collected works of Bo Juyi;

*Book of Odes and Documents, Divinations and Annals, Three Rituals and Ceremonies.*

Oh! The sight of me reciting them with annotations!

How would that be?

Four hundred odd books of *Extensive Records from the Reign of Great Tranquility*,

Four hundred odd books of *Extensive Records from the Reign of Great Tranquility*.

Oh! The sight of reading them all! How would that one be?¹⁰

¹⁰ The *Hallim pyōlgok* consists of eight stanzas. Here I introduce the first two stanzas, which demonstrate the profound and immediate influence of Chinese literary culture upon the Koryŏ literati. I also include the original text since it was written mostly in Classical Chinese, with Korean-language refrains. It was composed in 1216 under the military government controlled by Ch’oe Ch’uNHON 崔忠獻.

The heavily Chinese text is collected in the *Akchang kasa* 樂章歌詞 (Words for Akchang; sixteenth
Particularly noteworthy here is that *Taiping guangji* was already circulating among Koryŏ intellectuals by 1216. Considering that the publication of the *Taiping guangji* was suspended by imperial order after its completion in 978 and that it was not until the Ming dynasty (1566) that it became widespread in China, we can argue that an intact manuscript of the *Taiping guangji* (or possibly the rare edition published in 981) was somehow transmitted to Korea long before 1216.11

The late Ming saw a rapidly expanding book market and circulation of xiaoshuo fiction. It was no coincidence that from the late Ming period on, almost all Chinese literary works flooded into Korea almost simultaneously with their publication in China, popular novels being the most noteworthy example. With respect to the purchase of Chinese books by Korean literati, Chen Jiru 陳繼儒 (1588-1639), a renowned late-Ming scholar, once commented:

> Chosŏn people love books the most. Often about fifty to sixty men are sent as tributary envoys. Whenever there happens to be any Confucian classic, recent publication, or collection of various short stories (稗官小說) they have not acquired yet, they run to book markets in the daytime and write down the book titles by asking whoever they come across. To return home with books [they want], they do not mind paying high prices. Therefore, it is often the

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case that their country [Chosŏn] has rare editions [that even we do not have any more].

As Chen mentioned concerning the importation of books, Korean envoys to China played an important role. Embassies were sent to China several times a year for the celebration of various occasions during the Ming and Qing periods, and on each such occasion the envoys’ key duty was to acquire recent Chinese publications. Envoys not only purchased Chinese books in accordance with imperial orders, but also obtained them for their personal use. For example, Hŏ Kyun 許筠, alleged to have written the *Story of Hong Kildong* (*Hong Kildong chŏn*), purchased more than four thousand books in Beijing when he was sent there as one of the envoys in 1614 and again in 1615. He purchased virtually every single literary work written by famous Chinese literati, as well as all kinds of novels and banned books.

Yi Sanghwang 李相璜 (1763–1841), who served as a prime minister in his later years, also had a collection of thousands of Chinese stories even without having ever visited China. His interest in Chinese novels and ghost stories was well known among officials, and envoys to China presented him with the newest Chinese books each time they returned from China. There

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12 朝鮮人好書，凡使臣到中土 … 或舊典、或新書，稗官小說，在彼所缺者，五六十人日出市中，各寫書目，分頭遇人便問，不惜重値購回，故彼國反有異書藏本也。Quoted in An Pyŏngguk, 168; all translations are mine unless otherwise noted.


14 Ch’oe Yongch’ŏl (1997), “Chungguk kümsŏ sosŏl,” 547. The examples of Yi Sanghwang and Hŏ Kyun acquiring thousands of books from China also illustrate that Chinese books were quite affordable to them. Apparently, they purchased these books just for their “own pleasure” with their personal funds.
is also an example suggesting that even the king himself showed a personal interest in specific Chinese novels. It is recorded in *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* (The Veritable Records of the Chosŏn Dynasty) that King Yŏnsan, in the twelfth year of his reign (1506), issued an order that fiction or drama including the *Jiandeng xinhua* (New Stories to Trim the Lamp By), *Jiandeng yuhua* (Supplementary Stories to New Stories to Trim the Lamp By), and *Xixiang ji* (Dream of the Western Chamber) be purchased by his envoys in China. All these examples demonstrate the uninterrupted, simultaneous importation of Chinese fictional narratives into Chosŏn Korea. For example, the Korean translation of *Jinghua yuan* (Flowers in the Mirror) began to circulate in 1835, only seven years after its first publication in 1828 in China.¹⁵

2.2 Condemnation of Fiction by *Yangban* Literati

Traditionally, Chinese literati took a strongly disapprobative view of the value of all manner of fictional narratives. With respect to the condemnation of fiction, Wilt Idema observes:

> The Chinese tradition does not value fiction as being a way to express higher truths that lie beyond the realm of mere fact. On the contrary, fiction is condemned as by definition misleading and inciting to moral corruption. Accordingly, all forms of fiction (story, novel, novella, narrative ballad, play)

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¹⁵ Ever since Hu Shi 胡適 dated the first publication of *Jinghua yuan* as 1828, many prominent scholars such as Lu Xun 魯迅 and Sun Kaidi 孫楷第 have approved his dating. Recently, however, Sun Jiaxun, in his *Jinghua yuan gong’an bianyi* (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 1984) argued that *Jinghua yuan* was first published in 1818.
are traditionally excluded *ipso facto* from the realm of literature. There is room in true literature for anecdotes, myths, sagas, and legends only if they can be presented as actually historical.\(^{16}\)

The disapproval of the publication of the *Taiping guangji* in the Song dynasty, despite the fact that its compilation was initiated by imperial order and that by around 978 printing blocks had already been cut, clearly shows the literati’s precautionary attitude toward fiction; objections were raised because it was said to be of no use to young students.

Similar but possibly even more stubborn disapproval of fiction by *yangban* literati was evinced in Chosŏn upon the flow of fictional narratives from China into Korea; for years the importation, circulation, and composition of fiction were severely criticized. Having successfully established a Confucian state with the ideals of ruling the country with Neo-Confucian teachings,\(^{17}\) these objections by the *yangban* literati were based on the “teachings of the sage” since “the topics the Master [Confucius] did not speak of were extraordinary things, feats of strength, disorder and spirits” (*zi bu yu guai, li, luan, shen* 子不語怪力亂神).\(^{18}\) Among numerous records criticizing fiction and arguing for its complete abolition, that of Ki Taesŭng (奇大升, 1527–1572), then Recipient of Edicts 承旨 (in 1569), directed to King Sŏnjo while he was lecturing on Neo-Confucian teachings to the king, has been one of the most famous and

\(^{16}\) Idema (1997), 56.

\(^{17}\) Unlike the Koryŏ dynasty, the rulers of which often favored Buddhist teachings, the Chosŏn dynasty was founded by literati equipped with Neo-Confucian values.

\(^{18}\) Legge, 120; modification added.
most influential.  

Ki Taesŭng said:

I was told that when your majesty [King Sŏnjo 宣祖 (r. 1567–1608)], upon seeing Chang P’ilmu, mentioned, “As for the story of Zhang Fei 張飛 making ten thousand soldiers flee with producing one shout [at the Steepslope Bridge], I have seen it only in the Sanguozhi yanyi, not in the official history [of the Three Kingdoms].” Although I have not seen this [Sanguozhi yanyi] since it has not been around for a long time, I have heard my friends say it is full of empty and absurd sayings. My observation is that it is nothing but a collection of trivial sayings (雜言) edited by some rascals (無賴者), pretending that it is from old sayings. It is not only vulgar and pointless, but also harms the principle [of Confucian teachings]. For example, the story of Dong Cheng 董承 receiving a royal edict hidden in a sash and the details of winning the Battle of the Red Cliffs were all invented with the manipulation of groundless sayings as well as conjured-up and empty things. Therefore, it is quite pitiful that your majesty has seen it. Not only this book [Sanguozhi yanyi], but works such as Chu Han yanyi 楚漢演義, Jiandeng xinhua, and Taiping guangji are all misleading. Even magnificent verses are unrelated to the way of learning, to say nothing of these

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19 It was an important obligation of Chosŏn-dynasty kings to attend lectures on Confucian classics and official histories of China and Korea (經筵). Typically, the lectures were given one to three times a day and several high vassals usually attended the lectures, often using the sessions as an opportunity to make political suggestions to the king based on the contents of the lectures. Here, Ki tries to impress upon the king the bad influences of fiction and strongly requests him to suppress it.
tenuous and irrational books! The Official Histories (正史) record the ruler’s order and confusion as well as his rise and fall. Therefore, a ruler should not avoid reading these. … The profound meaning of the classics is difficult to understand, while the historical records are easy to trace; this is why people have hated to read classics and preferred to read historical records since ancient times. … Although Jiandeng xinhua is lowly and obscene, the Office of Editorial Review has still privately managed to gather materials [for its publication] and has even already cut the printing blocks [for it]; people of discernment (有識者) were all frustrated by this. The Sanguozhi yanyi, being so eccentric and hollow, also got published; those [who allowed the publication of the Sanguozhi yanyi] were surely without discernment (無識者). … When a ruler leads his people, he should ban these unrighteous books, since their bad effects are no different from those of petty men (小人). … As for books we Confucian scholars can value and exert ourselves over, there are none like Neo-Confucian teachings. 20 It is most lamentable that recently

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20 What Ki literally mentioned is the teachings of the Cheng brothers and Zhu Xi (程朱學), which often epitomize the concept of Neo-Confucian teachings. They also became the basis of the state civil service examinations in the Chosŏn dynasty. Concerning how the Neo-Confucian classics became the basis of the examinations, see Chung Chai-sik, “Chŏng Tojŏn: ‘Architect’ of Yi [Chosŏn] Dynasty Government and Ideology” in The Rise of Neo-Confucianism in Korea, edited by Wm. Theodore de Bary and JaHyun Kim Haboush, 65-6 and passim. Also see Yi Sŏngmu, “The Influence of Neo-Confucianism on Education and the Civil Service Examination System in Fourteenth- and Fifteenth-Century Korea” in The Rise of Neo-Confucianism in Korea, edited by Wm. Theodore de Bary and JaHyun Kim Haboush, 125-60, especially 149-52. Concerning how the educational system in Chosŏn operated with the basis of
scholars take Neo-Confucian teachings as uninspiring old sayings and instead like to read new books.  

Neo-Confucianism, see Ch’oe Yŏng-ho, “Private Academies and the State in Late Chosŏn Korea.” In *Culture and the State in Late Chosŏn Korea*, 15-45.

21 Ki, 2: 132-33; all translations are mine unless otherwise noted. 奇大升 進啓曰: "頃日 張弼武 引見時傳教內，張飛一聲，走萬軍之語，未見正史，聞在三國志衍義云。此書出來未久，小臣未見之，而或因朋輩問聞之，則甚多妄誕。如天文地理之書，則或有前隱而後著，史記則初失其傳，後難臆度，而敷衍增益，極其怪誕。臣後見其冊，定是無賴者裒集雜言，如成古談。非但雜駁無益，甚害義理，自上偶爾一見，甚為未安。就其中而言之，如 董承 衣帶中詔及赤壁之戰勝處，各以怪誕之事，衍成無稽之言。自上幸恐不知其冊根本，故敢啓。非但此書如 楚、漢 衍義等書，如此類不一，無非害理之甚者也。詩文詞華，尚且不關，況 《剪燈新話》、《大平廣記》 等書，皆足以誤人心志者乎？自上知其誣而戒之，則可以切實於學問之功也。" 又啓曰: "正史，則治亂存亡俱載，不可不見也。然若徒觀文字，而不觀事迹，則亦有害也。經書則深奧難解，史記則事迹不明，人之厭經而喜史，舉世皆然。故自古儒士，雜博則易，精微則難矣。《剪燈新話》，鄙褻可愕之甚者。校書館私給材料，至於刻板，有識之人莫不痛心。或欲去其板本，而因循至今，閭巷之間，爭相印見。其間男女會淫，神怪不經之說，亦多有之矣。《三國志衍義》，則怪誕如是，而至於印出，其時之人，豈不無識？…王者導民，當禁不正之書，此其為害，與小人無異也。…近來學者，以程、朱之書為尋常，而喜見新出之書，此亦多害。自上亦可知之也。"
It is worth noting that Ki himself admits that Confucian classics are less enjoyable to read than historical texts, while fictional narratives are even more entertaining than historical texts. By comparing the readability of Confucian classics and historical texts, Ki, to some extent, also seems to recognize that Chinese fictional narratives originated from unofficial histories. Ki’s objection to fiction is in fact divided into two layers based on social hierarchy. As for the literati, which includes the king, fiction should be banned since it can mix imaginary things with historical facts, eventually making the rulers and officials confused. Fiction also inhibits Confucian governance, since young scholars often choose to entertain themselves by reading fiction rather than devoting themselves to the Confucian classics, which eventually turns them into “petty men.” As for ordinary people, fiction’s lowly and obscene contents have a bad influence on them and hinder their enlightenment with Confucian values.

As a matter of fact, Ki’s condemnation of fiction shows a striking resemblance to Li Shimian’s 李時勉 petition to Emperor Yingzong 英宗 of the Ming in 1463 concerning the banning of the *Jiandeng xinhua*. Li, then Chancellor of the Directorate of Education 國子監祭酒, mentioned:

22 For a more detailed discussion of the relation between fiction and unofficial histories, refer to Judith Zeitlin, *Historian of the Strange*, 1–12. She points out that fiction was often called *waishi* 外史 (unofficial history) and *yishi* 逸史 (left-over history). I would add that fiction was also called *yeshi* 野史 (unofficial history), *yishi* 異史 (extraordinary history), or *yushi* 餘史 (residual history).

23 In the Chosŏn dynasty, the king was often identified as The Number One Literatus (*di yi ru* 第一儒), which implies that the king himself, as an exemplary role model for all subordinate literati, should exert himself to Confucian self-cultivation. Simply put, rulers of Chosŏn did not create powerful dictatorships as did rulers in late imperial China, and were bound strictly by Confucian obligations.
Recently some secular literati, making a pretext of observing peculiar matters, have been generating groundless accounts, *Jiandeng xinhua* being one of them. Not only are frivolous men in the street competing to read and recite these kinds of stories, but also students of Confucian classics and scholars, having discarded discussion of righteous studies, are going through [these stories] day and night, using them as the topics of their discussion. If we do not strictly ban [these stories], malicious beliefs and heresy would become prevalent day by day, eventually confusing public sentiment.\(^{24}\)

It is notable that Li’s frustration as to the dangerous effects of fiction is restated in detail by Ki in Chosŏn in 1569, upon the dissemination of stories such as *Jiandeng xinhua*. It can also be argued that both Li and Ki, being the strictest of Confucian scholars, almost unconsciously noticed that fiction would be the strongest competitor to Confucian studies since they all realized that fiction’s entertaining nature was too detrimental even for professional scholars, compared to the relative tediousness of Confucian doctrines. Just as beautiful women are conceived of as a potential danger since they can ruin scholars by tempting them to indulge in desire, fiction’s entertaining nature is likewise regarded as too dangerous in the same context; although both Confucian classics and fictional narratives are transmitted in the form of reading materials, in terms of entertainment readability, fiction excels the classics significantly. In other words, it is fiction’s addictive nature (like sex) that frustrated and scandalized these uptight scholars; fiction needed to be strictly contained, lest it impair Confucian ideals.

Although fiction was severely condemned in public—especially among the literati—it’s strong entertainment value nevertheless facilitated its successful and gradual permeation into the

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\(^{24}\) Quoted in Ch’oe, “Myŏngch’ŏng sosŏl,” 46. Li’s petition is later quoted in Gu Yanwu 顧炎武’s *Rizhi lu* 日知錄. Refer to Chapter Four, “On Banning Fiction” (*jin xiaoshuo* 禁小說).
life of yangban literati. Ironically, although most literati criticized the popularity of fiction, they were the only people who could enjoy the first and most direct access to newly imported stories from China; of course, it was also the literati who made frequent visits to China as envoys, purchasing all types of popular stories there. Whereas the literati strongly urged the king to refrain from reading these “misleading tales” and also objected to the publication of fiction by the government, they were also the ones who ardently read and appreciated these stories in their leisure time. Yi Sanghwang’s allegedly secret obsession with Chinese stories is a case in point. Yi warns: “Trivial tales are so detrimental to men that they harm more people than ferocious beasts do. When encountering beasts, people feel afraid and flee. When acquiring lewd books, they nevertheless embrace them.”

Though he was in fact a well-known reader of Chinese novels and ghost stories with a collection of thousands of Chinese novels, Yi nevertheless maintained a disapproving attitude toward Chinese narratives in public, following the long tradition of Chosŏn literati. However, his mania for Chinese stories was not merely confined to himself, but influenced those around him, whether they could read classical Chinese or not. Yi Sanghwang’s colleague, Yi Yuwŏn, mentions, “Lord Tong’ŏ [Yi Sanghwang] never releases trivial stories from his hands. Whatever interesting new book he acquires, he frequently brings it to the Translators’ Bureau [with himself being the head of the bureau] to have it translated.

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25 稗官為說害人多,猛獸於人不是過,猛獸當頭知畏避,淫書入手反摩挲. Yi Sanghwang, Tong’ŏ yujip 桐漁遺集. (Text available at http://www.itkc.or.kr)
precisely. Envoys and merchants to Beijing compete to purchase [storybooks to present him], and [the books purchased this way] have piled up to thousands of volumes.”

Contrary to Yi Sanghwang’s example, some bold literati openly revealed their fondness of fiction. Yun Ch’unnyŏn 尹春年 (1514–1567), who rose to the position of Minister of Rites, openly praised Kim Sisŭp 金時習 (1435~1493), author of Kǔmo sinhwa 金鰲神話

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26桐漁李□□□□□□, 即稗說也. 毋論某種好閱新本, 時帶譯院都相象譯之.

赴燕者爭相購納, 積之屢千卷. Yi Yuwŏn 李裕元 (1814-1888), Imha p’ilgi 林下筆記, juan 27, Ch’unmyŏng isa 春明逸史: 46. (Digital Text available at http://www.itkc.or.kr.) It can be safely assumed that Yi Sanghwang had the storybooks imported from China translated into colloquial Korean not for himself, but for others who lacked knowledge of classical Chinese, most probably for the women in the inner chambers. As a leading intellectual who later rose to the rank of prime minister, Yi could effortlessly enjoy the Chinese ghost stories that he favored such as Jiandeng xinhua, with his full command of classical Chinese. Min Kwandong asserts that Yi had the Chinese storybooks translated for the king’s concubines or his female family members such as his wife, mother, or daughters. (see, Min Kwandong (2005), 108-9). By this period, women in the yangban households had emerged as critical readers and buyers of Chinese storybooks, and it was not uncommon for yangban literati to translate Chinese narratives into colloquial Korean for their own female family members. For instance, note the example of O Hŭi’mun, who, upon the request of his married daughter, translated Chu Han yanyi 楚漢演義 from Chinese into colloquial Korean in 1595, as mentioned in the third chapter of this dissertation. I discuss in more detail the relationship between the dissemination of Three Kingdoms and the emergence of female readers in Chapters 3 and 5. For further examples of women’s readership of novels in Chosŏn Korea, see Ōtani Morishige, “Chŏsen chō shōsetsu no jitsuzō” 朝鮮朝小説の実像, Chŏsen gakuhō 朝鮮學報, nos. 176–77 (2000): 67–100.
(New Stories of Mount Kŭmo; hereafter Mount Kŭmo), comparing him to Confucius. 27 Yang Sŏngji 梁誠之 (1415~1482), one of the closest counsels of King Sejo 世祖 (r. 1455-1468), also argued to the king that reading the Taiping guangji can help scholars prepare for the state examinations. 28 Hŏ Kyun, who had purchased more than four thousand Chinese books in Beijing, was also a leading scholar and official. As time went by, some popular Chinese novels became so widespread that famous chapters of these novels grew to be common knowledge even among ordinary people. Yi Ik 李翊 (1681–1763) mentions an occasion when an episode from the Sanguozhi yanyi once became the topic of a state examination because the examiners confused official history with a fictitious story. 29 With respect to the influence of Chinese fiction, Yu Mong’in 柳夢寅 (1559~1623) mentioned, “All men of letters in our country have read Taiping guangji.” 30

The late Ming saw a rapidly expanding book market and wide distribution of xiaoshuo, facilitated by the prosperity brought by the economic growth in the Jiangnan area. With the economic growth and wider distribution of vernacular literature, accompanied by the new literary flow focusing on individualism and accommodation of human desire, the readers/audience of vernacular fiction also became more interested in an increased focus on the individual and the private as a theme of xiaoshuo.

Although literary trends in premodern Korea often followed China’s, this is not what happened in the case of the vernacular fiction boom and the increased focus on the individual


29 Yi Ik, 321.

30 Quoted in An, 171.
and the private. Chosŏn Korea did not go through the same economic growth that Ming China enjoyed; instead, during the late Ming and early Qing period, Chosŏn had to face the two greatest wars in its five hundred-year history. The Imjin Wars 壬辰倭亂 (the Hideyoshi invasions of Korea in the 1590s), and the Pyŏngja Wars 丙子胡亂 (the Manchu invasions of Korea from 1627 to 1628) brought about numerous critical changes in Chosŏn Korea. A boom in the publication of war literature was one such change. Scarred by the wars, many commoners yearned for the appearance of war heroes endowed with the values of loyalty (zhong 忠) and righteousness (yi 義). A cult of so-called “defensive nationalism” arose among Koreans after the foreign invasions, and Korean literati at the time were easily captivated by the idea of the historical legitimacy of the Shu-Han dynasty founded by Liu Bei (Shu-Han zhengtong sixiang 蜀漢正統思想). From the mid-Chosŏn period onward, Three Kingdoms became popular among all literate classes of people, and the influence of Three Kingdoms became apparent in all literary genres, including sijo (three-line verse), p’ansori (drama), narratives, and fables.

Mid-Chosŏn society also saw a boom in war literature, especially in the field of vernacular fiction, which often adapted scenes of war from the Sanguozhi yanyi and the Shuihu zhuan 水湖傳 (Water Margin); many of them simply “borrowed” certain chapters or scenes of war from these novels. Particularly noteworthy are the war novels whose protagonists are social minorities such as a maiden from the inner chamber or a posthumous child, which evidently reflected the commoners’ disillusionment with the impotence of yangban literati in cases of national emergency.31

31 In Pakssi chŏn 朴氏傳, Madam Pak, who has been rejected by her husband Yi Sibaek for her ugly appearance, defeats the Manchu general Longguda 龍骨大 when her husband Yi, then the Vice
Although the Japanese and Manchu invasions of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries “cost both the Korean people and the Chosŏn dynasty government dearly and took decades to overcome,” the struggle to re-clarify national identity along with the post-war reconstruction and development brought “cultural and economic transformation leading to a society, an economy, a culture, and an intellectual life more fluid, more diverse, and more sophisticated than any the peninsula had ever seen before.” After these two critical wars, Korea enjoyed peace for some two centuries; no major invasions from China or Japan occurred and no large-scale peasant rebellions erupted. Korea saw steady growth in its population during this relatively peaceful period. Although population growth led to a growing politically active class—mostly the literati class—the number of government posts did not increase in line with the growing population of people eligible and yearning for government positions and political careers, resulting in fierce competition among the literati for the same number of government positions. The result “heightened political rivalry, hardening into the factional alliances that

Minister of War 兵曹參判, shows incompetence in fighting the invaders. Her heroic martial skills as well as her Taoist magical abilities stand in marked contrast with her husband Yi’s lack of valor and strategy. Yi was a real historical figure—the Vice Minister of Defense at the time of the Manchu Qing invasion. In 

Yu Ch’ungnyŏl chŏn 劉忠烈傳 (Tale of Liu Zhonglie), Liu (Yu in Korean) is the posthumous son of a Ming loyalist Liu Xun, who was assassinated by his political enemies. Liu later takes his revenge by defeating his late father’s enemies, who secretly collaborated with the Manchu invaders. These stories all reveal strong antagonism against the Manchu Qing invaders and dissatisfaction with the incompetence of Korean officials in time of war.


33 Sourcebook of Korean Civilization, 2:4.
dominated politics for much of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.”

During this period of fierce factional struggles, Neo-Confucian metaphysics was often used as an excuse to initiate a political attack based on moral superiority over one’s rival party.

On the other hand, Chosŏn Korea saw a flourishing of fiction from the seventeenth century; we can observe a rapidly growing number of examples of the importation and dissemination of popular Chinese narratives and the creation of fictional prose narratives in vernacular Korean during this period. This fiction boom was especially prominent during the reigns of King Yŏngjo (r. 1725–1776) and King Chŏngjo (r. 1777–1800), which roughly coincided with the reigns of Emperor Yongzheng (r. 1723–1735) and Emperor Qianlong (r. 1736–1795) in Qing China. It is notable that during this period, both Chosŏn Korea and Qing China were experiencing the height of cultural and economic prosperity.

With the flourishing of fictional narratives, many literati began to boldly reveal their approval of fiction. Also, the number of literati actually producing fictional narratives began to increase; they often included notes on various stories and travelogues in their collected works, which were clearly influenced by the “writing-brush notes” (biji xiaoshuo 筆記小說) and vignettes (xiaopin 小品) popular in late Ming.

Along with the increasing number of advocates of fiction, opposition to this “empty and obscene” genre grew even fiercer. As noted earlier, during the reigns of King Yŏngjo and Chŏngjo, Neo-Confucian philosophy was often used as a pretext to attack the moral weakness of one’s political enemy at the royal court, and therefore any literary trend which embraced fiction

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34 Ibid., 2:7.
was severely criticized at court. Somewhat similar to the tragedy of *wenzi yu* 文字狱 (prosecution of writers on account of literary offence to the ruler) in Qing China during the same period\textsuperscript{35}, the vilification of anything related to fiction, including the creation and dissemination of fiction and any literary style not resembling the Confucian classics, soon became the targets of political attack in Chosŏn. As for those few literati who did not hide their fondness for fiction, their stigmatization as the advocates of an “unrighteous literary style” was quite detrimental to their political career, since King Chŏngjo himself had a clear and strong belief that the literati should refrain from “the composition of trivial writing” and restore the original writings of the sages. King Chŏngjo mentioned:

As for books, our nation’s households are filled with mounting piles of books and they are all identical to the original Chinese editions. Concerning the books already published, [people in our nation] have read them enough to both please themselves and refer to them for their own writings. So where is the need to purchase [additional books]? The most despicable things [among those books] are the collected works of the late Ming and early Qing and the so-called “notes on trivial things” 稗官雜說, being an enormous obstacle for the Way to enlighten the world. As I examine recent literary styles, so frivolous and erratic, I can easily tell that they are not from the great masters of writing but are mostly from trivial notes. Although [I] do not feel the need to set up a law to ban [the purchase of these lowly Chinese books], it would be advisable for those envoys to refrain

\textsuperscript{35} *Wenzi yu* in Qing China was most apparent during the reigns of the Yongzheng and Qianlong emperors. For example, refer to the prosecution of Zeng Jing 曾靜 discussed in Chapter 4. For further details of Zeng Jing’s case, see Jonathan Spence, *Treason by the Book*. 

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from going too far [and purchasing those books]. Therefore, let my instructions be well understood by the envoys. As for the books of trivial teachings, add them to a separate black list to have them strictly banned (t’onggûm 痛禁).\textsuperscript{36}

It is notable that King Chŏngjo specifically pinpointed the writings of late Ming and early Qing as the most problematic works that might harm the Neo-Confucian order of Chosŏn; the fascination with desire and the focus on individuality and the private realm prevalent in the fiction of the late imperial period were themes that the literati society of Chosŏn was not prepared to contain.

The official disapproval of fiction by government authority reached its peak when King Chŏngjo officially punished literati engaged in “empty writings.” In 1787, Yi Sanghwang and Kim Chosun 金祖淳 (1765–1832) were caught by King Chŏngjo while reading Tang and Song tales during their night duty at court. The king dismissed them immediately and burnt the storybooks on the spot. In 1792, King Chŏngjo also gave orders to strictly seek out and confiscate any “suspicious books” purchased by envoys to China. He also instructed that anyone who wrote in the style of “trivial writings of late Ming and early Qing” on the state examination should be failed and be deprived of the right to write a state examination in the future.

Student Yi Ok 李鈺 was punished for excessive use of the literary styles found in fiction.\textsuperscript{37} Nam Kongch’ŏl 南公轍 (1760–1840), who used to be one of the king’s favorite counsels, was also dismissed when his petition to the king included a word used in vernacular fiction. Including Nam, officials who were punished for their inadequate literary preferences

\textsuperscript{36} Quoted in Ch’oe, “Chungguk kûmsŏ,” 546–47; original text quoted in Juan 24 of Chŏngjo sillok (Veritable Records of King Chŏngjo’s Reign).

\textsuperscript{37} Pak Hyŏnmo, 164–65.
could be reinstated to their offices only after submitting a sworn statement in the style of the Six Classics.  What the king was actually trying to do was control the content of writing by restraining the literary style. This strict government oppression against vernacular literary trends, which was called the “restoration of virtuous textual style” (munch’e panjŏng 文體反正) was successful to some extent, in that it suppressed the vigorous creation of fiction. Until the end of the Chosŏn dynasty, very few literati created novels using their real names. Unlike the authors/writers in late imperial China, no scholar in Chosŏn tried to make a living by creating or editing fiction, or even by writing commentaries or a preface to novels. The fictional narratives by the literati which effectively survived this period include satirical stories with admonishing or didactic content and travelogues. Pak Chiwŏn 朴趾源 (1737~1805), who was openly criticized by King Chŏngjo as the ringleader of new-fangled literary styles, could only unfold his ideas by writing highly satirical stories in his travelogue to Beijing, the Yŏrha ilgi 熱河日記.  

However successful the oppression of new literary styles may have been in controlling the unrestricted creation of fiction by the literati, it could not entirely prevent the importation and dissemination of fiction from China, nor the creation of fiction by anonymous writers. By the late seventeenth century, many popular narratives permeated the lives of the literati so deeply that even those who criticized them knew the contents of such famous works as Jiandeng xinhua

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38 Pak Hyŏnmo, 165.

39 Pak asserted that he merely copied the stories he saw during his travels in China. Although he was still severely criticized for his unorthodox vernacular textual style, the ambiguous authorship of these stories enabled Pak to manage to avoid political attack for the liberal ideas concealed in his satirical stories.
and *Sanguozhi yanyi*. Because the number of scholars secretly reading fiction continued to increase, it was impossible to have them all punished, and such punishment typically did not last very long. An example is the same Yi Sanghwang, who was dismissed after the king caught him covertly reading Tang and Song tales, but eventually rose to the position of prime minister, despite his widespread reputation as someone obsessed with “notes on trivial things.” Yi’s recovery of the king’s favor illustrates the political limitations on the banning of fictional narratives.

### 2.3 Introduction and Dissemination of *Three Kingdoms* into Chosŏn Korea

Popular novels produced during the late imperial period flowed into Korea almost simultaneously with their publication in China. Unfortunately, scholars have yet to clarify the exact date of the *Three Kingdoms*’ first introduction to Korea. The first official reference to the *Sanguozhi yanyi* recorded in the *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* (Veritable Records of the Chosŏn Dynasty) was made in the second year of King Sŏnjo’s reign (1569) in the petition of Ki Taesŭng, which confirms that by 1569 the *Sanguozhi yanyi* had already been circulating widely among Korean literati. Late-Koryŏ scholars reveal a very strong sense of the historical legitimacy of the Shu-Han dynasty founded by Liu Bei [as outlined in the theory of Shu-Han legitimacy], which demonstrates that the literary society of late Koryŏ was already prepared to accommodate the Han-Chinese nationalism in *Sanguozhi yanyi* in terms of its ideological

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*Jiandeng xinhua* and *Sanguozhi yanyi* were the two most controversial and debated works at court concerning the influence and banning of fiction. The debates recorded in *The Veritable History of the Chosŏn Dynasty* demonstrate that even those officials who openly criticized these works were all familiar with the storylines of these works in great detail.
background. This ideological preference among Korean literati stimulated by Zhu Xi (1130-1200) became even stronger in the Chosŏn period. The issues of introduction, reception, dissemination, and influence of Three Kingdoms will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters.

2.4 Rise in Popularity among the Literati Class

Upon its importation, the popularity of Three Kingdoms grew steadily among the literati. One reason for this popularity is that the Three Kingdoms was written mostly in classical Chinese, unlike many other popular novels in the late imperial period. The yangban literati class in Chosŏn Korea was well versed in classical Chinese, but had almost no knowledge of colloquial Chinese. The example of Ki Tae-sŏng mentioned above illustrates

41 There can be little doubt that the Chinese narratives introduced to Chosŏn Korea were first consumed and appreciated by the yangban literati, and that some popular works became widespread, often with colloquial revisions, among all literate classes of people. Korean literati, with their educational background in classical Chinese, preferred works written in classical Chinese to colloquial ones. There is a record in the Chosŏn wangjo sillok [Veritable Records of the Chosŏn Dynasty] that King Yŏnsan, having difficulties understanding contemporary colloquial Chinese expressions in Jiandeng xinhua [New Stories to Trim the Lamp by], gave a royal order to revise it into classical Chinese (Chosŏn wangjo sillok 14: 63). For further references from the Chosŏn wangjo sillok, I rely on the digital database published by the National Institute of Korean History available at http://sillok.history.go.kr.

Reference books for reading traditional novels written mostly in colloquial Chinese were used among the Chosŏn literati in this context. For example, even in the late 1910s, Chuhae őlok ch’ongnam 註解語錄總覽 a reference book for colloquial vocabulary in traditional Chinese novels and
that Korean literati’s understanding of Chinese history also facilitated the reception of the Three Kingdoms, the storyline of which is based on the official history of that period of division. The absence of a complete translation of the Three Kingdoms in the early and mid-Chosŏn period also reveals that copies of the Three Kingdoms circulated mostly among the literati at the time in classical Chinese. Given that the vernacular Korean translation of Jinghua yuan [Flowers in the Mirror] appeared only seven years after its first publication in 1828 in China, it can be argued that the literati did not feel the urge or need to translate the Three Kingdoms into Korean, as they clearly had the literary skills necessary to read it.

dramas such as Xiyou ji, Xixiang ji, and Sanguo yanyi were published in Korea. For example, in the section for interpreting colloquial Chinese words in Xiyou ji of this book, niang 娘 is explained as an equivalent to mu (or mo in K.) 母 for Korean readers. For the electronic copy of this volume at the Naksŏnjae Royal Library Collection, refer to http://yoksa.aks.ac.kr/jsp/aa/VolumeList2.jsp?fcs=f&gb=1&cf=a&aa10up=kh2_je_a_vsu_C13^10_000.

It should also be noted that even the envoys to China had little knowledge of colloquial Chinese. The envoys were selected among high officials at court, and they were accompanied by professional translators/interpreters of Chinese trained at the Sayŏgwŏn 司譯院 (Translation Bureau). Pak t’ongsa and Nogŏltae, manuals of colloquial Chinese for Korean learners mentioned earlier in this chapter, were used as textbooks to train these translators at the Sayŏgwŏn. (Refer to Kim Dong-uk, 73-4.) The travelogue to Beijing by Pak Chiwŏn has anecdotes showing that Pak had to write memos in the form of classical Chinese, which was the everyday medium of writing for the yangban literati, in order to communicate with the Chinese intellectuals.
2.5  *Jiandeng xinhua* and the Development of Fictional Narratives in East Asian Civilizations

The dissemination of *Jiandeng xinhua* by Qu You (瞿佑 1347–1433) is a significant case study in the influence of Chinese classical tales on other East Asian civilizations, such as Korea, Japan, and Vietnam. Also worth noting is the reintroduction of *Jiandeng xinhua* and classical tales influenced by *Jiandeng xinhua* from these East Asian countries back to China.

*Jiandeng xinhua*, a collection of short stories in classical Chinese, gained immediate popularity after its first completion in 1379 under the name *Jiandeng lu* 剪燈錄 (Records by the Trimmed Lamp). Within several decades after its publication in China, *Jiandeng xinhua* (hereafter New Stories) was already circulating in Korea, and soon Kim Sisŭp created *Kŭmo sinhwa* (hereafter Mount Kŭmo), which was deeply influenced by New Stories both in its storylines and literary style. An annotated version of New Stories (*Chŏndŭng sinhwa kuhae* 剪燈新話句解) was also published by royal order in 1559 in Chosŏn.\(^{42}\)

Both New Stories and Mount Kŭmo had a great influence on Korean classical literature in later periods. During the Hideyoshi invasions, both Mount Kŭmo and Chŏndŭng sinhwa kuhae (hereafter Annotated New Stories) were exported to Japan and circulated widely, resulting in the creation of *Tokibŏko* 伽婢子, an adaptation of New Stories and Mount Kŭmo.

\(^{42}\) Annotations were inserted alongside the text. Refer to *Chŏndŭng sinhwa kuhae yokchu* (Seoul: Purŭn Sasang, 2007).
Meanwhile, *New Stories* found its way to Vietnam and also inspired the creation of *Truen Ky* 傳寄漫錄, a creative adaptation of *New Stories*.43

However, the banning of *New Stories* by the petition of Li Shimian in 1463 in China44 impacted its circulation seriously; it almost disappeared from the book market and was never able to regain its popularity among the masses until its reintroduction in 1917 by Dong Kang 董康, who acquired a copy of *Annotated New Stories* in Japan.45 Editions of *New Stories* published in the 1930s and 40s in China were all based on the edition Dong Kang brought back from Japan. It is interesting that *New Stories*, more than four hundred years after it was banned in Ming China, was finally reintroduced to Chinese readers through an edition that was originally annotated by Korean scholars and made available in Japan, thus demonstrating the interactive influence and dissemination of classical tales among these East Asian countries. *Mount Kǔmo* also nearly disappeared in Chosŏn Korea after it was taken by Japanese armies in a raid; it was not until Ch’oe Namsŏn brought back a copy of *Mount Kŭmo* from Japan in 1927 that it was reintroduced to Korea.46

In short, *New Stories* was influential on the development of classical tales in China, Korea, Japan, and Vietnam for more than five hundred years. It is ironic that although *New Stories* originated in China, it has had a much greater influence on the development of fictional narratives in countries outside China. *New Stories* also contributed to the formation of the

44 For the contents of Li’s petition, refer to page 22.
45 Choe (2000), 55.
46 Ch’oe, “Kŭmo sinhwa Chosŏn kanbon ūi palgul kwa wŏnbon e kwanhan koch’al, ” 359-69.
national literatures of Korea, Japan, and Vietnam; adaptations of *New Stories* all represented the sentiments of the local people and the authors/translators. I will now further examine the dissemination and circulation of *New Stories* to other East Asian civilizations.

### 2.6 The Making and Banning of *New Stories*

Like many authors of Ming Qing fiction, who were often “frustrated scholars,” Qu You did not lead a successful life. His political career was ruined by the political struggles in which he was involved. *New Stories* was completed in 1378 when Qu, at the age of 32, was working as a teacher for a local school in Hangzhou.\(^47\) *New Stories* seems to have gained popularity soon after its completion; it was circulated in both printed and manuscript form during the succeeding decades, while prefaces by famous literati were added in 1378, 1381, and 1389. The *Supplementary Tales to New Stories* 剪燈餘話 by Li Zhen 李楨, the first and most influential of many sequels to Qu You’s work, appeared in 1420, forty-two years after the first appearance of *New Stories*. Following the publication of *Supplementary Tales to New Stories* (hereafter *Supplementary New Stories*), Qu published the reprinted edition of *New Stories* in 1421, at the age of seventy-five—forty-four years after the first completion of *New Stories*. At this time, Qu was still in exile in Bao’an where he had been banished since 1408.

Allan Barr introduces the arguments of some scholars as to the influence of Qu’s political downfall on the reprinted *New Stories*, stating, “When Ch’ü [Qu] copyedited the text of his stories late in his life, he may have introduced some new contents in order to vent the frustration that he felt during his long period of disgrace and banishment from 1408 to 1425,

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\(^{47}\) See Xu Shuofang, 454–55 for a brief survey of Qu You’s career.
following alleged irregularities in the performance of his duties.” However, Qu’s views on the society of his day as conveyed in his tales did not prevail for another two decades, since Li Shimian, Chancellor of the Directorate of Education at that time, submitted a petition insisting on the banning of *New Stories* in 1442.

**2.7 *Jiandeng xinhua* in Chosŏn Korea**

Both *New Stories* and *Supplementary New Stories* were imported to Korea within several decades after their first publication in China. *New Stories* gained popularity among the literati soon after its introduction to Chosŏn. The story of *Aiqing zhuan* 愛卿傳 was introduced in *Hunse sŏrhwa*訓世說話, a textbook of colloquial Chinese compiled by Yi Pyŏn in 1464. Moreover, King Yŏnsan showed a particular interest in *New Stories*; he gave a special order for envoys to China to purchase *New Stories* for him, a most untraditional deed for a king who was expected to serve as the supreme example for Confucian scholars. Nevertheless, *New Stories*


49 There are four records as to King Yŏnsan’s particular interest in *New Stories* in *The Veritable Records of the Chosŏn Dynasty*—three of the records show King Yŏnsan ordering the purchase of *New Stories* from China and one has the king granting *New Stories* to his retainers, arguing that indulging in songs and women (聲色) and singing and dancing (歌舞) does not necessarily ruin the state of a kingdom國勢. (Refer to the record of the twelfth day of the fourth month of the twelfth year (1506) in *Yŏnsan ilgi* in *The Veritable Records of the Chosŏn Dynasty*. Text available at sillok.history.go.kr). His bold advocacy of unorthodox entertainment such as fiction later developed into one of the major reasons for his loss of the throne. Condemned as a dissipated and depraved ruler (*huangyin wudao*) 荒淫無道,
remained the object of the literati’s attention even after King Yŏnsan’s dethronement. In the sixth year of the reign of King Chungjong 中宗 (r. 1506–1544), officials at court discussed the influence of New Stories on a few different occasions. King Myŏngjong (r. 1545–1567) ordered the compilation of Annotated New Stories, which was successfully published by a team of officials and translators in 1549 and 1559 respectively. It remains the only annotated New Stories edition in all of East Asia, and was exported to China and Japan, gaining great popularity especially in Japan.

On the other hand, Kim Sisŭp, another talented but unsuccessful scholar in King Sejo’s 世祖 time (r.1455–1468), created Mount Kŭmo, an adaptive story collection based on New Stories, which was also introduced to China and Japan and became quite widespread especially in Japan. Kim resembles Qu You in many respects; both scholars were talented but had unsuccessful political careers, and their frustration was reflected in the story collections they created.50 Scholars generally agree that Mount Kŭmo is the first full-scale fictional narrative in premodern Korea, influencing numerous followers of its kind.

Yŏnsan was overthrown in 1506 and demoted to Lord Yŏnsan (燕山君) within several months of issuing his royal order to purchase New Stories.

50 Kim became the focus of attention at the age of three for his accomplished skills in Chinese poetry. Having gained a reputation as a prodigy for his unusual literary skills at such an early age, he had an interview with King Sejong at the age of five, successfully solving the problems the king had prepared to test his skills. Being an upright Confucian elite scholar, Kim refused to serve the new king when King Sejo gained the royal throne by overthrowing and killing his nephew, King Tanjong. He lived the rest of his life as a hermit, indulging in Buddhist and Taoist studies. Kŭmo is the name of the mountain where he lived as a hermit. Whereas we can find the chaotic state of dynastic change in Qu You’s New Stories,
2.8 Influence of *New Stories* and *Mount Kūmo* in Japan and the Creation of *Tokibōko*

As noted earlier, both *Mount Kūmo* and *Annotated New Stories* were exported from Korea to Japan after the Hideyoshi invasions in the 1590s. The first reference to *New Stories* in Japan is found in a poem composed in 1482, shortly after Kim Sisūp noted his reading of *New Stories*, thus revealing that *New Stories* was exported to both Japan and Korea within several decades of its completion. In 1602, Hayashi Razan 林羅山 (1583–1657), a Confucian scholar in the Tokugawa government, added a preface to the *Annotated New Stories* published in 1559 in Chosŏn, demonstrating the rapid dissemination of fictional narratives from Korea to Japan in this period. Hayashi also edited and published *Mount Kūmo* in 1653, which was republished in 1660 and 1673.52

The most famous Japanese adaptation of *New Stories*, *Tokibōko* by Asai Ryōi 浅井了意 (1612?–1691?), appeared in 1666. More specifically, *Tokibōko* is an adaptation of three different works; it includes eighteen stories adapted from *New Stories*, two stories from *Supplementary New Stories*, and two stories from *Mount Kūmo*. Recent studies of *Tokibōko* have revealed that Asai also closely studied *Mount Kūmo* as well as *New Stories* for his creation

Kim’s *Mount Kūmo* reveals the frustration of the author during the turmoil of political disorder resulting from the bloody struggle for the royal throne. Like Qu, Kim also created his classical Chinese story collection in his early thirties.

51 Ch’oe, “Myŏngdae,” 53.
52 Ibid.
of *Tokibōko*. Asai’s approach toward adaptation is distinctly revealed in *Tokibōko*; targeting Japanese readers unfamiliar with literary Chinese, Asai not only changed the names of characters, place names, and other settings into Japanese ones, but also rewrote the stories in plain Japanese with titles likewise changed to accommodate the sentiments of Japanese readers. The localization of this adapted story collection was so successful that *New Stories* became a popular source for many other adapted works in Japan. Among the three most representative adaptations of *New Stories* produced in Korea, Japan, and Vietnam, *Tokibōko* is the only work written in the colloquial language of its own country instead of in classical Chinese.

### 2.9 Influence of New Stories in Vietnam and *Truen Ky man luc*

*Truen Ky man luc* (Expansive Records of Marvelous Tales), a Vietnamese adaptation of *New Stories* by Nguyen Du 阮嶫, first appeared in the early sixteenth century. Like *Mount Kūmo* in Korean literature, it has an important status in the history of Vietnamese literature; it is considered to be the earliest fictional work produced in Vietnam. Twenty tales written in classical Chinese, *Truen Ky man luc* reflects intensely the historical background of the author. Nguyen Du lived through a period of political turmoil caused by internal revolts and invasions by Ming China beginning in 1407 and lasting for two decades. The chaotic situations during periods of dynastic change from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries are often used as the historical background in his work. It is worth noting that although Nguyen created his collection of classical tales based on *New Stories*, the complicated historical and political situation surrounding him made his work quite nationalistic.

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53 See Han Yonghwan, 10–12 and passim.

54 Chen Yiyuan asserts that it was first published around 1530–40. See 63–4.
Severe antagonism against the Chinese invaders is seen in many of his tales. For example, in *Liniang zhuan* 麗娘傳, Liniang, the female protagonist, is captured by the Ming armies, and commits suicide to preserve her chastity. Liniang’s husband, scholar Li, after vowing not to remarry in front of her tomb, voluntarily takes part in a campaign against Ming invaders and kills every single military officer of the Ming army that he encounters.\(^{55}\) In *Sanyuansi panshi lu* 傘圓祠判事錄, the soul of a Ming general named Cui takes the shrine originally dedicated to a Vietnamese general Li by impersonating him. General Li restores the shrine by formally complaining about the Ming general to King Yama with the help of a scholar named Wu. *Truen Ky man luc* is an example showing that an adapted work can be critical of the country of its source.

### 2.10 Dissemination and Reintroduction of Classical Chinese Tales in East Asian Civilizations

As noted earlier, *Mount Kŭmo* and *Annotated New Stories* were transmitted from Korea to Japan during the Japanese invasions of the 1590s. It must also be remembered that many Chinese fictional narratives, including contemporary editions of the *Sanguozhi yanyi*, were transmitted to Chosŏn during this war by Chinese soldiers sent to Korea to fight the Japanese army. In addition, Ch’oe Yongch’ŏl points out that *New Stories* might have been transmitted to Vietnam during the Ming invasions in the early fifteenth century, since Zhang Fu 張輔, who is presumed to have been an ardent reader of *New Stories* because he helped release Qu You from

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\(^{55}\) See Pak Hŭibyŏng for a Korean translation, 318, and the Chinese text, 210. Pak’s *Pet’unam ŭi kiihan yet iyagi* (Seoul: Tol Pegye, 2002) is the only complete Korean translation of the *Truen Ky man luc*.
his banishment and afterwards hired him as a teacher, took part in the military campaign to Vietnam during this period.\textsuperscript{56} In short, it can be argued that wars between these East Asian countries operated as an important conduit for the dissemination of fictional narratives from one civilization to another, with China often being the starting point. It is ironical that these works transmitted from one country to another have become much less influential in their home countries.

2.11 The Importance of \emph{New Stories} in the Literary History of East Asian Civilizations

We can say with confidence that dissemination of \emph{New Stories} to Korea, Japan, and Vietnam brought about the creation of adapted works in these countries and accordingly has contributed greatly to the development of fictional narratives in these countries. Moreover, it is tempting to find in \textit{Tokibōko} and \textit{Truen Ky man luc} examples of successful localization of exogenous literature in light of the fact that these adapted works were adjusted to the specific historical and political backgrounds of their own countries (Japan and Vietnam) and accommodated the sentiments of the local readers. \textit{New Stories} is a rare example demonstrating that a literary work can become more popular and influential in other civilizations using languages different than that of its birthplace; it has also been treasured more and developed more into various adapted works in countries other than China.\textsuperscript{57} \textit{New Stories} and its adaptive

\textsuperscript{56} Ch’oe, “Myŏngdae,” 56.

\textsuperscript{57} We can also observe that \textit{Three Kingdoms} has been experiencing a similar situation in contemporary Korean and Japanese society; it has been more popular and more copiously researched in these countries than in China, its place of birth, as I discuss in Chapters 6 and 7.
works are also good examples showing the interactive preservation and circulation of a literary work in countries within the Chinese cultural sphere over a span of hundreds of years. The status of *New Stories* in the history of Korean, Japanese, and Vietnamese literature is more significant and noteworthy than in the history of Chinese literature.

2.12 The Dissemination of *Taiping guangji* in Premodern Korea and Its Influence

As noted earlier, the *Taiping guangji* had already been circulating among Koryŏ intellectuals by 1216. Considering that it was not until the Ming dynasty (1566) that *Taiping guangji* became widespread in China, *Taiping guangji*’s popularity in Korea preceded that of China by hundreds of years.

Composed of tens of hundreds of tales covering a wide variety of subjects, the *Taiping guangji* was read by the literati as light reading to while away tedious hours when working or studying for the state examination. Whereas reciting and memorizing Confucian classics is a hard and arduous task for most such students, diverting collections of uncanny tales such as the *Taiping guangji* were entertaining.

For many students, their knowledge of classical Chinese, originally polished so as to devote themselves to Confucian classics for their success as an official, facilitated their access to stories in the *Taiping guangji*. By early Chosŏn, the *Taiping guangji* became a “must-read,” since it was often the topic of conversations among the literati. For example, whenever people came across an extraordinary phenomenon, the *Taiping guangji* was used as the primary
reference to check whether a similar observation had been recorded previously.\textsuperscript{58} With regard to the popularization of the \textit{Taiping guangji}, An Pyŏngguk asserts that many historical records and collected works by officials at court demonstrate that, although they never admitted so in public, all had covertly read the \textit{Taiping guangji}.\textsuperscript{59} Yu Mong’in (1559–1623), the author of \textit{Ŏu yadam} 於于野譚, the first collection of unofficial histories in the Choŏn period, also wrote, “All men of letters in our nation have read the \textit{Taiping guangji}.”\textsuperscript{60} The \textit{Taiping guangji}’s popularity did not cease until the end of the Choŏn dynasty; in the twenty-first year of Emperor Kojong 高宗 (r. 1863–1907), along with dozens of other Chinese fictional narratives, \textit{Taiping guangji} was translated into colloquial Korean by a team of translators led by Yi Chong’tae.\textsuperscript{61}

For many literati familiar with the \textit{Taiping guangji}, the tales therein were widely used as sources for tales written by Choŏn literati. Some tales were simply translated into vernacular Korean with the names of heroes and places modified, whereas some tales underwent a rather thorough adaptation that barely preserved the original plot. However, in contrast to the fact that there are many stories adapted from the \textit{Three Kingdoms}, it is hard to argue that any particular major premorden Korean novel was created on the basis of stories in the \textit{Taiping guangji}, because the \textit{Taiping guangji} is just a collection of hundreds of fairly short tales. Rather, the influence of the \textit{Taiping guangji} is found in small doses scattered throughout various fictional

\textsuperscript{58} Yu Mong’in mentioned, “By reading the \textit{Taiping guangji}, I have learned of the existence of the kinds of things which can be said to be the most extraordinary things of all times!” Cited in An Pyŏngguk, 171.

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{60} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{61} Skillend (1968), 31-2.
narratives. In *Unyŏng chŏn* 雲英傳, a romantic novel, there is a scene where the heroine Unyŏng reads the *Taiping guangji* while she awaits her lover, Student Kim. An Pyŏngguk points out that in *Mount Kŭmo*, there are references and adaptations from tales in *Taiping guangji*, including *Pei Hang* 裵航 and its main characters, a story in *juan* 50 of *Taiping guangji*.\textsuperscript{62} Scholars have also found that in *Kuun mong* 九雲夢 (Nine-cloud Dream), arguably the most famous classical Korean novel, there are also many adaptations from several stories in the *Taiping guangji*.\textsuperscript{63} Chŏng Kyubok also argues that a popular account repeatedly introduced in many Korean tales in which a young student, after disguising himself as a women, sneaks a peep at his bridal candidate while pretending to play the zither （換着彈琴說話） actually originated from *Wang Wei zhuan* 王維傳, a story in the *Taiping guangji*.\textsuperscript{64} *Chu Saeng chŏn* 周生傳, a story written by Kwon P’il 權驤 in classical Chinese, is rather peculiar in that the whole story is an adaptation of the story of *Huo Xiaoyu* 霍小玉 in *juan* 487 of *Taiping guangji*, the only major alteration being that the heroine takes her revenge on the ingrate male in the Korean adaptation.


\textsuperscript{63} See Chŏng Kyubok, 162–176. Also see An, 210–222.

\textsuperscript{64} See Chŏng, 201–212.
As noted above, the stories of *Taiping guangji* have been widely read and adapted by literati from the Koryŏ period on. The example in *Unyŏng chŏn* of the heroine, who is a palace lady, reading *Taiping guangji* while awaiting her lover also shows that the Korean translation of *Taiping guangji* had become popular among educated females and commoners in the post-Hideyoshi period.\(^{65}\) *Taiping guangji* can go down in history as the work of Chinese fiction that enjoyed the longest popularity in premodern Korea.

2.13 Selective Accommodation of Chinese Fictional Narratives

In a preface to *Chungguk sosŏl hoemobon* 中国小說繪模本 made by the order of a certain palace lady Li in 1762, the titles of 74 Chinese novels are recorded.\(^{66}\) The fictional works are categorized into novels 長篇小說, vernacular stories 話本小說, scholar-beauty stories 才子佳人小說, obscene or extraordinary stories 淫談怪說, and banned stories 禁書小說. The list of obscene or extraordinary stories includes sixteen stories such as *Rou putuan* 肉蒲團 (Carnal Prayer Mat) and the list of banned stories includes thirteen fictional texts such as *Bian er chai* 弁而釵 (Hairpins Beneath His Cap), *Sui-Tang yanyi* 隋唐演義 (Romance of the Sui and the Tang), *Shuihu zhuan* (Water Margin), *Jingu qiguan* 今古奇觀 (Stories New and Old), and *New Stories*. That the palace ladies were familiar with most contemporary Chinese stories, especially even obscene and banned stories, is a surprising finding considering that the importation and

\(^{65}\) The appearance of the *Unyŏng chŏn* can be attributed at its earliest to sometime after the Japanese invasions in the 1590s, since its historical background is set in the reign of King Sŏnjo (r. 1552–1608), who experienced the Japanese invasions.

\(^{66}\) Ch’oe, “Chungguk kŭmsŏ,” 559-60.
circulation of Chinese fiction were so tightly controlled by King Yŏngjo and King Chŏngjo. This example demonstrates yet again the full-scale importation and circulation of Chinese fictional narratives in Chosŏn Korea. However, it is tempting to find that, although many popular Chinese novels were imported to Korea, not all stories were as popular in Chosŏn society as they were in late imperial China. It was already noted earlier that New Stories and Taiping guangji managed to maintain longer popularity and greater influence in Chosŏn Korea than in late imperial China.

However, not all “masterpieces” enjoyed the same or even greater popularity in Chosŏn. Among the Four Great Ming Novels---Sanguozhi yanyi (Three Kingdoms), Xiyou ji (Journey to the West), Shuihu zhuan (Water Margin), and Jin Ping Mei (Plum in a Golden Vase)---only Three Kingdoms has achieved undying popularity in Korea.\(^67\) On the other hand, Honglou meng (Dream of the Red Chamber) and Jin Ping Mei are the two works whose gap in popularity between China and Korea was the biggest; although there are records

\(^{67}\) This is partly due to the vernacular styles of other Ming novels in contrast to the literary style of Three Kingdoms, as Chen Dakang (1993) points out in Tongsu xiaoshuo de lishi guiji, 6. As noted earlier, the yangban literati of Chosŏn, although well versed in Classical Chinese, had almost no knowledge of colloquial or vernacular Chinese, and therefore generally had difficulty understanding vernacular expressions in Chinese narratives. That Yi Sanghwang had the officials at Sayŏgwŏn translate storybooks purchased in China corroborates this. Refer to Yi Yuwŏn’s remark in footnote 26. Min Kwandong asserts that those Korean translations of Chinese stories initiated by Yi Sanghwang’s request became a critical source for the Naksŏnjae royal library collection established in 1884. See Min (2000a), 57 and Min (2005), 109. For a brief discussion of the Naksŏnjae collection, see Kim Dong-uk, 56-8. See also Skillend (1968), 31-2.
saying that they were imported and available, little interest was ever shown in these works. There are likely several reasons for this. Firstly, whereas the scope of the readers of fiction broadened into merchants, educated females, and even middle class commoners in late imperial China, Chinese fiction had to go through a process of “selective translation and dissemination” by the literati in Chosŏn. As noted earlier, the literati were the only people who had the first and most direct access to newly imported stories from China. Whereas the literati clandestinely read these stories in their leisure time, they often tried to suppress the circulation of books with “obscene and base contents” among the general public. Furthermore, although in late imperial China the focus of the novel gradually shifted from the public sphere (Three Kingdoms being a prime example) to the private realm (Jin Ping Mei being the first example of a “full-length” novel where the main focus shifted to the domestic residence of an individual), only those

68 See, for example, Ch’oe, “Hongnumong ǔi Han’guk chŏllae wa yŏnghyang yŏn’gu,” 214 and passim. Ch’oe notes that even at present, Korean scholars of Chinese literature show less interest in Honglou meng compared to Chinese and Japanese scholars.

69 See, for example, Cho Chaesam (1808-1866)’s remark on the “base” novels. Cho mentioned, “As for novels like Jin Ping Mei and Honglou meng, they are never supposed to be read by young students who have just started their studies or by gentlemen who need to strictly cultivate their self-discipline.” Cited in Ch’oe, “Hongnumong,” 197.

70 See Martin Huang 57-60 and passim for detailed discussion of the shifting focus of the novel from the public to the private. Huang uses Bahktin’s concept of “chronotope” to analyze the “privatizing” process in the fiction of late imperial China. He also argues that in Sanguo yanyi, an individual’s desire is still presented in terms of his “political aspirations” in the public realm, whereas the private and the individual begin to interact and receive more attention in Shuihu zhuan. Huang further asserts that the
novels with themes centering closely on the public (often military and political) sphere were popular in Chosŏn until the end of the imperial period. While in late imperial China the new focus on personal desire and the growth of individualism resulted largely from the burgeoning of capitalism (especially in the Jiangnan 江南 area), Chosŏn had to go through a boom in war literature and a “rectification” of textual style, both of which precluded any serious attention to the awareness of the private realm and the containment of personal desire. Given the sociopolitical circumstances of late Chosŏn society noted above, the readers of Chinese fiction in late Chosŏn found the shift of focus to the private concealed in novels such as Jin Ping Mei and Honglou meng unfamiliar. The study of the dissemination of Chinese fictional narratives in Chosŏn Korea shows that importation and dissemination of literary works from one country to another proceeds selectively, and the social and cultural characteristics of the receiving country are an important factor in the process.

authors of Jin Ping Mei and Honglou Meng finally start to delineate the “minute contours of desire at extremely private and intimate moments.”
The Importation and Dissemination of *Three Kingdoms* into Chosŏn Korea

3.1 First Official Reference to *Three Kingdoms* in the Historical Records

Ki Taesŭng 奇大升 (1527–1572) could not stand it any more. It was now apparent that King Sonjo 宣祖 (r. 1567–1608) was increasingly losing interest in Ki’s lectures on *Jinsi lu* 近思錄 (Reflections on things at hand). How was he being treated? Like a village schoolmaster?

As the most promising disciple of Yi Hwang 李滉 (1501–1570), the most accomplished Confucian scholar of the Chosŏn dynasty, and having edited and published at the age of 31 *Chuja mullok* 朱子文錄, an abridged version of *Zhuzi daquan* 朱子大全 (Complete works of Zhu Xi), he was already regarded as one of the most intelligent of younger Confucian scholars.

Furthermore, after engaging in eight years of sophisticated debate with Yi Hwang concerning *li* 理 (principle), *qi* 氣 (vital force) and other principles of Neo-Confucian metaphysical discourse, Ki was officially recognized by his teacher as his intellectual equal. This recognition had elevated him to the status of being second only to his teacher in the study of Confucianism.

Soon after King Sonjo rose to the throne, Ki was appointed Royal Secretary (sŭngji 承旨) and Reader in the Office of the Royal Lectures (sidokkwan 侍讀官), which allowed him to instruct the king on Confucian teachings twice a day, while also working as his secretary. Young and idealistic, Ki had sought to lead the king to embrace Confucian ideals with his daily lectures.

However, the king’s inclination to distract himself with exotic entertaining stories was in inverse proportion to his devotion to Confucian self-cultivation. Those in attendance who
secretly recommended that the king read war stories rather than orthodox texts were also a 
constant source of aggravation. Even worse, King Sŏnjo was deeply engrossed in one absurd war 
story in particular, the *Sanguozhi tongsu yanyi* 三國志通俗演義 (Popularization of the 
Chronicle of Three Kingdoms; hereafter *Three Kingdoms*)\(^71\), and liked to engage in animated 
discussions of war scenes in the novel with generals at court such as Chang P’īlmu 張弼武, 
Military Commissioner of North Hamgyŏng Province 咸鏡北道 兵馬節度使.\(^72\) To Ki Taesūng, 
this was an alarming sign that the king was deviating from the path of study he had envisioned 
for him.

It was not just military officers who were distracting and misguiding the king. Even a 
senior Confucian scholar such as Yu Hŭich’un (柳希春 1513-1577), whom Ki himself had 
recommended to the king just five months earlier, turned out to be an ardent reader and collector 
of Chinese stories, “so fond of books that he indulged himself with reading as if indulging in

\(^71\) In this chapter, several different versions of *Three Kingdoms* are discussed; the first being 
*Sanguo zhi pinghua* 三國志評話, an earlier version of *Three Kingdoms* that was already available during 
the Yuan dynasty, and the second being *Sanguo zhi tongsu yanyi* 三國志通俗演義, the most famous 
Chinese historical novel attributed to Luo Guanzhong 羅貫中, whose earliest extant edition bears two 
prefaces, dated 1494 and 1522, respectively. Later editions of *Three Kingdoms*, such as the “Li Zhuowu” 
specified whenever necessary, while the translated title, *Three Kingdoms*, will be used if there is no 
particular need to differentiate between distinct editions.

\(^72\) *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* 朝鮮王朝實錄 (Veritable Records of the Chosŏn Dynasty), 21: 231.
music or sex.” To Ki’s consternation, his protégé’s extensive reading was not limited to Confucian canonical texts; Yu had even asked envoys to China to acquire the latest Chinese books for him in Beijing.

Something needed to be done. As royal tutor, Ki felt an urgent need to reverse the king’s moral decline, even at the risk of giving offense. How on earth could he persuade others to stay away from such lewd books when the king was indulging in them? On the evening of the twentieth of the sixth month of the second year of King Sŏnjo’s reign (1569), Ki went to Munjōng Palace to deliver a lecture on Jinsi lu. However, he was determined to broach a topic that needed more urgent attention than the Confucian canon; Ki tried to impress upon the king the bad influences of fiction, especially those of Three Kingdoms in this case, and strongly requested him to suppress it.

The petition by Ki Taesŭng remains the first official reference to the Sanguozhi yanyi recorded in the Chosŏn wangjo sillok (Veritable Records of the Chosŏn Dynasty). As noted above, in the second year of King Sŏnjo’s reign (1569), the king mentioned battle scenes in the Three Kingdoms, following which Ki Taesŭng, then serving as Recipient of Edicts at the royal court, pointed out to him the fictitious nature of the work. Particularly noteworthy is that Ki also mentioned that many other Korean scholars had also read the Three Kingdoms by that time.


74 Kang Myŏnggwan, Ch’aek pŏledŭl Chosŏn ŭl mandŭlda, 112-131.

75 As mentioned earlier, most Chosŏn literati regarded any readings not in accordance with Confucian teachings as deviant and lewd even if they did not contain any seemingly explicit contents.

76 See pages 19-21 for details of Ki’s petition.
If we take at face value Ki’s remark that he previously heard about *Three Kingdoms* from friends rather than reading it himself, and given Yu Hūich’un’s predilection for storybooks and his close relationship with Ki, he could very well have been one of the friends who mentioned *Three Kingdoms* to him. As a matter of fact, just four years after the incident concerning *Three Kingdoms* at court, Yu acquired twenty *juan* \( \frac{2}{3} \) of *Three Kingdoms* (out of the 30 *juan* in the complete version) from Pak Kwang’ok and expressed his gratitude for it.\(^77\) Fake history (from Ki’s perspective) had not only infiltrated the ranks of the literati, but was also making a convert of the king.

It can thus be safely assumed that by 1569 *Sanguozhi yanyi* was already circulating widely among Korean literati. Given an atmosphere where all literate men were strongly discouraged from reading fictional narratives, as seen in the previous chapter, and where the king himself would discuss the details of battle scenes in the novel with his court officials, a considerable amount of time must have elapsed since the initial introduction of the work into Korea. Although the exact date of the *Three Kingdoms*’ entry remains a mystery, scholars generally agree that the book had been introduced at least several decades before 1569.\(^78\)

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\(^77\) Yun Sesun, 151.

\(^78\) Ki’s remark that “this book [*Three Kingdoms*] has not been around for a long time (此書出來未久)” gives only a vague time-line. However, people in the early Chosŏn period had a perception of the flow of time distinct from what we have nowadays. “Not yet long” could refer to a few months, years, or even decades. Given the circumstances examined above, it is unlikely that *Three Kingdoms* had been around for only a short period of time when Ki’s remark was made. Liu Shide, in his 2009 conference paper, asserts that the remark that “this book has not been around for a long time [in Chosŏn]” is an important point for the dating of the first Chosŏn print of *Three Kingdoms*. See Liu Shide,
For Ki, an embarrassing detail was the fact that before he could point out the inappropriateness of reading *Three Kingdoms* to the king, he had to read at least some parts of it himself. However, since it would be humiliating for a tenacious adversary of “pseudo-history” to do this, Ki was forced to deny that he had read the work and instead answered evasively that it was friends who had read the work, not he. However, whether or not friends had helped him gain knowledge of *Three Kingdoms*, in order to point out historical inaccuracies in the novel to King Sŏnjo, Ki must have carried out a painstaking textual analysis of the work. In his petition to the king, he meticulously pointed out that the story of Dong Cheng 董承 receiving a royal edict hidden in a sash and the details of winning the Battle of the Red Cliffs were “all invented with the manipulation of groundless sayings as well as conjured-up and empty things.” Based on this comment, we can say that Ki was possibly the second person in Korean history to carry out a textual analysis between *Three Kingdoms* and *Chronicle of the Three Kingdoms* (三國志, an official history of the period written by the historian Chen Shou 陳壽 (233-297)), in order to expose its distortions of history. The first to do so was King Sŏnjo, who pointed out the historical inaccuracy as to the story of Zhang Fei 張飛 making ten thousand soldiers flee by producing an uproar at the Steepslope Bridge.

When this issue was raised by Ki at court in 1569, *Three Kingdoms* had already been published by the Office of Editorial Review 校書館, as is evident in Ki’s remark: “Although Jiandeng xinhua is lowly and obscene, the Office of Editorial Review has still privately managed to gather materials [for its publication] and has even already cut the printing blocks [for it]. . . .

The *Sanguozhi yanyi*, being so eccentric and hollow, *also got published.*⁷⁹ Throughout the Chosŏn period, the Office of Editorial Review, which was a government office for publishing Confucian classics and books on history that corresponded to the state ideology, only rarely published *xiaoshuo* 小說 (fictional) narratives, with *Jiandeng xinhua* 剪燈新話 and *Three Kingdoms* being two rare exceptions.

It can be argued that *Three Kingdoms* was initially imported from China not long after 1522 (when it was first published as a complete printed edition in China),⁸⁰ that with each passing year it gained in popularity with the yangban literati, and that this popularity led to the publication of *Three Kingdoms* by the Office of Editorial Review sometime before 1569. In this way, the time frame for the introduction of the novel into Korea can be narrowed to this forty-seven-year period with a fair degree of certainty.

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⁷⁹ Ki, 2: 132-33 (emphasis mine); Min Kwandong and Yu T’agil speculate that this *Three Kingdoms* edition published by the Office of Editorial Review some time before 1569 must have been based on the Jiajing edition 嘉靖本, which came out in 1522. See Min (1995), 398 and Yu, 764-73.

⁸⁰ See Moss Roberts, 411 (abridged edition) and Xu Shuofang, “Lun Sanguo yanyi de chengshu” 論三國演義的成書 in *Xiaoshuo kao xinbian* 小說考新編 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1997), 1-30 for the dating issues surrounding the oldest complete printed edition of *Three Kingdoms*. 

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Besides asserting that *Three Kingdoms* was brought to Korea at least several decades before 1569, Yi Kyŏngsŏn also suggested that either *Three Kingdoms* or perhaps Yuan dynasty *zaju* (northern drama) versions of *Three Kingdoms* stories were imported to Korea in the early Chosŏn period.\(^8^1\) However, none of these arguments can be verified. Later scholars have also speculated about the exact date of the *Three Kingdoms*’ first introduction into Korea, but what can be verified is that it became increasingly popular after the Imjin Wars (the Hideyoshi-led invasions of Korea in the 1590s).\(^8^2\) In the following section, I will explore evidence that *Three Kingdoms* (or at least one of the earlier versions of it) was introduced to Korea long before 1569. I will also examine the grounds for how this work gained popularity among the Chosŏn literati almost simultaneously with its importation to Korea.

### 3.2 Ready from the Very Beginning? Historical Background for Chosŏn Receptivity to *Three Kingdoms*

By the time of the Three Kingdoms period in Korea (early fourth to late seventh century), Confucian classics and Chinese historical texts had already been imported to Korea. According

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\(^8^1\) Yi Kyŏngsŏn, 104-120. Regarding *zaju* dramas based on *Three Kingdoms* stories, see Kin Bunkyŏ (or Kim Mungyŏng), *Samguk chi ŭi yŏnggwang*, 70-9. On page 72, Kim lists 21 extant *zaju* dramas based on stories from the Three Kingdoms period. In many of these stories, Zhang Fei is often depicted as the most outstanding character both in martial valor and cleverness.

\(^8^2\) Detailed discussion with regard to the influence of the Japanese invasion on the dissemination of *Three Kingdoms* ensues in the following chapter.
to Chinese records, the *Chronicle of the Three Kingdoms* by Chen Shou was imported to Koguryŏ 高句麗 Korea (B.C 37-A.D. 668). Other records also indicate that it was imported again to Koryŏ 高麗 Korea (918～1392) along with other records of Chinese history. Kim Pusik (金富軾, 1075 - 1151), in *Samguk sagi* 三國史記 (Notes on the history of the Three Kingdoms, 1145) evaluates highly both Liu Bei (161-223) and Zhuge Liang (181-234), as exemplary ruler and vassal, respectively. Kim's evaluation of Liu Bei and Zhuge Liang might have been influenced by the *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑 (A comprehensive mirror for aid in government), which came out in 1084, preceding the publication of *Samguk sagi* more than half a century. For Sima Guang’s supportive description of Liu Bei and Zhuge Liang and the historical reconstruction he conducted for this purpose, see Hoyt Cleveland Tillman, “Selected Historical Sources for Three Kingdoms: Reflections for Sima Guang’s and Chen Liang’s Reconstructions of Kongming’s Story” in *Three Kingdoms and Chinese Culture*, edited by Kimberly Besio and Constantine Tung, 53-72.

Given that Confucian classics and Chinese historical records were essential reading for the Korean literati, they reached Korea almost simultaneously with their publication in China.

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83 See Linghu Defen 令狐德棻 et al., *Zhoushu* 周書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1971), 885. See also Liu Xu et al., *Jiu tangshu* 舊唐書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 5320. For Korean records, see Chŏng Inji et al., *Koryŏ sa* 高麗史 10: 23. Mueller-Lee also notes, “The Chinese sources on Zhuge Liang such as *Sanguozhi* or the “Anthology of Literature” (*Wenxuan* 文選), however, are already documented in Koguryŏ (BC 37-668) and came into the possession of Silla and then Koryŏ (918-1392), so the early Korean scholars undoubtedly knew who Zhuge Liang was.” See Mueller-Lee, 49.

84 Mueller-Lee, 50. For examples of Chinese literary works studied by Koryŏ literati, refer to the list of Chinese books purchased by the Korean merchants in the *Nogŏltae* discussed in the following section.
Koreans were thus amply furnished with knowledge of the Three Kingdoms period and this knowledge informed their reading of *Three Kingdoms* subsequently. More specifically, primary historical resources incorporated into the fictional work—such as Chen Shou’s * Chronicle of the Three Kingdoms* 三國志, *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書 (History of Later Han), and Sima Guang’s *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑 (A comprehensive mirror for aid in government; presented to the throne in 1084)—were studied by Korean literati, many of whom knew Chinese history better than their own.86 This is clear from evidence culled from their literary collections.

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86 A textual analysis of *Three Kingdoms* introduced in *Sanguo yanyi Sanguo zhi duizhao ben* 三國演義三國志對照本 (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji, 2002) verifies that the four major editions of *Three Kingdoms*, which are *Mao ben* 毛本, *Jiajing ben* 嘉靖本, *Zhizhuan jian ben* 志傳簡本, and *Zhizhuan fan ben* 志傳繁本, were based on four official histories: *Sanguo zhi* 三國志 (Chronicles of the Three Kingdoms), *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書 (History of Later Han), *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑 (Comprehensive Mirror for the Aid in Government), and *Jinshu* 晉書 (History of Jin) (See 1: 33 and passim). According to this study, about 63 percent of the *Three Kingdoms* text is based on historical facts recorded in the *Chronicles of the Three Kingdoms* alone, and if the historical records in the *Hou Han Shu*, *Jin Shu*, and *Zizhi tongjian* are added to the source text of official history for comparison with the target text of the novel, the percentage for textual resemblance rises significantly (1: 4). In addition, Andrew Lo’s Ph.D. dissertation, “‘San-kuo-chih yen-i’ and ‘Shui-hu chuan’ in the Context of Historiography: an Interpretive Study” (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1981), examines how, in the *Three Kingdoms* novel, the historical records in the *Zizhi tongjian* were edited, added, deleted, and manipulated in the tradition of the so-called *Chunqiu bifa* 春秋筆法 (Evaluative Rhetoric in the Spring and Autumn Annals) as articulated in the *Zizhi tongjian gangmu* 資治通鑑綱目 (Outline and digest of *A comprehensive mirror for aid in government*). See 13-92.
References to the heroes of *Three Kingdoms* can be found in the collected works of literati in the late Koryŏ and early Chosŏn periods; Liu Bei 劉備, Zhuge Liang 諸葛亮, and Cao Cao 曹操 are the most discussed figures. It is not clear whether the Korean literati obtained the historical facts about these figures from *Chronicle of the Three Kingdoms, A Plain Tale of the Chronicle of Three Kingdoms* 三國志平話 (*Sanguozhi pinghua*, an earlier version of the *Sanguozhi yanyi* that first appeared during the Yuan dynasty), or from both. However, we can say that late-Koryŏ scholars were familiar with detailed historical facts in the *Three Kingdoms*. Chŏng Tojŏn 鄭道傳 (1337-1398), a renowned scholar of late Koryŏ and the single most important founding member of the Chosŏn dynasty, reveals his detailed knowledge of historical figures from the Three Kingdoms period (of China) when he cites and evaluates the deeds of Zhuge Liang (mentioned eight times), Liu Bei (two times), Cao Cao (three times), and Liu Shan 劉禪 (two times) in his collected works. Chŏng’s greatest interest lies in the evaluation of Zhuge Liang as a military strategist, inventor, prime minister, and retainer who remained loyal to a mediocre ruler, Liu Shan.87

Chŏng’s interest focuses mainly on Zhuge Liang as a military strategist rather than on Liu Bei, whom Chŏng recognizes as the legitimate successor of the Han dynasty. As a matter of fact, Chŏng shows even less interest in Liu Bei (mentioned two times) than in Cao Cao (mentioned three times). Liu Shan, Liu Bei’s successor, is also mentioned twice, but only as a mediocre ruler who repeatedly impeded Zhuge Liang’s great task of reunifying China. Considering that the image of Zhuge Liang as a god-like military strategist and a loyalist who

87 For Chŏng’s references to Zhuge Liang, see *Sambong chip* 三峯集 1:206, 429 and 2:32, 46, 51, 159, 225, 262. For his assessment of Zhuge Liang’s strategy in battle formation, see 2:289. For a reference to Liu Bei, see 2:32, 159. See 2:46, 225 for his evaluation of Liu Shan as a mediocre ruler.
performed his best to serve an imprudent king is closer to his image in *Three Kingdoms* than to his image in history, we cannot rule out the possibility that in Chŏng’s time, a popular history such as *Sanguo zhi pinghua* was already circulating in Korea.\(^{88}\)

Late-Koryŏ scholars such as Chŏng Tojŏn reveal a strong sense of the historical legitimacy of the Shu-Han dynasty founded by Liu Bei. Chŏng’s theory of Shu-Han legitimacy (*Shu-Han zhengtong sixiang* 蜀漢正統思想) demonstrates that the literary society of late Koryŏ was inclined to find Han-Chinese nationalism in the *Sanguo zhi yanyi*, ideologically speaking. Although the books revealing the theory of Shu-Han legitimacy such as *Zizhi tongjian* were widely read by scholars in the late Koryŏ and early Chosŏn periods, idolization of Zhuge Liang as military strategist, Taoist, and loyalist superhero, which became prevalent after the mid-Chosŏn period, was not yet apparent in *yangban* 兩班 writings of this period. The ideological preference among Korean literati (for Zhuge Liang as military hero and loyalist, as opposed to

\(^{88}\) For a discussion of how Zhuge Liang’s contemporaries evaluated him, refer to Eric Henry, “Chuko Liang in The Eyes of His Contemporaries,” *Harvard Journal of the Asiatic Studies* 52: 2 (1992). Henry observes that, although Chen Shou, in *Sanguo zhi*, evaluates Zhuge Liang’s sincere devotion to the public highly, he relegates Zhuge’s role as a military strategist to a couple of concluding phrases, the content of which can be characterized as unenthusiastic at best: “He mobilized troops year after year without success. It would seem that situational strategy was not his strong point.” (Chen Shou, *Sanguo zhi*, 35. 934. Translation cited in Eric Henry, 591-2.) Henry also asserts that both Chen Shou’s basic account of Zhuge Liang and the relevant historical materials drawn from third-century histories and memoirs by Pei Songzhi, the fifth-century commentator of Chen Shou’s *Sanguo zhi*, include stories that “portray Zhuge Liang acting in ways that to us seem variously out-of-character” and that “he was no more immune from the rivalry, resentment, and ill opinion of his contemporaries than is any public figure.” (Henry, 591.)
Liu Bei as defender of the dynasty, which was stimulated by the thought of the Song Neo-Confucian Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200), grew much stronger in the Chosŏn period. Ki Taesŭng, who warned the king of the negative influence of Sanguo zhi yanyi, rated Zhuge Liang’s loyalty to the Royal House of Han 漢王室 highly, while vilifying Cao Cao as a traitor. Ki’s evaluation of these Three Kingdoms heroes illustrates that the Chosŏn literati’s approval of Shu-Han legitimacy had become entrenched by the mid-sixteenth century.

For example, Ki regarded Zhuge Liang as a hero who nearly succeeded in restoring the Royal House of Han, and says of him, “It goes without saying that Kongming [Zhuge Liang’s courtesy name] should not be held accountable for not being able to accomplish the Great Task (大業); it was rather due to the Mandate of Heaven (天命). If Heaven had allowed him a little more time to live, he could have restored the House of Han and brought a great accomplishment to it.”

On the other hand, Ki divulges an utterly opposite (and therefore disapproving) view concerning those who served Cao Cao, whom he regarded as a usurper and traitor to the Han Dynasty. Ki’s sole yardstick of legitimacy was Han nationalistic unity against those who threatened the throne of the Han empire, which included barbarians, usurpers, and traitors. Accordingly, he uses this criterion to judge each individual’s deeds during the Three Kingdoms

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89 See Chapter 4 for a detailed discussion of Zhu Xi’s views on the Three Kingdom’s period. In short, Zhu Xi’s Zizhi tongjian gangmu 資治通鑑綱目 (Outline and digest of A comprehensive mirror for aid in government) and the notion of Shu-Han legitimacy in it were hugely influential upon the Chosŏn literati.


91 Ki, 199.
period and/or in *Three Kingdoms*. An example is Xun Yu 荀彧 (163-212), the most talented and well-known military advisor among those serving Cao Cao. Xun competed against Zhuge Liang and arguably outperformed him, in that he helped Cao Cao take hold of most of the northern heartland (*zhongyuan* 中原) while Liu Bei, with Kongming’s assistance, was able to acquire only one of China’s eleven provinces. Ki’s evaluation of Xun Yu is utterly unsympathetic when viewing him as an anti-Shu-Han legitimacy figure. He remarks that “some [retainers] are so sly that they become as villainous as Xun Yu (或險而為荀彧之奸),”92 and adds, “Xun Yu, with his mastery of machinations, being a retainer to the Court of Han yet devoted his acumen to Cao Cao and assumed the power of the usurper.”93 Even though he recognized Xun Yu’s superior talent, Ki believed that these talents were wasted since Xun served a superior who was disloyal to the House of Han. However, he does appreciate Xun’s attempt to discourage Cao Cao from officially receiving the same court protocol that the Han emperor did, saying, “Although Xun Yu helped that guy Cao [曹氏; a disrespectful form of address] establish himself as ruler of a state, because he opposed Cao’s assuming the Nine Dignities of a patriarchal lord [九錫], Xun offended Cao and had to drink poison, only to die in defence of his loyalty to the House of Han [殉節].”94 Here Ki recognizes that although Xun Yu spent his life serving a traitor, he died a loyal death in the end, recovering to some extent his conscience and fidelity to the morally honorable side. According to Ki, Xun Yu is a Machiavellian traitor who then becomes a loyalist sacrificing his

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92 Ki, 2: 200.
93 Ki, 2: 198.
94 Ki, 2: 198.
life for a greater cause; the sole yardstick is whether or not he acted to uphold the legitimacy of the House of Han.

Ki is supportive of the idea that Xun Yu had to commit suicide by poisoning himself, since Cao Cao had ordered him to do so. This viewpoint is not to be found in official history, but does appear in a commentary added to Chen Shou’s chronicle history by Pei Songzhi (372-451).\textsuperscript{95} Thus, by Ki’s time, *Chronicle of the Three Kingdoms* with Pei Songzhi’s commentary and/or other unofficial historical records vilifying Cao Cao must have been circulating in Chosŏn Korea.

In tandem with Ki’s disapproving perspective on Cao Cao and those who served him, other Chosŏn literati of the sixteenth century began to reveal a predilection for Liu Bei and those who served him, a view that reflects the influence of the Cheng-Zhu school of Song Neo-Confucianism. Among those who served Liu Bei (hence, the Imperial House of the Han according to the Neo-Confucian interpretation), Zhuge Liang was particularly recognized for his undying loyalty to the Han, and was regarded as the most exemplary model of loyalty and moral integrity--values greatly emphasized in Neo-Confucian teachings.

Let us examine another example from Ki’s works; in a response to his teacher Yi Hwang he compares Zhuge Liang to a Korean politician whom he also recognizes as a Confucian hero. Ki writes, “Although this latter Zhuge [Cho Kwangjo 趙光祖 1482-1519] performed

\textsuperscript{95} Pei Songzhi is a fifth-century commentator on Chen Shou’s *Sanguo zhi*. He added a vast quantity of material to Chen Shou’s work in the form of notes drawn from more than two hundred sources. Many scholars think some of the anecdotes Pei added lack credibility. Moss Roberts (1999, 425) asserts that Pei was the first to attach some fictional material to *Sanguo zhi*. 
outstandingly, Heaven was not in his favor.” 96 Cho was a politician of great moral integrity who idealized the mythical paragons Yao 堯 and Shun 舜, legendary emperors of Chinese antiquity. In due course, Cho offended a great number of politicians, accusing them of being “petty men” (xiaoren 小人) according to his strict moral standards and therefore posing a threat to those in power. He was executed by his opponents in the purge of 1519 (the Kimyo massacre of scholars 己卯士禍). After his tragic death, he came to be seen by fellow-scholars and followers (Ki among them) as a Confucian martyr who challenged the conservatives at court. We can conclude that by Ki’s time, Zhuge Liang’s image in Korea had progressed from that of brilliant military strategist to Neo-Confucian role model and defender of Shu-Han legitimacy. This historical viewpoint based on Han-Chinese nationalism grew stronger along with the growing popularity of Three Kingdoms in Korea, becoming widespread even among commoners after the Japanese invasion of Korea (1592-1598) and the Manchu Qing invasion (1636-1637). 97

So far we have examined examples from the collected works of Chosŏn literati, which suggest that earlier versions of Three Kingdoms may have reached Korea well before 1569. The oldest complete printed edition of Three Kingdoms, published in 1522, has a preface dated 1494, which suggests “the possible existence of an earlier printed edition but more probably refers to manuscript copies, of which there must have been many.”98 It is quite probable that manuscript copies of Three Kingdoms were circulating in Korea long before 1569 when it was first mentioned in the official historical records of Korea. Either way, we can be sure that Chosŏn literati were familiar with the history of China’s Three Kingdoms period and that, with each

96 Ki, 3: 145.

97 See Chapter 4 for a detailed discussion.

98 Moss Roberts, 411.
passing year, they grew more sympathetic to the claim of Shu-Han legitimacy as reflected in Neo-Confucian ideology in China.

Also noteworthy is that the *Nogŏltae*, a colloquial Chinese textbook for Koreans whose oldest version is dated around 1346, contains a reference to a Koryŏ merchant’s purchase of *Sanguo zhi pinghua*. In a *Nogŏltae* dialogue, a Korean merchant, with the help of a Chinese merchant named Wang from Liaoyang, purchases various items in Dadu 大都, capital of the Yuan empire at the time. The merchant purchases thirteen different Chinese books, mostly Confucian classics and anthologies of famous Tang and Song writers. It is significant that we can confidently state that all other books mentioned in addition to the *Sanguo zhi pinghua* had been circulating in Koryŏ long before 1346. Below is the English translation of the dialogue in the *Nogŏltae* that depicts the Korean merchant’s purchase of Chinese books:

Also [let’s] buy some sets of books:

*Sishu* 四書 (The Four Books), all with Zhu Xi’s commentary.

Also buy copies of

*Maoshi* 毛詩 (Book of Odes),

*Shangshu* 尙書 (Book of History),

*Zhouyi* 周易 (Book of Changes),

*Liji* 礼記 (Book of Rites),

*Wuzi shu* 五子書 (Five Philosophical Works),

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Hanwen 韓文 (Selected Essays of Han [Yu]),

Liuwen 柳文 (Selected Essays of Liu [Zongyan]),

Dongpo shi 東坡詩 (Collected poems of [Su] Dongpo),

Shixue dacheng 詩學大成 (An Introduction to Chinese Poetry),

Yayun junchen gushi 押韻君臣故事 (Anecdotes about Rulers and Their Ministers in Verse),

Zizhi tongjian 資治通鑑 (A Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government),

Zhenguan zhengyao 貞觀政要 (Essentials of the Government of the Zhenguan Period)

Sanguo zhi pinghua 三國志評話 (Plain tale of Record of the Three Kingdoms).

These goods are all bought.

Considering that the books purchased along with the Sanguo zhi pinghua were all in high demand among the literati society of Koryŏ and had been widely read, it seems safe to assume that Sanguo zhi pinghua was also already circulating among the literati in the late Koryŏ period.

3.3 Notable Editions of Three Kingdoms Published in Chosŏn Korea

The oldest complete printed edition of Sanguo zhi yanyi, published in 1522, has two prefaces dated, 1494 and 1522, respectively. Scholars suggest the possible existence of earlier manuscript copies, given that the attributed author Luo Guanzhong was a fourteenth-century literatus in the late Yuan-early Ming period. Regarding the gap of about one hundred years

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100 Translation cited in Dyer, 489–91; Wade-Giles transcription has been modified to pinyin. I have added Chinese characters and made slight modifications.
between the presumed date of Luo Guanzhong’s death and the 1494 preface, many explanations have been provided, Chen Dakang’s assertion being one of them. He offers an estimate of the time, expense, and manpower necessary to publish a novel some 700,000 characters in length in late Yuan-early Ming period, and reckons that it would have required ten typesetters a year’s time to prepare the blocks and about 200 taels of silver, and that therefore Luo Guanzhong was not able to afford it.  

Since the primary aim of this section is to examine notable *Three Kingdoms* editions printed in Chosŏn, I will limit my discussion to pertinent editions of *Three Kingdoms* in late imperial China and Chosŏn. Given the above-mentioned situation, the *Three Kingdoms* published by the Office of Editorial Review before 1569 must have been a reprint of an early edition imported from China. Unfortunately, this Office of Editorial Review edition is not extant. Scholars in general speculate that it was the Jiajing edition 嘉靖本 (1522 edition) in terms of the timeline of publication. However, a new theory concerning this print put to blocks by the Office of Editorial Review has emerged, a matter I will return to shortly. The following discussion of the notable editions of *Three Kingdoms* in Korea will be made with the recent arguments taken into consideration.

Among the several editions of *Three Kingdoms* published in classical Chinese in Chosŏn Korea, the following three editions are cases in point.

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101 Chen Dakang (1993), 39-43. Chen also notes that even Mao Lun in the mid-seventeenth century lacked the financial means to put the *Three Kingdoms* that he had edited to blocks while he was alive; it was published by his son Mao Zonggang later. See Ibid.

102 Recall that Korean literati, with their educational background in classical Chinese, preferred works written in classical Chinese to vernacular ones. *Three Kingdoms*’ popularity grew steadily among
1) The edition mentioned by Ki in his petition in 1569

The first *Three Kingdoms* printed in Korea is almost certainly the one Ki mentions as having been published by the Office of Editorial Review in his abovementioned petition. Although scholars such as Min Kwandong and Yu T’agil speculate that this *Three Kingdoms* must have been based on the Jiajing edition that came out in 1522, we cannot rule out the possibility that it was based on a manuscript that came to Korea earlier. Unfortunately, why this version gained popularity among the literati so rapidly that the Office of Editorial Review chose to publish it cannot be determined, since this edition did not survive and is only attested in historical records. There are no extant remnants of the Jiajing edition in Korea; although most scholars who have studied this topic believe that the Jiajing edition was imported to Korea, there is no physical evidence remaining.

2) *Sin’gan kyojŏng kobon taetcha ũnsŏk Samgukchi chŏn t’ongsok yŏnŭi* published in the year Chŏngmyo (attributed date: 1627) on T’amna (Cheju) Island

The earliest extant edition of *Three Kingdoms* published in Korea is a woodblock print of a *Shulin* Zhou Yuejiao edition (*Shulin* Zhou Yuejiao kanben 書林周曰校刊本; hereafter Zhou Yuejiao edition) published in the year Chŏngmyo 丁卯 (arguably 1627) in the district of T’amna 欽羅 (modern Cheju 濟州 Island), the full title being *Sin’gan kyojŏng kobon taetcha*

the literati upon its introduction. This was partly because it was written mostly in classical Chinese, although *Three Kingdoms* is classified among vernacular novels.

103 See the quote on p. 59, especially the italicized text.


105 The debates on how to interpret the year of Chŏngmyo will be discussed in detail below.
This edition draws our attention in several aspects. First, the fact that another edition of *Three Kingdoms* was published following the one published by the central government illustrates the immediate and steady popularity that *Three Kingdoms* had gained since it was introduced to Korea. Also, this edition verifies the wide popularity that the work had gained by the early seventeenth century, considering that T’amna (Cheju) Island is the farthest place from Seoul, the capital, and therefore was known as the most notorious place for exile because of its harsh natural environment, scarce provisions, and raging epidemics. T’amna was an independent territory until 938 and remained virtually an autonomous region until 1105, when the Koryŏ government finally dispatched officials to handle the affairs of the island. Until the late Chosŏn period, T’amna Island remained a culturally isolated region, and also happened to be one of the poorest areas. With its unique dialect, the strong sense of territorial identity of the local people, the low level of Confucian influence, and poor medical provisions, T’amna was a frequent place of exile for officials who barely escaped execution. The fact that the earliest extant printed Korean edition of *Three Kingdoms* was published in this undeveloped locale soon after the most devastating war of the Chosŏn dynasty (Japanese invasions of Chosŏn Korea between 1592-1598) demonstrates that by then it had gained considerable popularity in places other than Seoul. Moreover, according to the the local gazettees

106 Scholars in general believe that the Zhou Yuejiao edition appeared in 1591 in Ming China. (See, for example, Kin Bunkyo (2002), 270-2.) Recently, Liu Shide asserted that it was published much earlier, a matter I will return to shortly. Translation of the title is quoted from Rolston, *How to Read the Chinese Novel*, 431.
of T’amna published in the eighteenth century, this Zhou Yuejiao edition had been reprinted by
the local government alongside Confucian canons and history books, which was highly unusual
considering the crude local print culture and small number of readers.  

In the early seventeenth century, it was not common for a private publisher to publish
novels for profit. As late as the end of the late nineteenth century, private publishing houses
existed in just three major cities in Korea: Seoul, Chônju 全州, and Ansŏng 安城. Given the
state of the book market noted in Chapter One, we can rule out all other possibilities but that this
Zhou Yuejiao edition of Three Kingdoms was published by the T’amna provincial
government. That it bears no reference to the publisher other than the plain description,
“published on T’amna in the year of Chŏngmyo (歳在丁卯耽羅刊行),” implies that no private
publisher was involved, since private publishers tended to record their names and contact
information for further sales.

107 There is an official reference that the Zhou Yuejiao edition was reprinted several times on
T’amna in the late eighteenth century, which shows that it gained enough local readers to produce

108 See Kang Myŏnggwan, Ch’aek póllëdul Chosŏn ŭl mandûlda, 112-131 for further details.
According to Kang, both the central and the provincial governments had publishing bureaus, and the
officials in charge of these sectors had the right to publish what was considered advisable. The books
published by the government, with the exception of Samgang haengsil to 三綱行實圖 (Illustrated
Conduct of the Three Bonds) were generally printed in limited runs, typically not exceeding several
hundred volumes. Popular novels were often disseminated in manuscript form, hand-copied from these
woodblock printings.
Given the small number of *yangban* literati in T’amma and the negligible local book market there, the only plausible explanation for publication of a printed *Three Kingdoms* on that remote island would be that it was also popular even among commoners with some literacy and the educated women in the *yangban* households in addition to the literati who were the first readers of the work. A reference from a *yangban*’s diary of this era provides more evidence for this tendency. O Hŭi’mun (1539-1613), in his diary, mentions that upon the request of his married daughter, he translated *Xi Han yanyi*西漢演義 from Chinese into colloquial Korean in 1595, which exemplifies that even during the Japanese invasion, Chinese novels were imported, translated, and read, broadening their readership.109 The reference in Ki’s petition saying that *Chu Han yanyi* was already popular among the *yangban* literati by 1569111, and O’s mention that a Korean translation of *Chu Han yanyi* appeared in 1595, make it clear that women, children, and

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109 *Xi Han yanyi* is better known in Korea by its alternative title, (C.) *Chu Han yanyi*, or (K.) *Ch’ŏ-Han yŏn’ŭi* 楚漢演義. Other Korean variants of the title include *Cho-Han ka* 楚漢歌, *Cho-Han chŏn* 楚漢傳, *Sŏ Han ki* 西漢記, and *Sŏ Han chŏn* 西漢傳. For further information, see Yi Chaehong, “Kungnip chung’ang tosŏgwan sojang pŏnyŏk p’ilsabon Ch’ungguk yŏksa sosŏl yŏn’gu” (Study of Manuscript Translations of Chinese Novels Collected at the National Library of Korea), 78-121. I thank Professor Hegel for reminding me that the title *Chu Han yanyi* does not appear in Chinese reference books on novels. Hereafter, for the convenience of references, I will refer to it with the title of *Chu Han yanyi* when discussing it in the context of Chosŏn Korean references.

110 Chŏng Pyŏngsŏl, “Chosŏn hugi han’gŭl sosŏl ŭi sŏngjang kwa yut’ong,” 269. For O’s remark in his diary, see O Hŭi’mun, *Swaemi rok* 瑣尾錄 1: 706.

111 Recall Ki’s remark that, “Not only this book [*Sanguozhi yanyi*], but works such as *Chuhan yanyi*, *Jiandeng xinhua*, and *Taiping guangji* are all misleading.”
students were also beginning to read novels from China. Given that *Three Kingdoms* was mentioned along with other Chinese novels such as *Chu Han yanyi* and *Jiandeng xinhua* as influential works in Ki’s petition, and given that it had been one of the most popular literary works in Korea for the past four hundred and forty years, it is likely that either a partial or full translation of it had also become available by this time. The publication of a classical Chinese version of the work on T’amna Island in 1627 certainly confirms the steady growth of its readership.

3) New Theories on the Zhuo Yuejiao Edition and its Importation to Chosôn Korea

With regard to the Zhou Yuejiao edition discussed above, arguments have recently emerged from both Chinese and Korean scholars which subvert established theories. If we take these assertions as correct, they would substantially alter the study of editions of *Three Kingdoms*, including the discussions made above for the Zhou Yuejiao edition and its importation to pre-modern Korea.

Liu Shide (劉世德), in his 2002 article entitled “*Sanguo zhi yanyi* Zhou Yuejiao kanben sizhong shilun” (Preliminary Discussion of Four Types of the Zhou Yuejiao Edition of the *Sanguo zhi yanyi*), points out that there are four different variants of the Zhou Yuejiao edition. He labels these editions the Jia 甲 (周曰校刊本甲本), Yi 乙 (周曰校刊本乙本), Bing 丙 (周曰校刊本丙本), and Renshoutang (仁壽堂) editions, respectively. According to Liu, the Zhou Yuejiao B edition is the best known of these, and is discussed by scholars such as Sun Kaidi 孫

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112 Hereafter these editions will be referred to as the Zhou Yuejiao A, B, C and Renshoutang edition, respectively, for convenience of discussion. See Liu (2002), 76–7 and passim for details.
Liu mentions that in many cases scholars are only aware of the Zhou Yuejiao B edition. The Zhou Yuejiao C edition is a reprint of the B edition with some modifications; among the above-mentioned scholars, only Andrew West differentiates the B edition. According to Liu, the Renshoutang edition is no longer extant. The Zhou Yuejiao A edition that Liu focuses on is a work that he claims none of the abovementioned scholars have paid attention to. It is owned by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (中國社會科學院) (hereafter CASS) Library as an incomplete edition; only juan 6, 7, and 9 are extant.

Through textual examination, Liu asserts that the Zhou Yuejiao A edition is the earliest extant Zhou Yuejiao edition. As the copy at the CASS library lacks the prefaces and the first

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114 Ibid. David Rolston's bibliographical notes for Xinkan jiaozheng guben dazi yinshi Sanguo zhi zhuan tongsu yanyi in How to Read the Chinese Novel (p. 431), mentions the publisher as "Renshoutang, Chou Yüeh-chiao [Zhou Yuejiao] Nanking" and the date of publication as 1591. Length: 240 ce in 12 juan. According to Rolston, Beijing University has a copy of this edition and the Far Eastern Library of the University of Chicago and Gest Library of Princeton have microfilm copies. Liu Shide labels this edition previously known as the Renshoutang edition as the Zhou Yuejiao B edition.

115 Ibid., 76.

116 Ibid., 76–7.

117 Ibid., 76.

118 Ibid., 79–88. The most significant difference between the Zhou Yuejiao A and B editions noted by Liu is that the A edition is devoid of illustrations while the B edition has about 240 illustrations. He also notes that Zhang Fei is styled Yide (益德) in the A edition with only one exception, while his zi often appears as Yide (翼德) in the B edition. For details, see Liu (2002), 80–5.
volume, it was not possible to date the volume from the publishing notes when Liu wrote his 2002 article. However, Liu speculates that the Zhou Yuejiao A edition was published as early as 1582, which challenges the notion that the Zhou Yuejiao edition came out in 1591.\textsuperscript{119}

On the other hand, Pak Chaeyŏn has recently collected remnants of the Zhuo Yuejiao edition of \textit{Three Kingdoms} printed in Chosŏn that had been scattered across different places in Korea, and edited these into a complete volume published in late 2008.\textsuperscript{120} He then compared the

\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., 86.

\textsuperscript{120} Pak, “Chosŏn kakpon Sin’gan kobon taetcha ūmsŏk Samgukchi chŏn t’ongsok yŏn’ui e taehayŏ” (Regarding the Chosŏn Print of Sinkan guben dazi yinshi Sanguo zhi zhuany tongsu yanyi), Chongguk ŏmune hakchi 27 (2009): 179–80 and passim. The Chinese version of this article entitled “Guanyu xin faxian de Chaoxian fanke ben ‘Sanguo zhi tongsu yanyi’” (Regarding the Recently Discovered Three Kingdoms Chosŏn Edition) was presented at the International Conference on Publication Cultures of East Asia in July 2008 at Tohoku University, Japan. He gathered incomplete editions from eleven different places—libraries, research centers, and private collectors. The places possessing chapters of the Zhou Yuejiao Chosŏn edition are as follows:

\textit{Juan 1}: Chung-Han pŏnyŏk munhŏn yŏn’guso (中韓翻譯文獻研究所), Sŏnmun University

\textit{Juan 2}: Chung-Han pŏnyŏk munhŏn yŏn’guso, Sŏnmun University; Sangbaek Collection of the Kyujanggak Institute, Seoul National University

\textit{Juan 3}: Chung-Han pŏnyŏk munhŏn yŏn’guso, Sŏnmun University; Sangbaek Collection of the Kyujanggak Institute, Seoul National University; Kyemŏng University Library

\textit{Juan 4}: Chung-Han pŏnyŏk munhŏn yŏn’guso, Sŏnmun University; Kyujanggak Institute, Seoul National University; Professor Im Hyŏngt’ae of Sŏnggyun’gwan University
Chosŏn version of the Zhuo Yuejiao edition of *Three Kingdoms* (hereafter Zhou Yuejiao Chosŏn edition) with the Zhou Yuejiao editions in China. As a result, he and Liu conclude that the text of the Zhou Yuejiao Chosŏn edition is completely identical to the text of Zhou Yuejiao A edition. Therefore, Pak concludes that the Zhou Yuejiao Chosŏn edition is a *fanke ben* 飿刻木 of the Zhou Yuejiao A edition.

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**Juan 5:** Kyujanggak Institute, Seoul National University, Tongguk University Library  
**Juan 6:** Kyujanggak Institute, Seoul National University, Namje Collection of Yŏngnam University Library  
**Juan 7:** Kyujanggak Institute, Seoul National University  
**Juan 8:** Chung-Han pŏnyŏk munhŏn yŏn’guso, Sŏnmun University; Kyujanggak Institute, Seoul National University  
**Juan 9:** Chung-Han pŏnyŏk munhŏn yŏn’guso, Sŏnmun University; Kyujanggak Institute, Seoul National University  
**Juan 10:** Kyujanggak Institute, Seoul National University  
**Juan 11:** Namje Collection of Yŏngnam University Library  
**Juan 12:** Chung-Han pŏnyŏk munhŏn yŏn’guso, Sŏnmun University; National Museum of Korea; Professor Kim Yŏngjin of Kyemyŏng University; San’gi Collection (Yi Kyŏmno’s private collection).

122 *Fanke ben* refers to a re-engraved edition imitating the original format.  
123 The only notable difference discovered by Pak is that the Zhou Yuejiao Chosŏn edition did not keep the punctuation of the original, possibly for convenience in the re-engraving procedure (see Pak 2009: 185). It should also be noted that not all texts of the Zhou Yuejiao Chosŏn edition gathered by Pak are primary sources. A print of *juan* 12 bearing the publication notes is a photocopied print of the original in Yi Kyŏmno’s private collection. In addition, the Chung-Han pŏnyŏk munhŏn yŏn’guso (where Pak
Both Pak and Liu speculate that the year Chŏngmyo marked as the publication date of the Zhou Yuejiao Chosŏn edition in Yi Kyŏmno’s collection is 1567 rather than 1627. This assertion is based on the bibliographical notes regarding Yi Kyŏmno’s edition of the Zhou Yuejiao Chosŏn print: he described *juan* 12 as bearing the publishing notes (*kan’gi* 刊記) in which the date of publication is specified as the year Chŏngmyo as a volume printed before the Japanese invasions of Chosŏn from 1592 to 1598. According to Pak, Yi Kyŏmno, an experienced book collector and well-known critical bibliographer of rare old Korean and Chinese books, made this assessment after examining *juan* 12 of the Zhou Yuejiao Chosŏn edition in his possession based on its paper quality, typesetting characteristics, and book format.

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Thus far, scholars who have studied the Korean editions of *Three Kingdoms* (such as Yu T’agil and Min Kwandong) have believed that the year Chŏngmyo when the Zhou Yuejiao Chosŏn edition was put to blocks was 1627, based on the established notion that the Zhou Yuejiao edition came out in 1591. However, Liu and Pak assert that the *Three Kingdoms* discussed at the Chosŏn court in 1569 was in fact the Zhou Yuejiao Chosŏn edition put to blocks on T’amma Island in 1567. This assertion is based partly on Liu’s 2002 claim that the Zhou Yuejiao A edition came out much earlier than 1591, and partly on Yi Kyŏmno’s conclusion that the Zhou Yuejiao Chosŏn edition was published before the wars against Japan started in 1592.

In addition, Pak speculates that the remnants of the Zhou Yuejiao Chosŏn edition that he gathered from various places are from more than two different prints. For example, while the *juan* 12 of the Zhou Yuejiao Chosŏn edition collected at the Chung-Han pŏnyŏk munhŏn yŏn’gyuso lacks publication notes, the *juan* 12 in Yi Kyŏmno’s collection has them. Based on the engraving characteristics of the blocks, Pak speculates that some incomplete editions gathered at different places are older than the *juan* 12 in Yi Kyŏmno’s collection (dated 1569). Given that the prints of *Jiandeng xinhua* mentioned along with *Three Kingdoms* by Ki Taesŭng were put to blocks in several different places, Pak believes that it is also highly probable that the Zhou Yuejiao Chosŏn edition was put to blocks in other places before it was published in 1567 in T’amma, the farthest place from the capital with a much smaller population of xiaoshuo readers.

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126 Ibid.


128 Ibid., 187–9.
The publication of the Zhou Yuejiao Chosŏn edition located Jiang Daqi’s preface in juan 1, which was missing in the Zhou Yuejiao A edition at the CASS Library.129 His preface is dated the Renzi year during the Jiajing reign period (1552, 嘉靖壬子), both in the Zhou Yuejiao Chosŏn edition, which is a fanke ben of the Zhou Yuejiao A edition, and in the Zhou Yuejiao B edition.130 Given that the prefaces in both the Zhou Yuejiao A and B editions bear the year Renzi as their publication date, Pak and Liu speculate that the Zhou Yuejiao A edition was put to blocks as early as 1552, rather than seeing it as a miscarving for the year Renwu of the Jiajing reign period (嘉靖壬午).131 In this context, Pak suggests the possibility that one of the early manuscripts of Three Kingdoms with the above-mentioned prefaces was published in 1552.132 Agreeing with Pak, Liu revises his theory on the publication date of Zhou Yuejiao in his 2002 article, acknowledging this possibility that the Zhou Yuejiao A edition was published in 1522.133

To sum up their arguments, the Zhou Yuejiao A edition was put to blocks in 1552, the Zhou Yuejiao Chosŏn edition was published in T’amna in Chosŏn in 1567, and between 1552 and 1567 (possibly sometime nearer to 1567) some fanke ben prints of the Zhou Yuejiao A edition were published in Chosŏn. The Three Kingdoms mentioned by Ki Taesŭng at court in 1569 was a fanke ben of the Zhou Yuejiao A edition published in 1567 on T’amna, or even a slightly earlier print whose remnants are extant in various places in Korea.

130 Ibid.
These arguments by Pak and Liu are ground-breaking in many respects. First, as for the study of *Three Kingdoms* editions in China, their dating of the Zhou Yuejiao A edition as a print put to blocks in 1552 instead of 1591 makes it the third earliest *Three Kingdoms* edition after the Jiajing Renwu and the Ye Fengchun (葉逢春) editions.\(^{134}\) As for the study of *Three Kingdoms* editions in Korea, they show that the first *Three Kingdoms* imported was the Zhou Yuejiao A edition, not the Jiajing edition whose remnants are nonexistent in Korea, and also that the *fanke ben* of the Zhou Yuejiao A edition was published in Korea as late as 1567.

Furthermore, Pak points out the gap of about a century and a half between the appearance of the Jiajing and the Mao editions in China, and also that the twenty-volume reprints of the Mao edition became predominant in Korea only from the nineteenth century.\(^{135}\) He asserts that the *Three Kingdoms* that was prevalent in Korea from around 1567 to the nineteenth century could very well have been the Zhou Yuejiao Chosŏn edition and its reprints.

Their assertions are worth noting if they are accurate, especially because the discovery of the Zhou Yuejiao Chosŏn edition contributed to the dating of one of the earliest *Three Kingdoms* editions. Just as the *Sanguo zhi pinghua* were all lost in China and “rediscovered” in Japan in the 1920s, the finding and examination of the Zhou Yuejiao Chosŏn edition is a case in point demonstrating that the study of Korean editions of *Three Kingdoms* can lead to a significant academic breakthrough.

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\(^{134}\) Liu (2009): 16.

\(^{135}\) Pak (2008): 172. Pak’s assertion is based on the fact that most extant Mao editions of the *Three Kingdoms* in Korean libraries are nineteenth-century productions. I do not agree with Pak on this matter, a point I will discuss shortly.
However, the arguments made by Liu and Pak are not without their problems. First, their dating of the Zhou Yuejiao Chosŏn edition is based largely on the assessment made by the late Yi Kyŏnmo: given that Yi Kyŏnmo passed away and the text that he examined has been missing since his death, it seems almost impossible to acquire any physical evidence to confirm his assessment. All we can do is accept Yi Kyŏnmo's assessment as a renowned bibliographer. We should also note that there are several different prints (albeit incomplete) of the Zhou Yuejiao Chosŏn edition gathered by Pak, and also that Pak, after reviewing their engraved fonts, suggested that some of these prints were published before 1567. These incomplete editions in various places in Korea should be examined by other specialists in this area to confirm his assessment and to date them more accurately.

Liu’s assertion that the Zhou Yuejiao A edition came out in 1552 should also be examined more thoroughly.\(^{136}\) Also, although Pak’s assertion that the Zhou Yuejiao Chosŏn edition had been prevalent in Korea for about two centuries until the Mao edition became predominant in nineteenth-century Korea seems plausible to some extent, we should also consider other possibilities. Just because no Jiajing edition has been found in Korea does not prove that it was never imported. For example, scholars were not aware of the existence of a

\(^{136}\) As a matter of fact, when Liu presented his article on the Zhou Yuejiao Chosŏn edition in Sepember 2009 in Seoul, Kin Bunkyō (or Kim Mun’gyǒng), a specialist on Three Kingdoms editions at Kyoto University, suggested alternative interpretations for the texts that Liu examined. As for the dating of the Zhou Yuejiao A edition, Liu has altered his theories rather frequently (in 2002, and then in August and September 2009). In Liu’s conference paper presented in September 2009, he mentions that he made changes to his article presented with the same title a month before. Liu’s 2009 conference paper has not been officially published yet, possibly because he is still in the process of articulating his theories.
complete copy of the Zhou Yuejiao Chosŏn edition until Pak recently put the scattered chapters together, while there are more than a dozen copies of the Mao edition extant in Korea. By the same token, we cannot entirely ignore the possibility that early editions of *Three Kingdoms* other than the Zhou Yuejiao edition could have been imported into Chosŏn, even though no extant copies are available. Even with the finding and dating of the Zhou Yuejiao Chosŏn edition, we still cannot be certain that it was the only *Three Kingdoms* edition that preceded the Mao edition. Furthermore, Pak himself, through textual analysis, asserts that a complete Korean translation of *Three Kingdoms* collected at the Naksŏnjae Royal Library is a translation of the Jiajiang edition. Judging from the orthographical features and literary style, Pak believes that the translation came out in the early- or mid-eighteenth century.

In addition, a complete pre-modern Korean translation of the “Li Zhuowu” commentary edition of *Three Kingdoms* has been discovered. Therefore, we can deduce that the “Li Zhuowu” commentary edition was imported and circulated in Chosŏn, even though no print of it has been found in Korea. Similarly, existence of the above-mentioned seventeenth-century Korean translation of the Jiajing edition strongly suggests that the Jiajiang edition was imported into Chosŏn. Although it is likely to some extent that the Zhou Yuejiao edition was popular in

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138 Ibid.

139 Pak edited and published this translation as a set of books in 1998. In the preface, he clarifies that, through textual analysis, he concluded that the volume is a translation of the “Li Zhuowu” commentary edition. See Pak, *Samgukchi t'ongsok yŏnŭi* (Seoul, South Korea: Hakkobang, 1998).
Korea until the Mao edition appeared,\textsuperscript{140} we cannot rule out the possibility that other editions of *Three Kingdoms* (such as the “Li Zhuowu” commentary edition and the Jiajiang edition) were also circulated and gained considerable popularity.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, there are many examples demonstrating almost simultaneous importation of Chinese fictional narratives into Chosŏn Korea: the Korean translation of *Jinghua yuan* (*Flowers in the Mirror*) in 1835 is a case-in-point, appearing only seven years after its first publication in 1828 in China. Kang Myŏnggwan also points out that the Chosŏn literati were very sensitive to literary trends in China and that even relatively minor or temporary trends were often rapidly disseminated into Chosŏn.\textsuperscript{141} Given that the Mao edition came out in China in the mid-seventeenth century, it is absurd to assume that its circulation in Chosŏn was delayed until the nineteenth century with a gap of more than a century and a half. That most extant prints of the Mao edition in Korea are dated around the nineteenth century does not prove that it became popular in Korea only from the nineteenth century, as Pak argues; rather, it is only natural that libraries should have more copies of recent publications than of older ones. As a matter of fact, as I will discuss in greater detail in Chapter 4, An Chŏngbok (安鼎福, 1712–1791), an eighteenth-century Chosŏn literatus, discusses in his collected works his impressions of reading the Mao edition of *Three Kingdoms*, specifically mentioning Jin Shengtan and Mao Zonggang as the commentators. His example shows that the Mao edition was already circulating in the early- to mid-eighteenth-century Korea.

\textsuperscript{140} The premodern Korean print of *Three Kingdoms* collected at the Academy of Korean Studies is a translation of the Zhou Yuejiao edition, which confirms Pak’s argument that the Zhou Yuejiao edition was influential in Chosŏn.

\textsuperscript{141} See Kang, *Ch’aek pŏledŭl Chosŏn ŭl mandŭlda* (Bookworms that Established the Chosŏn Dynasty).
As mentioned above, the extant prints of *Three Kingdoms* in Korea are reprints of the Zhou Yuejiao edition and the Mao edition. The next item we will examine is the Mao edition, which became a prominent text in Chosŏn Korea.

4) *Kwanhwadang cheil chaejas* (貫華堂第一才子書)

The most influential classical Chinese edition of *Three Kingdoms* came out sometime during King Sukjong’s 肅宗 reign (1674-1700). The full title page of this work reads, “Guanhuatang’s First Book of Genius, with original commentary by Jin Shengtan, and commentary and punctuation by Mao Zonggang” (聖歎原評, 毛宗崗評點, 貫華堂第一才子書) and the work is subtitled “The First of the Four Masterworks” (四大奇書第一種). In essence, it is a reprint of the Mao edition that came out in the mid-1660s in China. Just as the Mao edition “eclipsed the earlier version and was exclusively circulated in China for three centuries,” the *Kwanhwadang cheil chaejas* edition of *Three Kingdoms* was hugely popular and remained the most influential version throughout the Chosŏn dynasty and even during the early stages of the Japanese colonial period (1910-1945). The perennial popularity of this version of the novel seems in part attributable to the ideological predilections of the Chosŏn literati and court officials, to be discussed in detail in Chapter 4. This *Kwanhwadang cheil chaejas* ǒwas reprinted repeatedly, especially by private publishers, from the 1700s onward, and most extant editions collected in libraries in Korea are those printed in the nineteenth century.

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142 Moss Roberts, Afterword, 413 (abridged edition).

143 As a matter of fact, most modern translators of *Three Kingdoms* also tend to insist that they based their translations partly or entirely on the Mao edition, although significant numbers of them turn out to be retranslations of Japanese translations of *Three Kingdoms*. 
This work was the first *Three Kingdoms* edition to be disseminated nationwide and read by people of various literate classes. Such an extensive readership was achieved in conjunction with the emergence of a widespread readership for Chinese narratives in general, a phenomenon which became apparent from the seventeenth century. It is worth noting that from this period the yangban literati acknowledged that *xiaoshuo* narratives could serve a didactic purpose for admonishing and educating women properly, allowing or sometimes even encouraging them to read fictional narratives imbued with the ideology of Neo-Confucian orthodoxy, one of which was the Mao-edition *Three Kingdoms*. Lady Yi from Hamp’ eyŏng咸平李氏, the mother of Kwŏn Sangha權尙夏, 1641-1721), literatus known as one of the most ardent supporters of the Han Chinese-centered ideology (*zunzhou lun*尊周論), manually copied *Three Kingdoms* and circulated several volumes of it among her family members and relatives.144

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144 Pak Yŏnghŭi, 321-25 and passim.
The widespread readership for the Mao edition of *Three Kingdoms* is documented in the essays of literati of this period. Yi Ik 李翊 (1681–1763) mentions an incident when an episode from the *Sanguozhi yanyi* once served as topic on a state examination because the examiners confused facts from the official history of the Three Kingdoms (三國志) with a fictitious story from the *Sanguozhi yanyi*. Yi observes that this “laughable” incident happened because the *Sanguozhi yanyi* had become so popular that by his time every household was reading and reciting it, adding, “and nowadays it [*Three Kingdoms*] has been printed and distributed widely, with every household reciting it. It even became the topic of a state examination. People continue

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145 Yi Ik, 321.
to read it, handing the book from one to another, and do not feel ashamed for doing it; one can see how the way of the world has changed.”

There is also an example of Three Kingdoms being used as a preparation manual for becoming familiar with classical Chinese and Chinese history. In terms of entertainment value and readability, fiction excelled the Confucian classics significantly, and Three Kingdoms in particular was recognized for its exceptionally entertaining nature. The yangban literati also noticed that a substantial part of it was written in classical Chinese, and often quoted verbatim from historical records. While such aspects of the work worried serious literati such as Ki, others regarded it as a tool that could enable the students to learn classical Chinese in a more stimulating way. Song Myŏnghŭm 宋明欽 (1705-1768) noted:

In my household, trivial stories or dramas (稗書 雜戱) were not allowed. As a child I never enjoyed reading, and was told by my father that “you nevertheless have not realized that reading a book and scrutinizing its gist is far greater than merely reciting it.” He then purchased Three Kingdoms in order for me to learn the joy of reading. When I was a grown-up, I came to read it once again. Upon seeing that, my father scolded me and banned me from reading it.

146 三國演義 ... 在今印出廣布, 家戶诵讀, 試场之中, 擇而爲題, 前後相續, 不知愧耻, 亦可以觀世變矣. Yi Ik, 321.

For a young student who hated even to look at those archaic foreign phrases, *Three Kingdoms* was a sugar-coated package of classical Chinese easy to swallow. It can be noted that *Three Kingdoms* was a commodity easily purchased in the early eighteenth century when Song Myonghŭm was a child. Taking this information together with the earlier references about how Yu Hŭich’un was exceptionally pleased to acquire twenty *juan* of an edition of *Three Kingdoms* from Pak Kwang’ok in 1573, and how the mother of Kwŏn Sangha had copied by hand a partial copy of the work in the early seventeenth century for her grandson, we can suggest that with the development of printing technology and the emergence of private publishers noticeable from the late seventeenth century, *Three Kingdoms* (mostly the Mao-edition) acquired the status of a must-read in every literate household by the time of Yi Ik’s remarks.

3.4 *Three Kingdoms* Imported and Reprinted

Ever since it was first imported sometime before 1569 and until the early twentieth century, *Three Kingdoms* in classical Chinese circulated mainly through two networks; one being via the importation of various editions from China, the other being through reprintings in Korea. Although Korea started to print *Three Kingdoms* by 1569 at the latest, the importation of the

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148 *Three Kingdoms* is still used for such purposes. Editions of *Three Kingdoms* edited for children’s foreign language education, especially English learning, have been quite successful in the Korean book market. For example, the 20-volume manhwa entitled *The Romance of Three Kingdoms* (Seoul: T’aedong, 2000) is *Three Kingdoms* cartoons in both English and Korean designed for Korean learners of English.

149 Refer to Chapter 5, especially Chapter 5.2.2 for further evidences regarding the widespread readership of *Three Kingdoms* by this period.
book from China showed no signs of abating. On the contrary, the number of *Three Kingdoms* copies imported from China increased steadily, and most extant copies of the work from China are Mao editions imported in the Qing period.

As for other masterpieces among the four “masterworks” of the Ming novel (*si da qishu* 四大奇書) that were hugely popular in China\(^{150}\), Korean translations of *Shuihu zhuan* 水滸傳 (Outlaws of the marsh) and *Xiyou ji* 西遊記 (Journey to the West) by private publishers came out at a relatively later period (in the mid-nineteenth century), with no evidence that these works were printed in classical Chinese, or that any government bureau was involved.\(^{151}\) As it happens, a complete translation of *Xiyou ji* into Korean was not available even in the early twentieth century.\(^{152}\) *Jin Ping Mei* 金瓶梅, due to its obscene contents, was secretly read by limited numbers of literati, but never circulated in the Korean book market. In other words, only *Three Kingdoms* among the four Ming masterworks has enjoyed steady popularity in Korea, and has remained in favor with publishers from the late seventeenth century to this day. *Honglou meng* 紅樓夢 (A dream of red mansions) and *Rulin waishi* 儒林外史 (The unofficial history of the

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\(^{150}\) See Andrew H. Plaks, *The Four Masterworks of the Ming Novel* for detailed discussion of these novels.

\(^{151}\) Min, “Chosŏn sidae chungguk kojŏn sosŏl ŭi ch’ulp’an yangsang,” 71. As noted in Chapter 2, King Yŏnsan, having difficulties understanding sentences written in contemporary colloquial Chinese in *Jiandeng xinhua* [New stories to trim the lamp by], gave a royal order to revise it into classical Chinese (*Chosŏn wangjo sillok* 14: 63). In his collected works [*Okso chip* 玉所集], Kwon Sŏp 權燮 (1671-1759) noted that “I loathed the frivolous and petty style [of the colloquial stories] and translated them into classical Chinese” [*我嫌瑣簡以文飜*]. (Cited from Pak Yŏnhŭi, 342.)

\(^{152}\) Min, “Chungguk kojŏn sosŏl ŭi kungnae ch’ulp’ansa yŏn’gu,” 256.
scholars), which were popular in Qing China, also never enjoyed any substantial fame in Korea. From the sixteenth century on, *Three Kingdoms* has dominated in terms of its popularity and influence with Korean readers. While other Chinese masterpieces enjoyed passing fame, stories about *Three Kingdoms* heroes have been disseminated in folktales, myths, and war stories, expanding their status in Korean culture and history. Stories about Guan Yu are a case in point.

3.5 How Guan Yu Became a National Hero of Korea

“How Kim wears on his waist a hundred-pound double iron mallet, can eat a picul of rice, and can catch a running dog… Kim’s wisdom is that of Chuko Liang [Zhuge Liang] and his bravery that of Kuan Yu [Guan Yu 關羽].”

Worship of Guan Yu (162-220), or Guandi 關帝 (Emperor Guan), both in China and Korea, stemmed mostly from his portrayal in *Three Kingdoms* rather than from the deeds of the historical Guan Yu. By Ming and Qing times in China, “tales about the loyal warrior and his tragic death had circulated for centuries in the ‘Three Kingdoms’ theatre-and story-cycles and shaped the god’s persona and iconographical repertory: his beard, his sword, his horse Red Hare, his sworn brothers Liu Bei and Zhang Fei, his adopted son, his generals, and his faithful servants--these were all familiar and often represented.”

However, the tradition of Guan Yu worship in Korea was far from spontaneous, and Korea had no tradition of worshipping him as a god until the Imjin Wars. In the very same year that Ki Taesŏng 奇大升 (1527–1572) criticized the negative influence of *Three Kingdoms* in his petition (1569), Yu Sŏngnyong柳成龍 (1542-
1607), a secretary accompanying the envoy to Beijing to felicitate the Chinese emperor on his birthday, observed temples in China dedicated to Guan Yu and paintings of him in private residences and considered this foreign practice “bizarre.”\textsuperscript{155} Ironically, it was also Yu, then Chief Investigative Military Commissioner (\textit{toch\’ech’alsa 都體察使}), who later helped Chen Lin 陳璘 (1543-1607) a Ming admiral (水軍都督) dispatched to Korea, offer the first official sacrificial ceremonies to Guan Yu in Korean history during the Imjin War.\textsuperscript{156} Yu was also involved in the establishment of several Guan Yu temples in Korea, with the first shrines founded in Seoul and Andong 安東 in 1598 in celebration of the seemingly victorious return of Ming generals to China.

It was the religious beliefs of the Ming generals who fought the Japanese in Korea that contributed directly to the establishment of temples dedicated to Guan Yu. These generals had to face a series of humiliating defeats by an enemy they regarded as barbaric. Given Guan Yu’s status as god of war by the Ming period, Chen Lin and other Ming generals asserted that it was not ineptitude that cost them losses on the battlefield; rather these losses were unavoidable since they had not paid proper respect to the god of war. When they petitioned the Korean court to establish temples for Guan Yu, court officials who strictly favoured Confucius (a civil sage) over Yu was also involved in the establishment of several Guan Yu temples in Korea, with the first shrines founded in Seoul and Andong 安東 in 1598 in celebration of the seemingly victorious return of Ming generals to China.


\textsuperscript{156} Chen Lin often offered sacrificial ceremonies in search of “covert support” (\textit{yin zhu 陰助}) from Guan Yu, the god of \textit{wu 武} (martial valor). He and other Ming generals also had Chinese actors perform \textit{zaju 雜劇} dramas about Guan Yu’s martial prowess (Yi Kyŏngsŏn, 252), which could also have contributed to the rapid dissemination of \textit{Three Kingdoms} during and after the Japanese invasion.
Guan Yu (a martial god), unanimously resisted this proposal at first. However, the king was eventually advised to make a diplomatic decision to raise the morale of the Chinese troops, and agreed to establish Guandi temples in Seoul and Andong. Soon, with the financial support of the Ming emperor, a third Guandi temple was erected in Seoul, and similar temples were soon established in several other cities.

In as much as Guan Yu was a “non-native god imported by a foreign army,” worship at recently dedicated temples met with hostile reactions in the early stages. The shrine established in Andong had to be relocated to the outskirts of town from its original central location, since it was facing a temple dedicated to Confucian sages, a fact that outraged conservative local literati. In addition, Guan Yu temples in several areas crumbled into ruins with few visitors.

It was royal patronage that enabled Guan Yu temples to survive this initial indifference and hostility, until the tradition of Guan Yu worship took hold with Koreans. Guandi was

157 *Wen* 文 is akin to cultural attainment while *wu* 武 represents martial valor. The dyad *wen-wu* has been the most critical measure of one’s capabilities in traditional Asian culture. For more details on this *wen-wu* dyad, see Kam Louie, *Theorizing Chinese Masculinity*, 4, 21, 43, 66, 159, 161, and passim.

158 Yi Kyŏngsŏn, 225; Kim Myŏngja, 76; Son Suk’kyŏng, 217.

159 See Kim Myŏngja, 78-85 for details. The Guan Yu shrine in Andong was built in 1598, and was relocated to the outskirts of the town in 1606.

160 Kim Myŏngja, 90; Yi Kyŏngsŏn, 238-9. Kim notes a reference by Cho Myŏngch’ae 曹命采 concerning the crumbling statue of Guan Yu and his shrine in Sŏngju 星主, which was then repaired by the order of King Yŏngjo (r. 1724-1776). The Guandi shrine in Andong, of which maintenance was performed poorly became of the fierce opposition from the local literati, also had to be refurbished in 1711.
enthusiastically worshipped by many Chosŏn kings such as King Sŏnjo 宣祖 (1567-1608), Sukchong 虞宗 (1674-1720), and Yŏngjo 英祖 (1724-1776), who promoted and rewarded the god and refurbished and enlarged his temples. In Chosŏn Korea, Guandi was “principally identified with the bravery, loyalty, and uprightness enacted in his life” just as he was in Ming and Qing China.161

It would be misleading to reckon that the prosperity that Guandi temples enjoyed was based entirely on the support of the Chosŏn rulers. What’s not to like about a hero who represents martial prowess, loyalty, and dignity—values found wanting in most Korean generals and officials during the Imjin War? The lack of such a homegrown war-time hero made Korean people all the more eager to fantasize about the emergence of such a superhero, and stories about Guan Yu were soon incorporated into Korean war novels. Among the novels in which Guan plays a critical role, Imjin nok 壬辰錄 (Record of the Black Dragon Year)162 is a case in point.

As the title indicates, Imjin nok is a collection of narratives inspired by the Japanese invasion of Korea between 1592 (The year of Imjin; the Black Dragon Year) and 1598, which integrated folklore, myth, and legends widespread among the Koreans. Guan Yu is one of the most popular and critical protagonists in Imjin nok.163 Considering that many distinct oral narratives about the Japanese invasion had already begun circulating during the war, we can say

161 Naquin, 501.

162 This title is also romanized as Imjillok on several occasions.

163 Among some seventy editions of Imjin nok (either in manuscript or printed editions, long and short, in the Korean vernacular and in classical Chinese versions) identified so far, Guan Yu appears as a main protagonist in quite a few versions. For a study of distinct editions of Imjin nok and protagonists in them, see Im Ch’ŏlho, 212 and 219-20.
with confidence that a certain image of Guan Yu was already widespread among the Korean people during the war, and that representations of him owed more to his image in *Three Kingdoms* than to historical records about him. Guan Yu in *Imjin nok* is portrayed as a national hero who delivers his people and country from the barbarian invasion. Particularly noteworthy is that Guan Yu is seen as a *Korean* national hero rather than as a Chinese one. This attribution of national hero status to Guan Yu, a remarkable example of the relocalization of a *Three Kingdoms* hero to Korea, was based on legends concerning his frequent appearances on major battlefields of the Imjin War--legends which soon coalesced as the *Imjin nok*.

In fact, Guan Yu’s makeover as a Korean hero owed to more than just contemporaneous legends; it also resulted in no small part from the actions of King Sŏnjo, the very king who made the first official remark on *Three Kingdoms* at court and also experienced the largest Japanese invasion in Chosŏn history. He not only erected temples at places where Guan Yu allegedly had appeared, but also established Nammyo 南廟 (The Southern Temple) and Tongmyo 東廟 (The Eastern Temple) in Seoul, dedicating them to the deity.164 King Sŏnjo literally made it his personal mission to make sure that every major city in the nation was furnished with a Guan Yu shrine and that his vassals offered sacrificial ceremonies twice a year at them.165

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164 Yi Kyŏngsŏn, 229; Kim Myŏngja, 89; Son Suk’kyŏng, 217. The Ming emperor Shenzong and Ming generals serving in Korea also contributed to the founding of Tongmyo.

165 Some scholars assert that Chosŏn politicians such as King Sŏnjo and Yu Sŏngnyong deliberately acted as ardent believers in Guandi’s “covert support,” since doing so suited their ideological and political standing better. During the war, with the exception of Admiral Yi Sun-sin 李舜臣, the royal Chosŏn forces turned out to be incompetent, and it was largely the civilian forces led by the Confucian loyalists of Chosŏn that defeated the Japanese army. Soon after the war, King Sŏnjo felt that these leaders of the
In *Imjin nok*, folk narratives about Guan Yu defeating the Japanese army which were circulating at the time of the war among the populace are integrated into a coherent plot with sophisticated motifs. The first of these has him appearing in the Chosŏn king’s dream and predicting the imminent invasion of the Japanese. Then, as guardian and benefactor of Korea, he also appears to the Ming emperor in a dream and urges him to dispatch reinforcements to Korea immediately. The relevant part of *Imjin nok* reads as follows:

After sending back the envoy [Yu Sŏngnyong], the Son of Heaven [tianzi 天子; the emperor of Ming China], unable to repress his pity, leaned against a desk and had a dream. A general wearing armor and helmet, with gold cap and court attire over them, entered and bowed four times, saying: “Elder brother, you guard all under heaven, yet you do not know the ties between brothers. How can I not be sad?”

“Who are you to call me your elder brother?” replied the Son of Heaven.

“Lord brother, please listen carefully.” Again the ghost of General Kuan bowed four times. “Liu Hsuante [Liu Xuande 劉玄德] of the Three Kingdoms of old reincarnated as the Son of Heaven of Great Ming, and the youngest brother Chang Fei [Zhang Fei 張飛] became the king of Chosŏn. Your subject could not be reborn, so he used to rely on the younger to avoid wind and rain. Then the younger suffered the Japanese invasion and fled to Ŭiju. Please, send the requested civilian forces could be a potential threat to his throne, and either beheaded or exiled them, rather than reward them. To him and other politicians at court, the idea that the war was won with the help of the god of war, the guardian and benefactor of Korea, suited their state ideology, which sought to inculcate the view of Korea as an exemplary Sinicized state. See Ch’oe Mun-jŏng, 166-7.
reinforcements as soon as possible and save your younger brother from distress.”

He then vanished.166

In this story, the Ming emperor, upon receiving Korean envoy Yu Sŏngnyong’s request to dispatch reinforcements to Korea, rejects it since his ministers all object. Feeling uneasy and remorseful for the envoy’s disappointment, he still does not change his decision, made on the advice of his courtiers. Then Guan Yu appears in his dream to persuade him to change his mind, claiming that his sworn elder brother, Liu Bei, has been reborn as the Ming emperor, and his younger brother, Zhang Fei, as the Chosŏn King; he himself is the guardian ghost of Zhang Fei’s state. At first, this claim strikes the emperor as dubious and he hesitates to reverse his initial decision. Guan Yu then reappears in his dream, this time threatening that their tie as sworn brothers will be broken unless the emperor dispatches an army immediately. As we shall see, the reason given for why Guan Yu is so desperate to help Korea in its hour of need is because, for some reason, only he could not be reborn and was forced to rely on the care of his reborn younger brother. This rationale for a Chinese hero to seek so urgently to help a foreign country seems absurd at best, but can be explained in terms of a sentiment that already saw Guan Yu as the supreme role model for the guardian and benefactor of Korea, owing to his image in Three Kingdoms as a righteous, merciful, and chivalrous figure of great martial prowess. Given the absence of native Korean heroes capable of impressing the Korean people as much as Guan Yu did, the editor/author of Imjin nok provided the abovementioned reincarnation story to explain his frequent appearances on a foreign battlefield. Since it is the ties of sworn-brotherhood that prompt these appearances, helping Korea is not simply a matter of coming to the aid of a foreign state, but rather becomes a domestic matter. Furthermore, since it is the Mandate of Heaven that

166 Peter Lee, 79-80. See 134-35 for the original text.
these brothers have been reborn as emperor of China (elder brother) and king of Korea (younger brother), respectively, such an order can scarcely be ignored. Therefore, Peter Lee observes, “The intervention of Kuan Yu [Guan Yu], the god of war and loyalty, has another meaning. Despite the imperfections of the Korean king and his government, the fortunes of the House of Yi [Chosŏn] are to be maintained. Kuan Yu asserts the eventual return of order.”

Persuading the Ming emperor was just the first of Guan Yu’s deeds as protector and benefactor of Korea. He not only appears when Korean generals are in danger and saves them, but also rushes onto the battlefield and either terrorizes or kills Japanese generals.

Kiyomasa looked in the air and saw a general wearing a red gold helmet and a thousand-pound suit of armor. Brandishing a Blue Dragon sword and wearing a three-point beard, the general glared with the eyes of a phoenix and said:

“I am Marquis of Shouting, Kuan Yunch’ang, of the Three Kingdoms of the past. I am now entrusting myself to the state of Chosŏn to weather out the storm. Barbaric Japanese bandits, how dare you invade Chosŏn? When I beheaded the commanders

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167 Peter Lee, 31-32.

168 Katō Kiyomasa (加藤清正 1562-1611) was a Japanese daimyō 大名 of the Sengoku and early Edo periods (mid-fifteenth- to early seventeenth-century). He was one of the three senior commanders during the Imjin War. Together with Konishi Yukinaga (小西行長 1555-1600), he once captured Seoul, Pusan, and many other crucial cities. The description in Imjin nok that he was killed by Li Rusong with the help of Guan Yu is, of course, fictional and reflected contemporary Korean people’s thirst for revenge. He successfully retreated to Japan and died in 1611.
of five passes, hundreds of thousands of heroes all died at my hands. I am from another world. And if I do battle, you’ll be erased in an instant. If you do not wish to meet sudden death, evacuate your position and retreat at once. If you are arrogant, I will pulverize the Japanese people.”

Kiyomasa looked dazed. For it was indeed the famous general of the Three Kingdoms. Then, speechless and dumbfounded, Kiyomasa saw that Lord Kuan’s horse had vanished; he faced the sky with measureless gratitude and evacuated his position in terror and retreated to Kangwŏn province.

Here, Guan Yu contributes to the victory of the allied Korean and Chinese armies by scaring off Katō Kiyomasa, whom many contemporary Koreans saw as the archenemy. However, merely describing the scaring off of Kiyomasa apparently was not sufficient to pacify Korean readers’ grudge against him. Lord Guan, emerging as the national hero of Korea who guards Korea’s national integrity against the “barbarian bandits,” is called upon a second time to punish the leader of the invaders, and this time he shows Kiyomasa no mercy.

169 Here, the reference to Lord Guan’s killing five of Cao Cao’s pass guards (五關斬將) verifies that the representation of him in Korean literary works such as Imjin nok originated largely from his image in Sanguo zhi tongsu yanyi, already widely disseminated in Korea by the time of the Imjin War. Guan Yu’s beheading of five of Cao Cao’s pass guards does not correspond with the historical records, and was fictionalized in Sanguo zhi tongsu yanyi. Considering that the folk narratives concerning Guan Yu’s appearances on battlefields were widespread during the Imjin War, it is evident that Lord Guan had attained his status of the god of war against the invaders nationwide by the end of the sixteenth century.

170 Peter Lee, 72. Slight modification added; see 128-29 for the original text.
Fifty-six Japanese generals faced seventy Ming generals. As the two parties fought one another, heaven and earth roiled in confusion. How could heaven be so uncaring? Just then a cold wind picked up and blew dust, the earth caved in, and it was as if heaven were exploding. With a sound like thunder from the air, a general appeared wearing a Heaven Gold helmet and Green Cloud armor, riding Red Rabbit, brandishing a Blue Dragon sword, and wearing a three-point beard. With eyes glaring like a phoenix’s, he shouted:

“Ignorant Japanese raiders, hear what I say! Despite your tiny domain you intend to swallow Chosŏn whole? How can you possibly expect to live? I am Marquis Kuan Yunch’ang of the Three Kingdoms period! My sword has no mercy! Receive it!”

Kiyomasa could not bear to behold Lord Kuan twice, such terror did he strike into his heart. At that moment, Li Jusung’s [Li Rusong 李如松] sword flashed, Kiyomasa’s head fell, and Kim Űngsŏ skewered it on his sword’s end and danced a sword dance on horseback. Then he slaughtered the Japanese soldiers like leaves in an autumn wind.172

Here, Guan Yu plays a crucial role in the killing of Kiyomasa, the highest commander of the Japanese army dispatched to Korea. Having accomplished this, his desire to protect Korea shows no sign of abating. He “instructs and protects the Korean king in his escape and return to

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171 Li Rusong 李如松 (1549-1598) is a famous Ming commander of Korean ancestry who was the commander-in-chief of the Ming imperial army dispatched to defend Korea at the request of King Sŏnjo against the Japanese invasion masterminded by Toyotomi Hideyoshi 豊臣秀吉 (1537-1598).

172 Peter Lee, 90; see 142-43 for the original text.
Indeed, Guan Yu masterminds the whole defense against the Japanese invasion; he warns the Korean king and Chinese emperor about the impending war, saves Korean generals while defeating Japanese commanders on the battlefield, and advises Korean and Chinese commanders; in all respects he is the most crucial protagonist of *Imjin nok*. Considering that even a Korean war hero such as Kang Hongnip 姜弘立 (1560-1627), who is also one of the main protagonists in the story, betrays his country in the end by accepting a bribe from the Japanese ruler, Guan Yu remains trustworthy and loyal throughout the story, reflecting contemporary Koreans’ acceptance of him as a true national hero.

3.6 Guan Yu as Antidote against the Japanese

The representation of Guan Yu as the guardian and benefactor of Korea remained intact in the post-Imjin War period, especially insofar as Chosŏn kings deliberately promoted state-institutionalized worship of Guan Yu to emphasize their commitment to Neo-Confucian orthodoxy, as already noted. They expected that the promotion of Guan Yu as a guardian deity would serve to strengthen their legitimacy as rulers of a Sinicized Neo-Confucian state.

Ever since the beginning of the nineteenth century, Guan Yu has assumed a role also in Korean popular religion. Shamans (*mudang*巫堂) worship him as their guardian deity, who grants wishes upon the receipt of proper sacrificial offerings. Shamanistic representations of Guan Yu as the guardian of Korean nationality have repeatedly resurfaced during times of conflict with foreign invaders, especially the Japanese. For example, Yi Kyŏngsŏn notes an incident during the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937 to 1945). A Japanese police chief in Sŏngju

173 Lee, 203.
星州 district dropped dead when he tried to destroy and dispose of Guan Yu’s granite statue, which he identified as the deified general of an enemy state.174 The Guan Yu shrine in Sŏngju was built to commemorate Lord Guan who, according to local folktales transmitted since the Japanese invasion in the sixteenth-century, prevented the Japanese army from invading the town in the middle of the Imjin War. Given the references in the local myths and folktales to Guan Yu’s presence in Sŏngju, it can be seen that he protected the city for more than three hundred years against Japanese intruders.

Similar folk records are abundant. Hwang Hyŏn 黃玹 (1855-1910), a late Chosŏn historian, notes an incident in 1906, when several Japanese deliberately showed disrespect to Guan Yu’s statue in a shrine dedicated to him in Chŏnju 全州 district; all died instantly. He says, “Five Japanese in Chŏnju had entered the Guandi temple and ridiculed the statue [of Guan Yu], and they soon all died spitting blood. From that time, a succession of sudden deaths by ghostly power occurred repeatedly and the Japanese, frustrated, escaped to other districts.” 175 Similarly, a monument erected inside the Guan Yu temple in Andong to the memory of fifty Ming generals who fought in the Imjin War was also destroyed by the Japanese during the colonial period (1910-1945)176. Such acts reflect the rival claims of China and Japan to authority in Korea. These examples of Guan Yu temples damaged by the Japanese show that he was seen as the guardian of Korea not only by Koreans, but also by the Japanese invaders as well, even in the early twentieth century.

174 Yi Kyŏngsŏn, 241.

175 Hwang Hyŏn, Maech’ŏn Yarok 梅泉野錄, 687 (Kyomunsa, 1994).

176 Kim Myŏngja, 94.
Furthermore, the late Chosŏn period saw Guandi’s status elevated to a place even higher than that of god of war. In Andong, a statue of Zhao Zilong 趙子龍, one of the Five Tiger Generals of Shu-Han 五虎大將 whose rank equals that of Guan Yu in *Three Kingdoms*, is placed to the side of Guandi’s statue as a deputy general 副將 along with Zhou Cang 周倉 and Guan Ping 關平, who have traditionally been designated as deputy generals for this revered deity.\(^{177}\) Zhao Zilong, one of the most favored figures from *Three Kingdoms* in Korean folk literature\(^{178}\), is nevertheless outranked by Lord Guan.

It is also intriguing to find that the statue of Guan Yu erected in Tongnae 東萊 holds the *Annals of Spring and Autumn* (*Chunqiu* 春秋) in his hand instead of the customary Blue Dragon Sword 靑龍刀, the legendary weapon that beheaded so many formidable enemies in *Three Kingdoms*.\(^{179}\) Considering that the *Annals of Spring and Autumn* represents the guiding principle of Confucius and orthodox Confucian interpretations of legitimacy, we cannot overlook this representation of Guan Yu holding this book instead of his sword. Traditionally, Guan Yu has been “revered as the *wu* god in temples and shrines throughout the Chinese world,” while “Confucius [was revered alongside him] as the Paragon of Teachers and *wen* god.”\(^{180}\) However, 

\(^{177}\) Ibid.

\(^{178}\) One example showing the popularity of Zhao Zilong among Korean readers is the *Cho Charyong silgi* 趙子龍實記 (Veritable Record of Zhao Zilong) (also called *Sanyang taejŏn* 山陽大戰 The Battle of Shanyang), a story adapted from *Three Kingdoms* popular in the late Chosŏn and during the colonial period. For further discussion of this title, see the section on adaptations of *Three Kingdoms* in Chaper 5.

\(^{179}\) Son Sukkyŏng, 232.

in traditional Chinese/Sinicized philosophical thought, \textquotedblleft wen was considered superior to wu, despite each having its place in the ordered Confucian state.	extsuperscript{181}\textsuperscript{181} Therefore, as long as the Confucians prioritise wen over wu, Guandi, despite being hugely popular and widely worshipped, can never be the predominant figure. However, the statue of Guan Yu holding the \textit{Annals of Spring and Autumn} clearly challenges the traditional \textit{wen}-\textit{wu} icons of Confucius and Guan Yu, respectively; it breaks the dichotomy of \textit{wen}-\textit{wu}, allowing Guan Yu, the \textit{wu} god, to infringe upon the realm of the \textit{wen} god. The metaphor that the \textit{Annals of Spring and Autumn} held in Guan Yu's hand delivers is quite obvious, since an extract from the canon declares: \textquotedblleft The virtue of \textit{wen} is superior, the greatness of \textit{wu} is lower, and this has always been and will always be the case.	extsuperscript{182}\textsuperscript{182}\textsuperscript{182} A god of \textit{wu}, Guan Yu is now portrayed as having attained the \textit{wen} attribute, too, developing to

\textsuperscript{181} Kam Louie, 17.

\textsuperscript{182} Cited in Louie, 18. Louie (31, 175) also mentions that the expression ‘Guan Yuanchang du Chunqiu’ (Guan Yunchang reads the \textit{Spring and Autumn Annals}), indicating that Guan Yu was well-versed in the \textit{Chunqiu}, had become a popular dictum in premodern China. See also Tan Liangxiao and Zhang Dake, eds., \textit{Sanguo renwu pingzhuan}, 177. The biography of Guan Yu in the \textit{Chronicle of the Three Kingdoms} does not make any reference to Guan Yu reading the \textit{Chunqiu}. In \textit{Three Kingdoms}, however, when Zhang Liao 張遼, Cao Cao’s general and Guan Yu’s friend, persuades Guan Yu to surrender to Cao Cao’s side to protect Liu Bei’s wives, he mentions that Guan Yu is well-versed in Confucian classics and the \textit{Shi ji} （\textit{Shi ji} 當記）（chapter 25), which implies Guan Yu’s knowledge of \textit{Chunqiu}. In chapter 26 of the Jiajing edition \textit{Three Kingdoms}, Zhang Liao asks Guan Yu about the anecdote concerning Guan Zhong 管仲 and Bao Shu 鮑叔 in the \textit{Chunqiu}, and Guan Yu elaborates on their account, divulging his erudition in the classic. (The Mao edition \textit{Three Kingdoms} leaves this part out.) The image of Guan Yu as scholar of the \textit{Chunqiu}--omitted in the Mao edition \textit{Three Kingdoms}--could indicate the possibility of widespread readership of earlier editions of \textit{Three Kingdoms} in Chosón.
the state of ultimate deity, “complete both in wen and wu (wen wu jianbei 文武兼備).” Such a representation of Guan Yu has never been apparent in official histories such as the Chronicles of the Three Kingdoms, and if we consider that Chosŏn Korea has always been proud of being an exemplary Confucian state, such an attribution, which could even be regarded as “heretical” against the sage Confucius\(^{183}\), demonstrates that the status of Guan Yu in Korea has steadily risen in conjunction with the rising popularity of Three Kingdoms, hitting its peak in the early twentieth century. In 1920, Kwansŏng kyo 關聖敎 (literally “Religion of His Holiness Guan Yu”), a religious group that worships Guan Yu, was established in Korea and later developed into several sects. Likewise, Guan Yu is still worshipped as the god of war in shamanistic belief.\(^{184}\) Among all the heroes of Three Kingdoms, it is safe to say that Liu Bei is remembered as the one with the utmost virtue and Zhuge Liang as the greatest strategist. However, Guan Yu has remained the one most loved and revered for the past several hundred years in Korea just as in China. While there are quite a few modern Korean readers and critics who assert that in Three Kingdoms Liu Bei is an over-sentimental and indecisive ruler and Kongming was in fact a mediocre strategist in history, Guan Yu’s loyalty, integrity, and martial prowess remain unchallenged even by these rather harsh fans of the work. As a matter of fact, he continues to be the most popular commander played by Three Kingdoms-related computer game players all over the world as well as in Korea; the legacy of Guan Yu shows no signs of abating.

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\(^{183}\) Refer to Chapter 4 for Chosŏn literati’s fanatic and literal devotion to Confucian teachings and their purge of “heretics.”

\(^{184}\) Kim Myŏngja, 76-7.
4 Three Kingdoms in Late Chosŏn Korea

4.1 The Fall of Ming China and the Identity Crisis of Chosŏn Korea

As noted in Chapter 3, it appears that Three Kingdoms had already gained substantial readership among the yangban literati by 1569. Soon afterwards, in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, Chosŏn Korea encountered two of the greatest wars in its five hundred-year history. The Imjin Wars 壬辰倭亂 (Hideyoshi’s invasions of Korea in the 1590s) and Pyŏngja Wars 丙子胡亂 (the Manchu invasions of Korea from 1627 to 1628) brought about critical changes in Chosŏn Korea. A boom in the publication of war literature was one such change.

Why did other war novels such as Pakssi chŏn 朴氏傳 (Tale of Madam Pak) and Yu Ch’ungnyŏl chŏn 劉忠烈傳 (Tale of Liu Zhonglie)—formerly well-received in the time of foreign invasions—become less influential to some extent in the post-war period? As we have seen, from the mid-Chosŏn period, Three Kingdoms became the most widely read novel among all literate classes of people, and its influence became apparent in all literary genres. It seems clear that the longing for the appearance of a war hero in the times of major foreign invasions contributed hugely to the rapid dissemination of Three Kingdoms in Korea and to the emergence of folktales that portrayed its heroes, as with the example of Guan Yu. Here I examine in more depth the cultural and sociopolitical circumstances underlying the reception and dissemination of Three Kingdoms, in particular the sociopolitical and ideological background of mid- to late-Chosŏn Korea. I show how Chosŏn rulers utilized Neo-Confucian values in Three Kingdoms to

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185 Refer to footnote 31 in Chapter 2 for Pakssi chŏn and Yu Ch’ungnyŏl chŏn.
maintain and strengthen Korea’s role as the sole cultural and spiritual successor of the Great Han-Chinese empire (the Ming dynasty) after its collapse in 1644.

Even though the Chosŏn court discouraged and sometimes even banned reading of fictional narratives from China, readership of *Three Kingdoms* was often encouraged by rulers and scholar-officials who identified with the rulers of the state of Shu-Han in the novel. By so doing they sought the same political and historical legitimacy that Zhu Xi and his followers had attributed to the state of Shu-Han, while justifying their antipathy to both foreign invaders and heresy against Confucian ideology in particular. In the latter sections of this chapter, I will demonstrate how the heroes of the novel and the Neo-Confucian values they represent were officially appreciated by the rulers of Chosŏn Korea, and how the state-institutionalized reading of the work manipulated dichotomy of good and evil, legitimate and heretical, culturally Han-Chinese and barbarian among an ever-increasing Korean readership. I also examine other stories from the late Chosŏn period with the theme of Shu-Han legitimacy, analyzing how the issue of legitimacy is interpreted and applied in them to assess the particular sociopolitical situation Koreans faced.

The Chosŏn dynasty was established in 1392 by Neo-Confucian scholars affiliated with Yi Sŏnggye, the founder, and was based strictly on Neo-Confucianism of the Cheng-Zhu School. One of this group, Chŏng Tojŏn 鄭道傳 (1337-1398), was the single most important

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186 Regarding the role and influence of Neo-Confucianism in the establishment of Chosŏn, de Bary mentions, “The case of the Yi [Chosŏn] dynasty would seem to be a singular instance in which Neo-Confucians played a large role in the creation of a new regime and in the formulation of its institutions.” Refer to de Bary (1985), “introduction,” 36-7. See also James Palais (1996), 25-61. Palais (1996, 5) notes, “After 1392 [the year when the Chosŏn dynasty was founded] the Neo-Confucian thought of Sung [Song
founding member of the Chosŏn dynasty, and is cited in Chapter 3 for his detailed knowledge of historical figures in the Three Kingdoms period in China. Chŏng endeavored to design the government system of the new dynasty according to Neo-Confucian principles.187

By adopting Confucianism, Chosŏn rulers also had to acknowledge that the Mandate of Heaven (天命 tianming), which was bestowed on the Chinese emperor, placed China at the center of the Confucian world order. Based firmly on an ideology imported from China, Chosŏn Korea never challenged China’s claim to be the Central Kingdom, nor did it ever harbour dreams of becoming the dominant power in Asia, as at times Japan has done.188 Rather, the Neo-Confucian rulers of Chosŏn Korea saw their country as an exemplary Sinicized state, which was second only to China and superior to all other “barbarian” states.

This dependence on the imperial authority of Ming China helped early Chosŏn Korea to secure a recognized place within the broader context of China’s cultural sphere189; it also helped Korea deal effectively with internal affairs, by means of an authoritarian approach based on Neo-

宋] dynasty China as epitomized in the writings of Chu Hsi [Zhu Xi 朱熹] in the twelfth century became the basis not only of the educational curriculum and the civil service examination system, but also of ritual, family organization, and ethical values for an increasing percentage of Korean society.”


188 de Bary (1985), 1. As an example of Japan’s aspirations to become the dominant power in Asia, Palais (1996, 78) mentions, “In a letter Hideyoshi sent to Korea before the invasion in 1592 he revealed his plan to conquer Ming China, install the Japanese emperor in the Chinese capital, and assign his adopted son to rule Korea, before subjugating other countries like Ryūkyū, Taiwan, and the Philippines.”

189 Haboush and Deuchler 1999, 3.
Confucian codes.\textsuperscript{190} For the first two hundred years of the dynasty, Korea’s tributary status ensured a relatively peaceful and prosperous time with no major warfare or political chaos, and this status “symbolized a definite and secure place for the Yi [Chosŏn] monarchy in the hierarchy of an orderly universe.”\textsuperscript{191} The long peace enabled Korea to maintain a military establishment sufficient for ensuring domestic order but not for expelling foreign invaders.\textsuperscript{192} The aristocratic yangban rulers took great pride in methodical civil administration (\textit{munch’i 文治}), and this civil government was designed, maintained, and regulated along Neo-Confucian lines; more specifically the Ming penal code (\textit{Da Ming lũ 大明律}).\textsuperscript{193}

Given that Koreans were endeavoring to outdo their Chinese counterparts in implementing Confucian standards, a consensus emerged among the Chosŏn literati that their dynasty was superior to the Ming when it came to maintaining Neo-Confucian rituals and

\textsuperscript{190} On this Ming China-Chosŏn Korea relation, Haboush (1999, 67) notes, “While the Ming dynasty reigned in China, the Sino-Korean relation was defined largely in terms of a convergence between the political and the cultural spheres and a harmony between self and the fellow members of the civilized world. Ming China reigned at the center of this civilized world. The Korean relationship with Ming China was presented in terms of a special affinity: both had reclaimed their respective native traditions after a century of Mongol domination, and both subscribed to the Neo-Confucian conception of the world. Koreans regarded the Ming as worthy leaders of the civilized world.”

\textsuperscript{191} Haboush (1988), 21.

\textsuperscript{192} Haboush (1999), 68.

\textsuperscript{193} The National Code of Chosŏn (\textit{Kyŏngguk taejŏn 經國大典}) was based on the \textit{Da Ming lũ}. See Haboush (1999), 52.
upholding the teachings of the Confucian canon. This pride derived, in part, from the belief that the civilization of Korea was inaugurated by Kija (Qizi 箕子), a sage-statesman “variously identified in classical sources as a survivor of the Shang dynasty who either came to northern Korea as a vassal of the Chou [Zhou] or chose exile there rather than serve under a new dynasty.” Chosŏn scholars believed that Kija initiated a high level of Korean culture and civilization and that under his direction and influence Korea had transformed into a state equivalent to Confucius’ home state of Lu (魯國) or Mencius’ home state of Qi (齊國) when it came to exemplifying Confucian cultural values. After the Ming fell in 1644, this belief led in turn to the practice of calling themselves the Eastern Zhou (Dong Zhou 東周), to be discussed later in this chapter.

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194 See Haboush (1988), 22; and Haboush and Deuchler (1999), 3. On the Koreans’ relentless endeavor to outdo their Chinese counterparts, see Miura Kunio (1985). Kunio (1985, 412) notes that Chosŏn Korea allowed only one orthodox doctrine, Neo-Confucianism, and that Korean literati were so intolerant of those who “stood outside of orthodoxy” that such people “might be put to death.” He adds that such extreme views were not seen in China or Japan. Moreover, in Korea as opposed to China or Japan, “Neo-Confucianism dominated not only the bureaucratic system, but even the daily life of the people (concretely in the form of the Family Rituals of Master Zhu [Zhuzi jiali 朱子家禮] and their spiritual life as well).” (413, with Wade-Giles transcription modified into pinyin.)

195 de Bary (1985), 17 and 38. Also see Palais (1996), 145.

196 Young-woo Han, 365-70. Regarding the reception and influence of Kija in Korea, see Young-woo Han, "Kija Worship in the Koryŏ and Early Yi Dynasties: A Cultural Symbol in the Relationship between Korea and China" in The Rise of Neo-Confucianism in Korea, edited by Wm. Theodore de Bary and JaHyun Kim Haboush, 349-74. See also Haboush (1988), 21.
Chosŏn civil governance faced its greatest test when Hideyoshi invaded in 1592 and the Imjin Wars broke out. Hawley notes of this war that “it remains to this day the worst calamity that has ever befallen the nation, to be rivalled only by the Korean War of 1950-53 for devastation and loss of life.” In addition to the huge economic and political damage that Korea had to suffer for the next two hundred years, about twenty percent of its population was either slaughtered or died of starvation and disease caused by the war. After the loss of some 300,000 Korean, Chinese, and Japanese soldiers over a period of seven years, Hideyoshi’s armies retreated to Japan in 1598 without having gained an inch of territory.

It can be argued that Ming China, with the collaboration of Chosŏn Korea, barely managed to maintain the existing order of East Asia based on Neo-Confucian hierarchy against the challenge posed by Hideyoshi. The yangban rulers of Chosŏn believed in general that their country was saved from a much worse fate due largely to Ming intervention. This belief culminated in a strong sense of gratitude among the Korean literati toward Ming China, especially toward the Wanli emperor 萬曆帝 (r. 1573-1619), who made the decision to send

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197 Hawley (2005), *The Imjin War*, 564.

198 Hawley (2005), 564. For the social, political, and economic changes brought in by the war, refer to Palais (1990), 92-121 and passim. See also Hawley (2005), 564-9 and passim.

199 Hawley (2005), xii-xiii.

200 It is well-known that Hideyoshi’s ambition was much bigger than conquering Korea alone. Rather, he had grand plans to conquer the entire East Asia. Hawley (2005, xii) notes, “Hideyoshi, in short, was intent on conquering the whole world as it was then known to him, an ambitious goal for what was in fact the first centrally directed war of overseas aggression in the history of Japan.”

201 Palais (1996), 93.
armies, and also towards the Ming generals dispatched to Korea. Many politicians in power and the yangban literati literally believed themselves to be eternally indebted to the Ming for unwavering support provided at great cost—chaejo ch iŭn 再造之恩 (literally “indebtedness for the second creation of the Korean state”).

4.2 Chosŏn as the Sole Guardian of Authentic Confucian Heritage

It took only a few more decades for this East Asian order based on Neo-Confucian hierarchy to collapse. The defeat of Chosŏn by Nurhaci’s son Abuhai in 1627 and 1636, and the defeat of Ming China by the same Manchu Qing forces in 1644, led to a bewilderment on the part of Korea’s elite. For the Chosŏn literati, it was impossible to explain or accept in a Neo-Confucian context the collapse of the Heavenly Court 天朝 (or Divine State 神州) at the hands of a people they regarded as barbarians. Regarding this foreboding felt by Koreans at the demise of the Ming, Deuchler and Haboush note:

However much the war with Japan challenged the Korean assumptions on which national security policy had been based and created a sense of insecurity, it was the Korean capitulation to the Manchus and the subsequent fall of the Ming to these “barbarians” in 1644 that threatened the very basis of Korean cultural identity. Since Koreans viewed the Manchu conquest of China as nothing less than the loss of the center of civilization to barbarians, the world order as they had known it was

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203 Hawley (2005), 568. Hawley (565-67) also asserts that the enormous cost of the Imjin Wars, which China had to pay, contributed to the fall of the Ming dynasty. This became apparent when China was invaded by Nurhaci in 1611. See also Haboush (1999), 68-69.
completely in chaos. The world changed from a benign place of order and peace in which the hierarchy among countries corresponded to their degree of civilization to a lopsided and disorderly one in which power was divorced from legitimacy, creating suspicion and contempt.204

The demise of Ming China and the “usurpation” of the Confucian center of civilization by “barbarians” fundamentally challenged the world order defined by a Chinese emperor who ruled with Heaven’s Mandate. For more than two centuries Ming China had been the center of Confucian civilization and therefore “its disappearance deprived Korea not only of the agent that had validated its membership in the civilized world but also of the structures by which its civilization was valorized.”205 The Korean literati now faced a dilemma as to how they were to accept, explain, and deal with the destruction of their world view and the resulting sociopolitical challenges caused by such a traumatic upheaval.

In this context, emphasis on Confucian legitimacy and orthodoxy on the part of Song Siyŏl (宋時烈 1607-1689) and his followers was the most notable reaction to the dilemmas seventeenth-century Korea faced. Song is best known for his extremely literal devotion to Zhu Xi and Neo-Confucian ideology. He was such a wholehearted admirer of Zhu Xi’s teaching that “for him even a slight deviation from the track of Zhu Xi was an unpardonable crime.”206 In no other country—neither Japan, Vietnam, or even China—has such a dogmatic and conservative admirer of Zhu Xi appeared.207

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204 Deuchler and Haboush (1999), 5.
205 Haboush (1999), 70.
206 Kunio, 416.
207 de Bary (1985), 49 and Kunio (1985), 416
Based on the firm faith in Neo-Confucian legitimacy and orthodoxy, outlined by Zhu Xi in *Zhuzi daquan* (Complete works of Master Zhu), *Zhuzi yuli* (Classified conversations of Master Zhu), *Zhuzi jiali* (Family ritual of Master Zhu), *Jinsi lu* (Near thoughts), and *Zizhi tongjian gangmu* (Outline and digest of A comprehensive mirror for aid in government; hereafter Outline and Digest), Song Siyŏl refused to acknowledge for many years the dynastic change from Ming to Qing. In this context, he and his fellow Confucian statesmen regarded the Manchu Qing empire as illegitimate. In a petition to King Hyojong (孝宗, r. 1649-1659), Song explained his view:

> Your humble servant believes that [Confucian teachings] from the Spring and Autumn Annals to the Outline and Digest unanimously advocate the Singular Legitimacy (*da yitong* 大一統). If legitimacy is not verified clearly, then the way of governance will be in disorder. If the way of governance is in trouble, then the state will fall. In our country, since the year of Pyŏngja [1636; the year when Manchu Qing invaded Korea], many people’s thoughts became confused, and they began to recognize the wrong [emperor] as the right [ruler] and false legitimacy as orthodoxy. If some ten years pass in this way, even officials will not be interested in discussing legitimacy.\(^\text{209}\)

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\(^{208}\) Kunio, 413-4, 417-21; de Bary (1985), 26; Deuchler (1999), 97.

\(^{209}\) *Hyojong sillok* (孝宗實錄, Veritable Records of King Hyojong’s Reign), 36:108. (臣按，《春秋》以至《綱目》，一主於大一統。蓋大統不明，則人道乖亂，人道乖亂，則國隨以亡。我國自丙丁以後，人心漸晦，以僞為真，以僭為正者多矣。若復十數年後，則正統之說，當不聞於搢紳間。) (Text available at http://sillok.history.go.kr.)
Song’s denunciation of the Qing regime based on his belief in Confucian legitimacy appealed to King Hyojong, who had suffered humiliations during eight years spent as a hostage in Mukden (modern Shenyang 瀋陽). He was the only king in Korean history who had to spend his youth as a captive in an enemy state, and it is no surprise that a strong anti-Qing sentiment was the result of this involuntary stay abroad. It was not difficult for Song Siyŏl to rouse Hyojong’s animosity against the Manchu “barbarians” into “Korea’s postwar determination for revenge and longing for the restoration of the old world order.”210 Appealing strongly to Hyojong’s anti-Qing sentiment and providing Neo-Confucian justification for the king’s resentment, Song soon became the king’s favorite retainer and closest advisor, to the point of enjoying “solitary audiences (tokdae 獨對).” Such a privilege was in violation of Chosŏn custom, which required that all royal audiences be conducted in the presence of historians to record the proceedings.”211

Relying on the king’s confidence, Song was able to convince him of the need to restore Confucian order in the Central Plain (zhongyuan 中原) by military force, and this proposal soon took shape as the puŏl 北伐 (northern expedition) policy.212 Whether Song really believed that

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210 Haboush (1999), 71.

211 Haboush (1999), 64 and Haboush (1989), 20. Song was one of only two officials in Korean history to be favored in this way.

212 The connotation of the term pŏl (fa in Chinese) 北伐 with regard to the issue of legitimacy will be discussed later in this chapter.
victory against “the barbarian destroyer of supreme culture” was possible, this policy of retaliation against the Qing facilitated his virtually exclusive control of state affairs. Hyojong treated him as a supreme advisor to whom he could delegate major political decisions, including the preparations for and launch of the northern expedition. Song Siyŏl increasingly garnered political power to an extent that no other retainer of the Chosŏn dynasty could have dreamed of, and was also joined by numerous followers and disciples he cultivated. He eventually achieved a status equivalent to that of Confucius, Mencius, and Zhu Xi (朱子, Master Zhu). Honored with the title of “Master Song” (Songja 宋子), he acquired the power to label anyone against him a heretic and did not hesitate to use it. Convinced of his grasp of “immutable Confucian truth,” Song was “an awe-inspiring figure on the intellectual as well as on the political scene,” who saw those who differed with him as “rebels who destroy Confucian culture” (samun nanjŏk 斯文亂賊).215

Hyojong’s aspirations to repay the debt incurred to the Ming by toppling the Qing resulted in military preparations that lasted for ten years. Of course, even King Hyojong could not possibly have believed that Korea, acting alone, could successfully take revenge on the Qing. Song Siyŏl reminded Hyojong of the Ming loyalists still active in Southern and Western

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213 Kang Myŏnggwan (2007, 179) thinks that the northern expedition policy was nothing more than empty political rhetoric. Palais (1996, 396) also sees the ongoing debates at Hyojong’s court as an act of catharsis rather than as a feasible military plan.

214 Deuchler (1999), 97.

215 Kunio, 422.

216 Haboush (1999), 72.
As for the utmost favour a vassal [state] can derive from a superior [state], nothing can excel the one our court received from the Ming empire, which was far greater than the favour Koryŏ Korea received from Song China. Your humble servant has heard that a legitimate [Ming] lineage [yimai zhengtong一脈正統] is still intact in a remote place in Southern China. . . . Among our soldiers and commoners, and among the literati and the warriors, how can there not be those filled with loyalty and integrity, who will volunteer to be dispatched [to fight the Manchus to reinstate the Southern Ming king to the throne]? Your humble servant suggests that your majesty make plans for this through secret consultations with your closest retainers.  

However, to Song’s dismay, he finally reached a point where he had no other choice but to compromise his belief in the revival of the Ming empire. Although he had relentlessly denied the legitimacy of the Qing dynasty, referring to those “barbarians” as “no better than dogs and . . . .

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218 而君臣之中，受恩罔極，又未有若本朝之於皇明也，豈比麗之於宋哉。竊聞今日一脈正統，偏寄南方… 一國軍民，文武之中，豈無忠信沈密，而應慕願行者乎？伏乞殿下，默運神機，獨與腹心大臣，密議而圖之。Hyojong sillok, 36:107.
sheep,” the political situation in China developed in the opposite direction, as anti-Qing movements and Ming loyalists were subdued one by one. Wu Sangui, who posed a great threat to the Manchu government in Beijing at the beginning of his rebellion, was eventually defeated by troops of the Kangxi Emperor by 1681. In 1662 Guiwang 桂王, the “legitimate Ming lineage”

219 Songja taejŏn 宋子大全 (Complete Works of Master Song), juan 5, Kich’uk pongsa 已丑封事. (Text available at http://www.itkc.or.kr) Song’s comment is worth comparing to the letter of Zeng Jing (a Ming loyalist during the reign of Emperor Yongzhong 雍正帝) to Yue Zhongqi, whom Zeng believed to be the direct offspring of the famous Song loyalist Yue Fei 岳飛. In the letter Zeng says, “When the rulers of the Ming dynasty lost their virtuous way, the land of China was submerged, the barbarians took advantage of our weakness to enter, and usurped our precious throne. The barbarians are a different species from us, like animals; it is the Chinese who should stay in this land, and the barbarians who should be driven out.” The reasons for this are obvious: “Heaven gives birth to humans and to things. The principle is one, though the manifestations are many. Those living on Chinese soil have the proper elements, their yin and their yang are in harmony, they possess virtue, and they are human. Those outside the borders, in all four directions, are oblique and vicious by nature; they are the barbarians. Below the barbarians come the animals.” Quoted from Jonathan Spence, Treason by the Book (New York: Viking, 2001), 7. It is notable that while Zeng says that barbarians (including the Manchu people in this context) are placed between the civilized Chinese and the animals, Song takes one step further, insisting that Manchu “barbarians” are at the level of “dogs and sheep.” Miura Kunio (1985, 413) asserts that such an extreme standpoint, revealed in Song’s writings, is derived from “a sense of inferiority about their own country [Korea], which they thought of as an outlying country” and as a country of “barbarians to the east of China” (tong ’i 東夷). This envisioning of the self as “Eastern barbarians” soon developed into a self-righteous identification as “Eastern Zhou” (tongju 東周) on the part of Chosŏn intellectuals.
for whom Song Siyŏl had such great hopes, had also died, and in 1683 the last hope for the restoration of the Ming ended when the remaining anti-Qing forces in Taiwan were suppressed.

To Song, this was all unacceptable. He could not let his ideology be proven wrong, nor could he allow his reputation as the most influential Neo-Confucian leader and politician to be ruined. However, given that several decades had already passed and the Qing had grown more and more powerful, it now appeared that both the northern expedition policy and the notion that “barbarians cannot flourish for long” had lost their rationale. Nevertheless, Song found it inconceivable that barbarians he had once compared to dogs and sheep were now the legitimate rulers of the Central Plain.

In this context, Song Siyŏl and his followers did not have much choice. With the possibility of restoring the Ming long gone, an unprecedented political initiative, however far-fetched, was needed. Having succeeded in persuading King Hyojong that the Qing could be conquered militarily, Song was now prepared to argue that the legitimacy of the Ming and the orthodoxy of Confucian culture be claimed by Chosŏn Korea and its rulers. Accordingly, he and his followers switched their political stance from the dream of “driving out the barbarians” to the more feasible idea of “rejecting the barbarians.” Negation of the Manchu Qing’s legitimacy and

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221 This notion of seeing the dominant culture/ideology of one’s self as civilized and seeing others as “barbaric” was not unique to the Confucian cultural sphere. Maruyama Masao and Kato Shuichi assert that the Elements of International Law (date of publication: 1836) written by Henry Wheaton (1785-1848) regards only Christian nations as “civilized” nations, thereby asserting that international law can be applied only to Christian nations, which therefore validates unequal treatment of all other “barbarian” nations. See Im Sŏngmo, trans., Pŏnyŏk kwa ilbon ŭi kŭndae (Translation and Japan’s Modernity), 130-1.
awareness that Koreans had now succeeded to the orthodoxy of Chinese culture (繼承中華) were views shared not only by Song Siyŏl and his supporters but also by their political enemies. These included the scholar-official Yun Hyu 尹鑴 (1617-1680) and Song Chun’gil 宋浚吉(1606-1672), another political magnate of the era. 222

To buttress this new political stance, Song needed to create a conceptual framework that would clarify why and how, according to Neo-Confucian doctrine, the mission of protecting Confucian civilization had been bestowed upon the Koreans rather than upon the “barbarians” who had seized the geopolitical advantage by conquering the Central Plain (zhongyuan 中原). Song began by asserting that Korea, with a history of being within the Chinese cultural sphere that extended back to the refugee sage Qizi (Kija), had survived to become a latter-day “Eastern Zhou” (Dong Zhou 東周). This position was one that “made Korea responsible for upholding Confucian civilization in the face of barbarian rule in China.” 223 Song found his inspiration in the phrase, “respect the Zhou and reject the barbarians” (zunzhou yangyi 尊周攘夷), which he believed to be Zhu Xi’s interpretation of the Chunqiu 春秋 (Spring and Autumn Annals). 224 This conceptual framework, initiated by Song and other Neo-Confucian scholar-officials, was put into more concrete form by his disciples.

To this end Kwŏn Sangha 權尙夏 (1641-1721), one of Song’s leading disciples 225, proposed that King Sukchong 肅宗 (r. 1674-1720) perform a sacrificial ceremony to Emperor

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222 Haboush (1999), 87.
223 Deuchler (1999), 92.
224 Haboush (1999), 78; slight modification added.
225 Deuchler (1999), 96.
Shenzong (the Wanli Emperor), who had sent troops to Korea during the Imjin Wars. The ceremony was intended to express “perpetual gratitude for the second creation of the state.” Nevertheless, it also comprised a rather obvious political declaration that the Korean king now saw himself as the only ruler qualified to assume Confucian legitimacy by commemorating the Ming legacy. In 1705, King Sukchong established the Taebodan (Altar of Great Retribution) and read the following prayer of condolence:

> With the Mandate of Heaven bestowed upon You, You generously pacified barbarians in all four directions [of which the Koreans (dongyi 東夷) were one as the Eastern barbarians)]…Has [the Ming dynasty] ended after only three hundred years? When the ceremonial bells were removed, superior and inferior exchanged places. As for the intervening disasters, we can hardly bear to speak of them. We lament our helplessness and can never forget the grace You bestowed upon us. We have wished that China and its heritage prosper, but have not achieved our aim. Three generations have passed, and our mission has never flagged. . . . With your homeland fallen to a vile enemy, where would [Your soul] take itself to? Having been indebted to You formerly, it is time we returned Your favor. It seems that the dragon flags and phoenix banners are headed to the East, and your vassals Yang [Hao] and Li [Rusong] are there to protect and serve You.\(^{226}\) Your

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\(^{226}\) Yang Hao (楊鎬, ?-1629) and Li Rusong (李如松, 1549-1598) were the Ming commanders dispatched to Korea during the Imjin Wars.
Majesty’s grace has extended to our distant land [in Korea], and we hope that You will manifest your divine power and smile upon our offering.”

King Sukchong’s address makes clear that now that the Central Plain has been conquered by barbarians, Korea remains as the only bastion of Ming traditions, where Confucian culture can be remembered and preserved.

Taebodan having been established in the spirit of “respecting the Zhou and rejecting the barbarians”, the status of Song Siyŏl, his ardent followers, and their ideology rose accordingly. It is worth noting that the project to establish the Taebodan was initiated by Kwŏn Sangha, who was renowned for his extreme veneration of Song Siyŏl and Zhu Xi, to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary (in 1705; yi zhoujia 一周甲) of the fall of the Ming. In other words, sixty years after the demise of the Ming, the ruler and scholar-officials of Chosŏn officially acknowledged that they had finally given up on the plan to restore the Ming and take revenge on the Qing. Instead, envisioning themselves as the only civilized people remaining, Koreans declared that they had survived to become the “Eastern Zhou” in terms of their strict adherence to Confucian culture, even though in reality they had no choice but to accept their tributary status to the Qing.228

227 Sukchong sillok, juan 41: the ninth day of the third month of the thirty-first year of King Sukchong’s reign. (Text available at http://sillok.history.go.kr/) 明承天命, 誕撫四夷… 三百而終？
錘築既移，冠屨遂倒，中間變故，蓋不忍道。 自傷力弱，恩豈敢忘？ 尚希夏靡，而志未成。 爾來三世，
一念靡懈… 故國腥膻，于何陟降? 昔所漸被，今宜肸蠁。 龍旗鳳旌，彷彿東指，誰其衛侍，
有臣楊李。 芒芒海域，猶戴皇仁，庶幾揚靈，載笑不顰。

228 An example of the Koreans’ strict adherence to Confucian tradition, in contrast to “barbarians,” is their sense of responsibility for protecting the orthodox tradition in terms of the rituals and regulations governing scholar-officials’ daily life (Kunio 1985, 414-15). Miura Kunio introduces Cho Hŏn’s (1544-
4.3 Sociopolitical Background of the Dissemination of *Three Kingdoms* in Late Chosŏn

As noted in Chapter 2, in Chosŏn society fictional narratives were criticized heavily for their “empty and obscene” content. Historical fiction was particularly disapproved of, since it mixes imaginary things with historical facts and confuses both ruler and officials. Yi Sik 李植 (1584-1647) loathed historical novels so much that he advocated burning them.²²⁹

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²²⁹ As a fierce pro-Ming and anti-Qing Confucian, Yi Sik was one of the Chosŏn officials taken captive by the Qing forces in the aftermath of the Pyŏngja War, because of his hostility to the Manchus.
Historical novels at first blush resemble a child’s plaything. Their language also is crude, inadequate even for approximating the truth. Having circulated for a long time, their false stories take their place alongside the true ones and the words recorded in them find their way into encyclopedias. Lettered men also use them indiscriminately without investigating. For example, Chen Shou’s *Chronicle of the Three Kingdoms* is comparable to [the works of] Sima [Qian] and Ban [Gu], and yet it has been overshadowed by the popular novel and people no longer read it. Now for every dynasty there is a popular novel, and it has reached the point where the founding institutions [canons] of the Ming disseminate absurdities. It is fitting, then, that the state strictly ban such works and act as the Qin dynasty did in burning them.230

The fierce antagonism against historical novels notwithstanding, *Three Kingdoms’* popularity grew steadily among the literati upon its introduction. This was partly because the

As his example shows, Chosŏn literati espousing Neo-Confucian values tended to be highly critical of fictional narratives.

230 Yi Sik, *Taektang chip* 澤堂集, 15: *Chapjŏ 雜著*.

演史之作。初似兒戲。文字亦卑俗。不足亂眞。流傳既久。眞假並行。其所載之言。頗採入類書。文章之士。亦不察而混用之。如陳壽三國志。馬、班之亞也。而爲演義所掩。人不復觀。今歷代各有演義。至於皇朝開國盛典。亦用誕說敷衍。宜自國家痛禁之。如秦代之焚書可也。

(Text available at http://www.itkc.or.kr.) The erroneous record in the official history compiled by the imperial order of the Ming founder refers to the records in the *Taizu shilu* 太祖實錄 and *Da Ming huidian* 大明會典, in which Yi Sŏngye, the Chosŏn founder, was falsely described as the son of Yi In’im 李仁任, who had been a prominent official in Koryŏ Korea. It took about two hundred years for the Chosŏn diplomats to finally have these corrected.
Korean literati studied Chinese history. The example of Ki Taesung mentioned in the Chapter 3 illustrates how Korean literati’s familiarity with Chinese history facilitated the reception of the *Three Kingdoms*, the storyline of which is based on the official history of that period of division.231

Given that the Koreans had declared themselves the only surviving bastion of Confucian civilization after the fall of the Ming, the Korean government endeavoured to publish and distribute such major works of Confucian political history as Sima Guang’s 司馬光 *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑 by Sima Guang and Zhu Xi’s abridgment of it (the *Outline and Digest*).232 This was one of a series of attempts to claim Korea’s political and historical legitimacy based on Neo-Confucian tenets, since both works focus on “the didactic value which the Chinese [and the Confucian scholar-officials of Chosŏn Korea] attributed to the study of history.”233 In his *Comprehensive Mirror*, Sima Guang attempted to account for “the rise and fall, amalgamation and disunion of all the various dynasties” in one consecutive narrative.234 This endeavor became more pedagogical in Zhu Xi’s *Outline and Digest*, in that he selected “only the most significant

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231 Refer to footnote 86 for a textual analysis showing that major editions of *Three Kingdoms* were based on official histories of China. According to this study, about 63 percent of the *Three Kingdoms* text is based on historical facts recorded in the *Chronicles of Three Kingdoms*. In this context, Zhang Xuecheng’s depiction of it as a historical novel composed of “seven parts fact and three parts fiction” is convincing.


233 de Bary et al., comps., (1960), 493; de Bary, ed., (1991), 94. Needless to say, scholar-officials in Chosŏn Korea shared this view of these works.

234 de Bary et al., comps., (1960), 493.
points of Sima Guang’s lengthy narrative, recording and arranging them in such a way that, like the entries of the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, they would clearly convey the [Neo-Confucian] moral lessons of history.” \(^\text{235}\) For the study of Chinese history, which was essential preparation for the civil service examination, most Chosŏn literati read the *Outline and Digest* rather than the *Comprehensive Mirror* given the latter’s enormous length of 294 *juan*. \(^\text{236}\) They also did this because Zhu Xi’s ideological interpretation of history was recognized as the most authoritative one. Concerning the Three Kingdoms period, as opposed to Sima Guang, who maintained a rather neutral attitude regarding the issue of legitimacy in the *Comprehensive Mirror*, Zhu Xi unilaterally approved the legitimacy of the Shu-Han in his *Outline and Digest* in the spirit of the Confucian moral principle. \(^\text{237}\) He also showed a tendency to idolize Zhuge Liang as an exemplary loyalist and model official.

No other popular literary work suited this Neo-Confucian interpretation of historical legitimacy as effectively as *Three Kingdoms*, since the edition most popular in Korea was furnished with a strong sense of Shu-Han legitimacy. This ideological bias of the Mao Zonggang edition of the novel made scholar-officials of Chosŏn re-evaluate its educational value as a pedagogical tool, their general animosity against fictional narratives notwithstanding.

This political appropriation of *Three Kingdoms* can be seen in the seventeenth-century phenomenon whereby *yangban* literati acknowledged that *xiaoshuo* narratives could serve a didactic


\(^{236}\) Sin Tongjun ed. *Chach’i t’onggam-Samguk chi* 資治通鑑-三國志, 1: 14. According to Sin, the same situation applied to Sima Guang’s contemporary Song scholars, many of whom found it very time-consuming to read through the *Comprehensive Mirror*.

\(^{237}\) Sin Tongjun, 1: 14-5.
purpose for admonishing and educating women and children provided that they were imbued with Neo-Confucian orthodox values. Women and children were permitted, sometimes even encouraged, to read fictional narratives, and chief among these was the *Three Kingdoms* (including Korean translations). This can also be seen as an attempt to spread Neo-Confucian ideology to new readers of fiction.

An example of this practice can be found in the household of a fanatic believer in Neo-Confucian orthodoxy. As noted above, Lady Yi from Hamp’ǒng 咸平李氏, the mother of Kwŏn Sangha (權尙夏 1641-1721), hand-copied *Three Kingdoms* and circulated several volumes of it among her family members and relatives. Kwŏn Sangha was one of the most ardent supporters of the Han Chinese-centered ideology (*zunzhou lun* 尊周論) initiated by Song

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238 For further discussion of the Mao edition of *Three Kingdoms* in Chosŏn Korea, refer to Chapter 3 of this dissertation. For women’s readership of fiction, see the following discussion on Kwŏn Sangha’s household by Pak Yŏnghŭi.

239 The practice of using narratives with fictional nature for political purposes was not uncommon in late Chosŏn. Kim Manjung 金萬重 created *Sassi nam jong ki* 謝氏南征記 (The Tale of Lady Xie Wandering in the South) around 1689 to criticize King Sukchong’s decision to dethrone the queen consort and replace her with his favorite concubine. *Hanjung nok* 閑中錄 (Reminiscences in Retirement), written by Lady Hyegyŏng in 1795, reveals an intention to defend Hong Ponghan 洪鳳漢 (1713~1778), her father, who was involved in the tragic death of her husband, the Crown Prince Sado 思悼世子. For further details of the *Hanjung nok*, see Haboush, *The Memoirs of Lady Hyegyong: The Autobiographical Writings of a Crown Princess of Eighteenth-Century Korea* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).

240 Pak Yŏnghŭi, 321-25 and passim.
Siyŏl, and was the very person who persuaded King Sukchong (r. 1674-1720) to hold a sacrificial ceremony for Emperor Shenzong by establishing the Taebodan in 1705. Strictly speaking, Kwŏn should have rejected historical novels filled with “false and misleading” sayings. However, the strong sense of Shu-Han legitimacy embedded in *Three Kingdoms* accorded with Zhu Xi’s stance in the *Outline and Digest* and Kwŏn therefore saw no harm. Pak Yŏnghŭi finds that the copies of *Three Kingdoms* that Kwŏn Sangha’s mother handed down were treasured by her sons, daughters-in-law, grandsons, great-grandsons, and daughters, until they was buried in the clan shrine in her great-grandson’s generation. She also points out, that given the distinguished social status of the Andong Kwŏns安東權氏, who were closely associated with pro-Ming and anti-Qing Confucians such as Song Siyŏl and Song Chun’gil, prominent literati from this clan would not have allowed *Three Kingdoms* in their households unless they saw it as a pedagogical tool that sugar-coated Neo-Confucian values for women and minors in the inner chambers.

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241 Pak Yŏnghŭi, 325-32 and passim. Pak (357) also asserts that without the endorsement of the senior clan members, it would not have been possible to bury copies of *Three Kingdoms* in the family shrine of the Kwŏn clan, which demonstrates that the novel was approved by the Confucian literati since it properly served their ideological stance.

242 Pak, 321, 352-6. Women, in most cases, had difficulty reading classical Chinese, since education for women was rather restricted. The yangban literture had a double-layered approach to the readership of historical novels. They maintained a critical attitude to the literati’s indulgence in them, while allowing women and children to read them to enhance their cultural attainment. (Pak, 355 and passim.) The complete Korean translation of *Three Kingdoms* dated early- or mid-eighteenth century (as mentioned in Chapter 3) shows that by then even readers with no knowledge of classical Chinese had access to *Three Kingdoms* in its entirety.
The spread of the Neo-Confucian interpretation of historical legitimacy in the *Outline and Digest* seems to have contributed to the rise in readership of the Mao edition of *Three Kingdoms* starting in the late seventeenth century. Indeed, the *Outline and Digest* furnished the ideological basis for the revisions made to *Three Kingdoms* by Mao Lun and Mao Zonggang. Their commentary to the work is as follows:

Readers of the *Chronicle of the Three Kingdoms* should be aware of the distinction between states that rule by legitimate succession, those that rule during an intercalary period, and those that rule illegitimately. Which state was a legitimate regime? The state of Shu-Han [221-263]. Which states were illegitimate? The states of Wu [222-280] and Wei [220-265]. Which state is an example of an intercalary regime? The Western Jin dynasty [265-317]. Why should the state of Wei not be accorded legitimacy? According to territorial criteria, control of the Central Plain might be sufficient to establish legitimacy; but according to the criterion of principle, legitimacy should be accorded to the Liu clan [the ruling house of the Han dynasty, 202 B.C.-220 A.D.]. The criterion of principle ought to take precedence over territorial consideration. Thus Sima Guang [1019-1068] is wrong to have accorded legitimacy to the state of Wei in his *Zizhi tongjian* [Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government], and Zhu Xi [1130-1200] is correct to have accorded it to the state of Shu-Han in his *Zizhi tongjian gangmu* [Outline and Explanation of the Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government].

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Given the Manchu regime’s geopolitical priority obtained by conquering the Central Plain, Song Siyŏl and his fellow Chosŏn scholar-officials faced the dilemma of clarifying why Chosŏn was a more appropriate successor to the Ming. In due course, they relied upon Neo-Confucian theories of orthodoxy, which were also articulated in the Mao commentary to *Three Kingdoms*. If we replace “the Liu clan” with the “ruling house of Chosŏn” in the phrase concerning the issue of legitimacy in the Mao commentary, it fits so impeccably that the revised phrase lucidly elucidates the argument of Song and his followers—that legitimacy should be determined in terms of the succession of Confucian principle rather than territorial or political priority, and that Chosŏn therefore deserves to be accorded legitimacy.

In fact, such reasoning for determining legitimacy based on Neo-Confucian principles, which is one of the main themes of *Three Kingdoms*, was not unusual when it came to seventeenth-century debates over issues of legitimacy in Korean history. Hong Manjong 洪萬宗 (1643-1725), in his *Tongguk yŏktae kangmok* 東國歷代綱目 (Outline and digest of *A chronological history of Korea*), discusses one such issue with recourse to the case of Liu Bei:

> Although Ki Chun 箕準 was defeated and lost his state to Wi Man 衛滿 [r. B.C. 194?- B.C. 206], and had to flee to another place to set up a new capital city there, he nevertheless is accorded legitimacy since he succeeded the sacrificial ceremony to Kija, just as Emperor Zhaolie 昭烈帝 [Liu Bei] of the Han established a state in the land of Shu 蜀 [to succeed the Han dynasty]. According
to the principle of the *Outline and Digest* by Zhu Xi, I conclude that [Ki Chun] is accorded legitimacy [for his dynasty].

Both Liu Bei and Ki Chun can be viewed as losers in history, since they failed to achieve territorial superiority over their opponents and had to settle for a small and peripheral territory that did not long survive. However, in terms of Neo-Confucian principle, legitimacy was conferred on them. Liu Bei and his Shu state were the case in point for the Korean literati’s justification of their political and historical stance, which in turn facilitated their support for broader readership of *Three Kingdoms*.

In this context, Hong’s *Outline and Digest of A Chronological History of Korea*, as its title suggests, demonstrates the contemporary trend of interpreting history following the principles set by Zhu Xi in his *Outline and Digest*. To cite another such case, Kim Suhŭng 金壽興 (1626-1690), a high court official in the late seventeenth century, mentioned that “The Sage Zhu Xi specifically granted [xu 许] legitimacy to Emperor Zhaolie [Liu Bei] of Han and Zhuge Kongming in order to commend [biaozhang 表章] them, since their resolution to revive the house

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244Hong Manjong 洪萬宗, *Tongguk yŏktae kangmok* 東國歷代綱目 (*Outline and Digest of A Chronological History of Korea*), *Pŏmnye* 凡例. 笈準雖為衛滿被逐失國，從都尚繼箕子之祀，則猶漢昭烈之國於蜀，而不失正統，今亦依朱子綱目例，以正統書之.

Wi Man, or Wei Man (in Chinese) is said to be from the state of Yan 燕, and became a vassal of Ki Chun, then king of Korea and a descendant of Kija. Wi Man later overthrew Ki Chun and took over the state. The sage-statesman Kija was revered as the founder of Korea. (See p. 111 above.)
of Han was as luminous as the sun and stars." Here, Kim elevates the status of Zhu Xi and his principles above even that of Liu Bei and Zhuge Liang, which is indicative of Chosŏn literati’s fanatic inclination to principle in Zhu Xi’s writings. Liu Bei, Zhuge Liang, Guan Yu and the kingdom of Shu-Han that they established were embodiments of these principles.

In seventeenth-century Korea, not only Korean history but also Chinese histories of the Song and Ming dynasties were published in the spirit of paying respect to Zhu Xi’s principle of legitimacy. *Chach’i t’onggam kangmok sinp’yŏn* (Newly compiled *Outline and digest of A comprehensive mirror for aid in government*), published by Sŏ Myŏng’ŭng 徐命膺 (1716-1787) in 1773, was a case in point. This boom in the publication of Song and Ming history by Chosŏn literati is indicative of their endeavors to claim exclusive credentials for compiling the history of Han-Chinese dynasties now that Korea had become the custodian of the principle articulated in the *Outline and Digest*. Once called the “Eastern barbarians” by the Chinese, Koreans now asserted that they had been an “overseas Chinese people” (海外之一中華) 漢昭烈，諸葛孔明，興復漢室之志，炳如日星，朱夫子特許正統以表章之。


246 The Song and Ming histories published in late Chosŏn include *Myŏngsa kangmok* 明史綱目 (Outline and digest of *Ming history*) by Yi Hyŏnsŏk 李玄錫 (1647-1703), *Myŏngsŏ chŏnggang* 明書正綱 (Orthodox digest of *Ming history*) by Nam Yuyong 南有容 (1698-1773), *Nam Myŏng ki* 南明紀 (Chronological record of the southern Ming) by Hwang Kyŏngwŏn 黃景源 (1709-1787), *Hwang Myŏng yumun* 皇明遺聞 (Unofficial history of the Southern Ming), and *Song sa chŏn* 宋史筌 (Complete Song history) by Hong Kyehŭi 洪啓禧 (1703-1771). For a detailed discussion of these histories of the Han-Chinese dynasties published in late Chosŏn to commemorate their legitimacy, see Hŏ T’aeyong (2007), 255-64 and passim.
ever since Kija moved to Korea.247 This perception of self-identity, initiated largely by Song Siyŏl and his followers in the seventeenth century, grew stronger with each passing year, to the extent that Chosŏn literati eventually challenged the traditional “Chinese-barbarian distinction” (huayi guan 華夷觀)248 by redefining it. Hwang Kyŏngwŏn黃景源 (1709-1787) declared:

What is this so-called “being Chinese?” It is nothing but observance of ritual [liyi 禮儀]. If rituals are practiced visibly, even barbarians can become Chinese. If rituals are ignored, even the Chinese will become barbarians.249

247 Hŏ (2007), 85.

248 A perspective that dichotomizes Han Chinese (華) as culturally superior and civilized and other ethnic groups (夷, namely barbarians) as less civilized and culturally inferior.

249 Hwang Kyŏngwŏn 黃景源, Kanghan chip 江漢集, juan 5. 夫所謂中國者何也, 禮儀而已矣. 禮儀明則戎狄可以爲中國, 禮儀不明則中國可以爲戎狄. The Yongzheng Emperor 雍正帝 of the Qing dynasty, as a non-Han Chinese emperor governing the Central Plain, also adopted this revised huayi guan in an almost identical context. In an edict issued on November 1729, he focused on the “irrelevance of racial identity to providing morality in government.” (Spence, Treason by the Book, 159-60.) In the edict he elaborates on the absurdity of the distinction between Han Chinese [hua 華] and allegedly “barbarian” [yi 夷] Manchu. Spence (Treason by the Book, p. 129) summarizes Yongzheng’s argument as follows:

To attain and maintain power, he [Yongzheng] argues, rulers from the past to the present have all had to combine concern for their subjects’ welfare with the ability to earn their subjects’ trust and affection. That is the meaning of the phrase that “only the virtuous are able to rule all under the Heaven” [皇天無親, 惟德是輔]. One’s geographical origins were inconsequential here. . . . Why, then, he asks, when the Manchus have successfully brought peace and unity to the country and its border regions, do the Chinese keep using the invidious comparisons of “inner” [nei 内] and “outer,” [wai 外] or of Chinese
The emergence of this new huayi guan can also be seen in the epitaph erected in the Guan Yu temple in Kogũmdo 古今島 in 1719 (the thirty sixth year of King Sukchong’s reign), fourteen years after Sukchong performed a sacrificial ceremony to the Wanli emperor (Shenzhong 神宗). With the state-institutionalized tradition of Guandi worship already quite widespread, as noted in Chapter 3, the government enshrined in the Guandi temple ancestral tablets of Chen Lin 陳麟 and Yi Sunsin 李舜臣, admirals (水軍都督) of the Chinese and Korean armies, respectively, during the Imjin Wars. The epitaph written by Yi Imyŏng 李頤命 (1658-1722) for Guan Yu, reads as follows:

from the heartland [中原, “Central Plain”] as opposed to those they call the “Yi” 夷 and “Di” 狄 barbarian peoples from the outer lands? Just because the latter wear different clothing, or have different ways in warfare, that means nothing about their skills at government. Some of the greatest rulers of the past, now saluted as “Chinese,” were in fact Yi or Di, just as some of the most disastrous ones were Chinese. They destroyed their kingdoms not because of where they came from, but because they ignored the principles of decent governance. Confucius himself wrote about the days of disunion and fragmentation in which he lived that “the Yi and Di tribes have their rulers, unlike our own land where there are none” [夷狄之有君, 不如諸夏之亡也]. Boundaries and even language had changed over time: what were now the provinces of Hunan, Hubei, and Shanxi were all once seen as “Yi” territories; insults against a particular ethnic group--“island barbarians” [島夷]; “chained slaves”[索虜]--sprang from specific historical moments, and then acquired permanence. (Cited from Spence, Treason by the Book, 129; I added the Chinese characters.)

Kim Unhoe, whose argument I will discuss below, also points out that ethnic groups residing near the Chinese border have long been given insulting names by the Chinese, with degrading connotations such as “barbarians,” “slaves,” and “wolves.” (Kim, 2: 197-8.)
The temple of Lord Guan in Kogūmado was established by Chen Lin, the admiral of the navy, following the imperial order [of Emperor Wanli]… Your soul flows as free as water, with no place You cannot reach. Therefore, there is no reason we cannot commemorate You here in the East. Confucius delighted in reading *Chunqiu* and wished to reside in the place of Jiu Yi 九夷, since he lamented the fading of the Kingly Way [in the Central Plain]. Given that Lord Guan also delighted in reading the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, how could Your heroic soul be at ease in the former Chinese territory that is currently in the hands of the barbarians? [We believe that] You will appreciate our custom of cherishing and respecting the Han-Chinese culture here in the Eastern soil.251

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250 The reference that Confucius wished to reside in the place of Jiu Yi 九夷 is based on the reference in *Lunyu, Zihan pian* 子罕篇, which reads, “Confucius wished to reside in the place of Jiu Yi.” (子欲居九夷). An annotation in *Siku quanshu* 四庫全書 (Complete books of the four imperial repositories), *jingbu 經部, Zhouli quanjing shiyuan* 周禮全經釋原, juan 8, says, “Tong’i [The land of Eastern barbarians], or the state of Kija (Qizi) is the place Confucius wished to reside in.” (東夷箕子之國, 孔子所欲居.)


古今島關王廟者。皇明水軍都督陳公璘所建也…公靈如水。無不至矣。何獨不可祀於東土也…昔夫子修春秋而欲居九夷。蓋悲王迹之熄也。關公嘗好讀春秋。其雄魂。可安於今日中土之腥膻乎。將樂我東思漢之風乎。
Zhu Xi’s logic in the *Outline and Digest* helped Korean literati assert that legitimacy is defined by cultural continuity with Confucian sages as well as by adherence to principles set by them, rather than by territorial superiority. In this context, they could claim without restraint that heroes of *Three Kingdoms* such as Guan Yu could be served and remembered more properly in Korea than in their place of origin. Scholar-officials of Chosŏn made a point of noting that Guan Yu had enjoyed reading the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, and associated this fact with “Spring and Autumn” inferences (*Chunqiu lun* 春秋論), which were a core evaluative principle in Neo-Confucian orthodoxy.\(^{252}\) State-sponsored promotion of Lord Guan and other characters of the novel helped transform them into national heroes in Korean folk narratives, as noted already in Chapter 3. By enshrining Chen Lin and Yi Sunsin, Ming loyalist and Chosŏn Korean loyalist, respectively, in the temple of a “popular symbol of Han nationalism” against the foreign conquerors,\(^{253}\) the Chosŏn government endeavoured to extend the Shu-Han nationalistic sentiment in *Three Kingdoms* to the public, demonstrating a shift in the lineage of loyalty from Lord Guan to Chen Lin and Yi Sunsin, from *Three Kingdoms* the novel to the realities of late Chosŏn society, and from China to Korea.

The issue of legitimacy in *Three Kingdoms* in accordance with the principles in the *Outline and Digest* functioned repeatedly as a key component in discussions of critical state

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\(^{252}\) *Chunqiu lun* or *Chunqiu bifa* 春秋筆法 (evaluative rhetoric in the *Spring and Autumn Annals*) refers to the guiding principle of Confucius when writing this classic. It emphasizes the cardinal principle of public righteousness (*dayi mingfen* 大義名分) based on objective historical facts. Here, it refers primarily to a Neo-Confucian interpretation of history that emphasizes legitimacy based on the Chinese emperor’s Mandate of Heaven, thereby defining all other marginal tribes as unorthodox.

\(^{253}\) Moss Roberts, *Three Kingdoms* (abridged version), 432.
affairs in Chosŏn Korea. Some Chosŏn literati such as Kim Yakhaeng 金若行 (1718-1788) argued openly at court that, just as Liu Bei had crowned himself king of Hanzhong 漢中王, thereby succeeding the legitimate royal lineage as Han’s true heir (in chapter 80 of *Three Kingdoms*), so too the Chosŏn king should declare himself the legitimate successor to the Chongzhen emperor 崇禎帝, the last Ming emperor.\(^{254}\) The fact that the Central Plain was occupied by the Manchu Qing was of little importance, since Liu Bei had also established himself on the throne, even though he had controlled but one of China’s eleven provinces (roughly, modern Sichuan province). This was far from the geopolitical center of China at the time, while many of the remaining provinces were occupied by Cao Cao, who had traditionally been regarded as a symbol of foreign conquerors since the Southern Song dynasty.\(^{255}\) By the same token, Chosŏn literati thought that the legitimate line of succession of the Ming had been broken since the death of the Chongzhen emperor, and they even felt a sacred duty to continue it. As Song Siyŏl pointed out in his petition to King Hyojong, “[Confucian teachings] from the Spring and Autumn Annals to the *Outline and Digest of A Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government* unanimously advocate the Singular Legitimacy (*da yitong* 大一統).” That is, there cannot exist two distinct legitimate regimes concurrently within the world as it was then known. Therefore, Sŏng Taejung 成大中 (1732-1809) argued that although the Ming had fallen, the

\(^{254}\) *Yŏngjo sillok* 英祖實錄 (Veritable Records of King Yŏngjo’s Reign), juan 110, the sixth month of the forty-fourth year of Yŏngjo’s reign.

\(^{255}\) Moss Roberts, *Three Kingdoms* (abridged version), 432.
presence of Chosŏn negated its collapse [明雖亡，賴我而猶不亡也], and Chosŏn thus came to possess the legitimacy of the Chinese [中華之統] according to Heaven.256

This self-identification as the only legitimate inheritor of Chinese civilization provided rulers of Korea with the necessary rationale for King Hyojong’s and Song Siyŏl’s plan to launch a military attack against the Qing. When we examine the terminology they used to justify this attack, it becomes apparent that the Chosŏn rulers identified themselves with embodiments of Han loyalism in Three Kingdoms such as Zhuge Liang, who launched several military attacks against Cao Cao, who came to represent foreign conquerors such as the Qing to both Chinese and Koreans.

Regarding Zhuge Liang’s military action against Cao Cao’s state of Wei, the Mao commentary has this to say:

Thus he [Zhu Xi] accords legitimacy to the state of Shu-Han because its founder was a descendant of the imperial house of Han and denies it to the state of Wei because its founder had usurped the throne. For the same reason the text states prior to this that Liu Bei [161-223] raised an army in Xuzhou in order to “chastise” Cao Cao [155-220] and later states that the Han chancellor, Zhuge Liang [181-234], launched a “punitive expedition” [fa 伐] against Wei. By this choice of terminology he makes the cause of right manifest for all time.257

By such “choice of terminology,” Kongming’s repeated attacks on Cao Cao’s state of Wei are thus defined as part of a “punitive expedition” for just cause, even though they all ended

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256 Sŏng Taejung, Chng Taej jip, juan 7, Myŏng ‘un ’gi 明隱記. (Text available at http://db.itkc.or.kr.)

257 Translation quoted from Rolston ed., How to Read the Chinese Novel, 153.
in failure.258 By the same token, King Hyojong and Song Siyŏl’s plan for attacking the Qing, no matter how unrealistic, was named a “punitive northern expedition” (北伐), for the purpose of “chastising” the usurpers of the Ming throne, following the example set by Zhuge Liang in *Three Kingdoms*. Here is a case in point, showing that the “Spring and Autumn” inferences 春秋論 prevalent in the Mao edition *Three Kingdoms* played a critical role in setting the political agenda in seventeenth-century Chosŏn Korea.259

Let us examine yet another example that demonstrates the Chosŏn court’s efforts to identify itself with the Shu-Han state in the novel and associate the Qing regime with the state of Wei. After Korea was defeated by the Manchus in 1627 and 1637, the Chosŏn court had to accept its tributary status to the Qing since the Manchu regime demanded the same ritual recognition of superior status from its neighbors as the Ming had.260 Thus, the court had to use Qing reign titles (nianhao 年號) for all official records. This was a tremendous humiliation to Chosŏn rulers who

258 Some critics of *Three Kingdoms* assert that the repeated “expeditions” against the Central Plain by the Shu armies led by Kongming and Jiang Wei 姜維 (292-264) were merely a series of reckless attempts at best, considering the significant difference in military and economic power between the states of Wei and the Shu. Based on the numbers of registered households and populations of each state, Miyazaki Ichisada, a renowned Japanese scholar of Chinese history, evaluates the national power of the Wei, Wu, and Shu as 6:2:1, respectively. (Quoted from Kim Unhoe, 1: 57.) See also Kim Unhoe, 1: 53-67 and passim.

259 Chang Chŏng’i’l strongly rejects the “Spring and Autumn” inferences 春秋論 in his translation of *Three Kingdoms*, since he feels that racial minorities such as Koreans are marginalized by the Han-Chinese-centered political viewpoint. This will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 5.

260 Haboush (1999), 69.
denied the legitimacy of the Manchus, given that “the emperor functions as a personified calendar” and “the reign title projects his heavenly authority.”

Accepting the Qing reign titles was tantamount to recognizing their legitimacy. Although Chosŏn had no other option but to agree to their use, most literati (sometimes even the king himself) found ways to avoid using them. Qing reign titles were used for official records, yet the literati continued to use the reign title of the Chongzhen emperor in their personal documents (私家文件). In doing this they were following the precedent set by Zhu Xi, who rejected Sima Guang’s acceptance of Wei as a successor of the Han dynasty in his Outline and Digest.

Moss Roberts points out, “Zhu Xi changed the calendrical entries in his Gangmu [Outline and Digest] to accord with those of Shu-Han and devised headings whose wording implied a pro-Liu Xuande [Liu Bei], anti-Cao Cao judgement.” More specifically, Zhu Xi changed the first year of the Wei dynasty Cao Pi’s reign (A.D. 220) back to the twenty-fifth year of Jian’an 建安, reign title of Emperor Xian 献帝, whom Cao Pi 曹丕 had deposed. He also renamed the second year of the Wei dynasty (A.D. 221) as the first year of the Shu-Han dynasty proclaimed by Liu Bei in that year.

By renaming reign titles as he pleased, Zhu Xi denied the legitimacy of the Wei and recognized that of Shu-Han instead. By the same token, Chosŏn literati, ardent followers of Zhu Xi, also denied the legitimacy of the Manchu Qing and proclaimed themselves successors of the Ming by adhering to the reign title of the Ming’s last emperor. They continued to use Chongzhen’s reign title in their works and sometimes even in official documents (sometimes mixed with the Qing

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261 Moss Roberts, Three Kingdoms, 426.
262 Roberts, Three Kingdoms, 432.
263 Roberts, Three Kingdoms, 432-3.
264 Ibid.
reign titles) until the very end of Chosŏn dynasty.\(^{265}\)

For example, Pak Chiwon 朴趾源 (1737~1805) starts his famous travelogue to Beijing, the \(Yŏrha ilgi\) 熱河日記, by explaining the practice of continuing to use the reign title of Chongzhen and the reasoning behind this custom.

Preface to the Notes on River Crossing \([Togang nok só\) 渡江錄 序]\)

**Why do I use [the symbolic reign title of] \(hu\) sam kyŏngja?** It is to record dates along with daily weather conditions in the itinerary. **Why do I use “Post-” \([hu]\)?** It

\(^{265}\) None other than Song Siyŏl himself insisted on continuing to use the reign title of Chongzhen after the collapse of the Ming, and under his influence several government departments adhered to the Chongzhen reign title in the early Qing period. (Refer to an article on Song at http://news.naver.com/main/read.nhn?mode=LSD&mid=sec&sid1=102&oid=089&aid=0000094037) There are also records in the Chosŏn wangjo sillok (Veritable Records of the Chosŏn Dynasty) showing that the literati were using the reign title of the Chongzhen emperor even in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In 1746, the eleventh year of the Qianlong emperor’s 乾隆 reign, Chosŏn scholar Yi Chinŭi 李鎭儀 submitted a petition to King Yŏngjo, insisting on using the reign title of Chongzhen in a memorial address to the royal mausoleum of Chosŏn (Yŏngjo sillok, 43:214, twenty sixth day of the fifth month, twenty second year of Yŏngjo’s reign). Also in 1803, 727 students of the National Academy (Sŏnggyun’gwan 成均館) petitioned the king, requesting that Kang Sejong 姜世靖, a magistrate of Hoedŏk 懷德 who had rejected the reign title of Chongzhen at a ceremony to the Confucian sages, be exiled. Kang was indeed promptly exiled to a remote place (Kijang hy 機張縣; a place in modern Kyŏngnam 慶南 Province). The students noted that the tradition of using the reign title of Chongzhen had been a nationwide custom for many years. See Sunjo sillok, 47: 468, the eleventh day of the twelfth month, the third year of Sunjo’s reign. (Texts available at http://minchu.or.kr/)
is to indicate that the current date is past Chongzhen’s reign. Why “Third occurrence of the year *kyŏngja*” [*sam kyŏngja*]? It is to specify that it is the third *kyŏngja* year since the enthronement of the Chongzhen emperor.\footnote{The traditional Chinese calendrical system has a sexagenary cycle, whereby the designation of a year repeats every sixty years. Since the *kyŏngja* year has repeated three times when Pak was composing this travelogue, at least one hundred twenty years had passed since the death of the Chongzhen emperor.}

I refrain from using the term Chongzhen, considering that I am about to cross the river [to the Qing border]. I am avoiding the expression since we are going to encounter the Qing people once we cross the river. All under Heaven follow the Qing calendar and no one dares to adhere to the reign title of Chongzhen. Then why do we privately use the Chongzhen reign title? It is because we Koreans are the supreme state that received the initial investiture by the Imperial Ming. It has been over one hundred thirty years since Emperor Yizong 毅宗 [Chongzhen] passed away and the Ming fell.

Then why do we still adhere to the reign title of Chongzhen? Ever since the Manchus conquered and occupied China, the tradition and rituals of the previous sovereign degraded into those of barbarians. Yet our Eastern soil of several thousand *li*, separated by the river [from the Qing], uniquely preserves the custom and rituals of the former rulers, which clarifies that the Ming dynasty is still existent east of the Yalu river. Not powerful enough to sweep away the barbarians from the Central Plain and to reinstate the ruling house of the preceding dynasty, we nevertheless
commemorate the Chongzhen emperor by using his reign title, preserving the Chinese [culture] within us.

Yŏlsang oesa 利上外史 [Pak Chiwŏn’s sobriquet] writes in the one hundred fifty-sixth year of Emperor Chongzhen’s reign. Hu sam kyŏngja is also the fourth year of his majesty our king [Chŏngjo 正祖]’s reign, and the forty-fifth year of the Qing Qianlong emperor’s reign.267

As Pak clarifies in his notes, the Chosŏn literati’s adherence to the reign title of Chongzhen was closely associated with their self-identification as the legitimate successor of the Han-Chinese Ming dynasty. Given their feelings of humiliation, and the political and diplomatic pressure they suffered since the seventeenth century, their endeavour to be recognized as the bearers of Neo-Confucian legitimacy is reflected in the symbolic legerdemain of comparing the Chosŏn dynasty to the Shu-Han state and the Manchu Qing to the Wei.

In doing so, they were following Chinese precedents. Sympathy for Shu-Han rather than Wei has always been prevalent when Han Chinese had to flee invasions by northern

267 Pak Chiwŏn, Yorha ilgi, 1: 35-36.
“barbarians.” In the Southern Song dynasty, which was established after the Jurchen armies drove the Han rulers south, sympathy for Shu-Han was in a populace that found itself in a defensive position similar to that of Shu-Han nine hundred years earlier. Song Siyŏl’s “punitive northern expedition” evoked a similar political context, in language chosen to convey such ideological affinities.

During the Yuan-Ming and Ming-Qing dynastic transitions, editors of the Three Kingdoms narrative fortified a pro-Liu Bei/Shu-Han and anti-Cao Cao/Wei bias. Liu was associated with “a long frustrated ambition of Han nationalism,” Cao with barbarous invaders.

268 Roberts, Three Kingdoms (abridged edition), 439.

269 The publication in 1993 of a manga series titled Nambŏl, which means “a punitive southern expedition,” can be appreciated in the same context. With domestic anger on the rise over Japan's recurring claims to Tokdo Island, most Koreans felt a strong antagonism against Japan, aggravated by memories of colonial rule and the invasion in the sixteenth century. Nambŏl came out under these circumstances, and even with its fantastic storyline, of a Korean hero who singlehandedly defeats a Japanese army poised to invade, it became hugely popular, promoting sequels. Koreans have long regarded the Japanese as “barbarians” with inferior culture (wae, often deliberately written as waeg, “midgets”). In one of these sequels, notwithstanding huge ideological differences, the South and North Korean regimes collaborate to fight the Japanese invader. Nambŏl also resembles pukpŏl (the punitive northern expedition) in that both policies are utterly implausible militarily and can only be understood as acts of catharsis, as Palais (1999, 396) pointed out in the case of pukpŏl. These ideas of launching an expedition nevertheless reveal how the claim to legitimacy operates effectively for political and/or nationalistic purposes, and such attempts are still being conducted in modern Korean society today.

from the north. It can be safely said that readers of *Three Kingdoms* (the novel) have been
influenced by the ideological and nationalistic values the work conveys. Such a
pedagogical/didactic reading was strongly championed by editors of the novel like Mao
Zonggang, especially in a time of foreign invasions, and this tendency was also found in

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271 For example, the 1494 preface to *Three Kingdoms* by Jiang Daqi places the novel in the tradition
of the *Spring and Autumn Annals* and Zhu Xi’s *Outline and Digest* in that they all convey Confucian
moral judgment while depicting the rise and fall of kingdoms. Jiang asserts that the novel is not only “a
worthy successor to these works, it has the added virtue of reaching the broadest possible public (*tongsu* 通俗) with its message.” (Roberts, 456.) Both the 1522 preface to the novel by Xiuran Zi and Mao
Zonggang’s preface are concerned with moral and historical issues such as the legitimacy of the Shu-Han
kingdom. See ibid. and Rolston, *How to Read the Chinese Novel*, 146-95, for detailed discussion of the
Mao preface. Andrew Lo also examines how, in the *Three Kingdoms* novel, the historical records in the
*Comprehensive Mirror* were edited, added, deleted, and manipulated in the tradition of *Chunqiu bifa* 春秋筆法 (evaluative rhetoric in the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, articulated in the *Outline and Digest*). See 13-92. In Chapter 3 of her dissertation, Alison Bailey examines how the Maos’ (Mao Lun and Mao
Zonggang) historical stance influences their reading and editing of the novel. See Alison Bailey, “The
Mediating Eye: Mao Lun, Mao Zonggang and the Reading of Sanguo zhi yanyi,” 121-70. She also points
out that the ambivalent aspects in Maos’ commentaries---they were not entirely supportive of Liu Bei and
his claim to legitimacy, while not completely against Cao Cao and his political deeds---might have helped
win the popularity of their edition among the Qing rulers (p.148). Nevertheless, it can be safely said that
the general popularity of *Three Kingdoms* among the Qing rulers or the Chosôn readers is due largely to
its intrinsic greatness as a narrative (ibid.), and that its strong entertainment value facilitated its successful
and gradual permeation into readers of all classes, both in China and Korea.

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Chosŏn Korea. An Chŏngbok’s 安鼎福 (1712-1791) notes in his collected works show that Chosŏn scholars shared a profound consensus where the ideological background of *Three Kingdoms* was concerned:

I have read Chinese novels. There are the Four Masterworks, the first of which is *Three Kingdoms*, the second *Water Margin*, the third *Journey to the West*, and the fourth *Plum in the Golden Vase*. Taking *Three Kingdoms* as an example, the commentaries to it are marvellous, the editorial principles remarkable, the preface outstanding, and the literary style extraordinary. I speculate that those who wrote them are Jin Shengtan and Mao Zonggang, and that it was published in the Jiashen year of the Shunzhi emperor's reign [1644]. I do not know what kind of men Jin Shengtan and Mao Zonggang were, but [what I do know] is that the Jiashen year of the Shunzhi reign was the time when the world changed and Chinese civilization collapsed. Chinese dress norms were defiled with the likes of the shaved forehead and left-buttoned lapel. Among those talented literati who could not meet their time, some must have conveyed their satirical sentiment by means of this novel.272

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272 An Chŏngbok 安鼎福, *Sun’am chapji* 顺庵雜誌, 42 ce 册. 余觀唐板小說，有四大奇書. 一三國志，二水滸志，三西遊記，四金甁(屏)梅也. 試三國一匣，其評論新奇，多可觀，其凡例亦可觀. 其序文亦以一奇字命意. 而其文法亦甚奇，考其人則金...考其時則順治甲申年[1644]也，未知金...，而順治甲申，此天地變易，華夏淪...，中原衣冠，混入于剃髪左袵之類，文人才子之怨抑而不遇者，其或托此而寓其志也！Most Chosŏn literati,
An’s remark reveals a Choson literatus’s precise understanding of the sociopolitical background concerning the popularity of the Mao-edition *Three Kingdom* in the early Qing, as well as the nationalistic implications in it. Such appreciation was associated with the sympathy Confucian literati of Chosŏn felt for Han Chinese Ming loyalists, and it was based upon an adherence to the Confucian concept of legitimacy (*zhengtonglun* 正統論) prevalent in eighteenth century Korea.273

However, we can notice a remarkable contrast between post-Ming Chosŏn and China during the Yuan-Ming and Ming-Qing transition periods. In China, private publishers, editors, and commentators contributed greatly to the nationalistic sentiment associated with *Three Kingdoms*.274 In Korea, however, the ideological aspect of the novel was grasped primarily by scholar-officials who had a firm sense of Confucian legitimacy and morality and thus appreciated the pro-Ming anti-Qing implications of the novel's pro-Liu anti-Cao bias.

This tendency can be illustrated with examples of *Three Kingdoms*’ dissemination into the households of scholar-officials who are best known for their pro-Ming anti-Qing (or pro-

including An, did not recognize that it was not Jin Shengtan who wrote the commentaries, and that his name was merely used for advertising.


274 Zeng Xianghua (2008), 37. There are, of course, in China as well, political figures who exploited the nationalistic sentiment in the novel for political purposes, among them Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋, the Ming founder. (Roberts, 443 and passim.) However, the pro-Ming stance had to be covert under the Manchus, who also sought to co-opt the novel's popularity by identifying themselves with Liu Bei and Lord Guan and conferring many titles on the latter, including "sage" and "great emperor." (Naquin, *Peking*, 501, and Roberts, 460-64.)
Confucian principle and anti-barbaric disorder) stance. As noted in Chapter 3, *Three Kingdoms* was treasured in the families of Kwŏn Sangha, one of Song Siyŏl’s most distinguished disciples, and Song Myŏnghŭm 宋明欽 (1705-1768), a great-grandson of Song Chun’gil 宋浚吉 (1606-1672), one of two pro-Zhu Xi political magnates alongside Song Siyŏl in the seventeenth century. It can hardly be a coincidence that the novel was appreciated by the disciples and descendants of the two most fanatic devotees of Zhu Xi, at a time when Korean rulers and scholar-officials were gripped with a fervent desire to avenge the Ming.275

4.4 Korean Stories with the Theme of Shu-Han Legitimacy

Issues of moral principle found in *Three Kingdoms* are reflected in many fictional narratives written anonymously in Korean in the late Chosŏn period. These works reveal a profound knowledge of Chinese history and Confucian morality, suggesting they were authored by *yangban* literati. Their plots typically involve *Three Kingdoms* characters such as Liu Bei, Zhuge Liang, and Guan Yu—all positive protagonists representing the orthodoxy of the Shu-Han state in the original work. As such they seek to convey both the historical legitimacy of Shu-Han and Chosŏn Korea’s contributions to the protection of Confucian orthodox values.

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275 This favorable reception of the novel by the literati was hardly acknowledged publicly. Being Neo-Confucian scholars abiding by Zhu Xi’s principle, few Chosŏn literati had the courage to do this, given that the slightest dissent from orthodox Confucian values made one vulnerable to the charge of being a “rebel who destroys Confucian culture” (*samun nanjŏk* 斯文亂賊). See Miura Kunio (1985); Deuchler (1997), 97; and Chapter 3. References to *Three Kingdoms* are found mostly in private collections of the literati (*munjip* 文集), published posthumously.
In *Yi Taebong chŏn* 李大鳳傳 (Tale of Yi Taebong; *Li Dafeng zhuan* in Chinese), the protagonist Yi Taebong meets Guan Yu at a critical moment when the imperial capital of the Ming is under siege by “Northern barbarians” (*bei xiongnu* 北匈奴) and the emperor has fled. Lord Guan delivers the following charge to his latter-day brother-in-arms:

“I am Guan Yunchang, Marquis of Shouting of the Han empire. . . . Your performance tonight proved that you are a hero. I hereby bestow my Green Dragon crescent-moon blade upon you. Hurry back to the imperial capital to defeat the barbarian bandits and recover the imperial house of the Great Ming. Drench this sword with the barbarians’ blood to console the spirit of heroes.”

In this Korean novel about the fall of the Ming, we can observe that the Shu-Han legitimacy espoused in *Three Kingdoms* is closely associated with the pro-Ming anti-Qing sentiment and Sino-centric ideology (*zunzhou lun*) current in late Chosŏn. Yi Taebong is depicted as a Chinese literatus, and Guan Yu-- returned to life some one thousand two hundred years after his death fighting for Liu Bei’s cause--abruptly intervenes in the storyline to help him rescue the Ming dynasty and its emperor. The story of Yi Taebong being but one example, many other late Chosŏn Korean stories depict protagonists, typically Koreans, who defend Han-Chinese dynasties and their Confucian civilizations from barbarian threats.

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276 *Yi Taebong chŏn* (Li Dafeng zhuan) 李大鳳傳, 1:89-90. See: http://www.krperia.co.kr. To locate the text, go to the section *Han’guk panggakpon sosŏl chŏnjip* 韓國坊刻本小說全集 (Complete Collections of Korean Novels Printed by Commercial Bookstores). Written in colloquial Korean sometime between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, *Yi Taebong chŏn* was first published by *Pangmun sŏgwon* 博文書館 in 1916.
In *Yu Ch’ungnyŏl chŏn* 劉忠烈傳 (Tale of Liu Zhonglie), the protagonist is the posthumous son of a Ming loyalist, Liu Xun, who was assassinated by his political enemies. Liu Zhonglie ("loyal integrity") later takes his revenge by defeating his late father’s enemies, who have secretly collaborated with the Manchu invaders. In *Sin Yubok chŏn* 申遺腹傳 (Tale of Sin Yubok), the hero Yubok ("posthumous son") defeats barbarians invading Ming China from three directions and saves the emperor when the Han-Chinese generals prove to be utterly incompetent. A grateful emperor expresses his gratitude personally to his savior:

> Chosŏn is a small state, yet it possesses such a superb commander who came to save my country! Why would I have reason to worry about dealing with the bandits? I unfortunately faced a difficult time and the fate of my kingdom was hanging by a thread. Render your loyal service to me, sir, and have your worthy name honored throughout the five states.”

The emperor spared no pains to draft soldiers for him and appointed Yubok commander-in-chief *tae wŏnsu* 大元帥. 277

Yubok subdues an allied barbarian force from the three states, namely Tibet (Xifan 西蕃), the Tartars (Keda 可達), and Mongolia (Menggu 蒙古). It is worth noting that along with these three peoples, Chinese have regarded Koreans as one of the "barbarians in all four directions" (四夷) and described them as a people who are “oblique and vicious by nature” and primitive “like animals.” 278 Yubok, a commander summoned from the land of the Eastern barbarians

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277 *Sin Yubok chŏn*, 41. The five states referred to are Ming China, Chosŏn Korea, and the three invading barbarian states.

278 For example, refer to Zeng Jing’s remark in footnote 251 above.
(dongyi 東夷), nevertheless makes it his mission to defeat troops from the other three barbarian nations in order to protect the center of Confucian civilization. As a matter of fact, his expedition is a favor to the Ming emperor, who has made a formal request to the Chosŏn court for such a commander:

An envoy from the Ming arrived and submitted a petition for army dispatch to the king of Chosŏn. It read:

“I, Emperor of the Ming, write with respect to the king of Chosŏn. The Tibetans and Tartars have grown formidable. Allied with the Mongols, they took over seventy fortresses in the west and have reached Xiping Pass 西平關. They appear so invincible that my kingdom is facing the danger of annihilation. Therefore I seek help from you. If you could generously lend your commander to me, it would greatly help me repel the bandits and save my kingdom.”

Here we encounter a neat reversal of the situation in 1592. Now it is the Koreans who dispatch an army to repel an invasion that threatens the Ming. With the creation of a hero like Yubok, who saves the Ming empire when no Chinese hero can, we sense a mixture of sentiments on the part of contemporary Koreans. On the one hand, there is a self-assertiveness, despite being marginalized as a people “living on the far eastern edge of the Chinese world.”

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279 Sin Yubok chŏn, 36. These fortresses all happen to be in the territory of the former Shu-Han kingdom, which implies that Han-Chinese legitimacy is being threatened by barbarian forces.

280 Miura Kunio, 415.
hand, there are feelings of mission and pride stemming from an awareness that “the integrity of the orthodox teaching should be defended nowhere else so well as in ‘this Eastern Zhou’,”\(^{281}\)

In most cases, from the seventeenth century onward, Korean literati identified Chosŏn Korea as the ultimate bastion of Confucian civilization. In the Korean novels discussed above, Yu Ch’ungnyŏl and Sin Yubok are orphaned before they were born, a circumstance conveyed in the latter case by the hero's given name. The implication here is that Chosŏn’s debt to the Ming is greater than that which a son owes to his father (\(en \, you \, fuzi\) 恩猶父子) for aid provided in the war against Hideyoshi that had conferred "the gift of a second birth." \(^{282}\) In this context, the aspiration of the son (Chosŏn) to be loyal to his father (Ming) can only be realized in fiction, since in reality the father was long dead and the son lacked the means to retaliate against his enemies.

To Kim Unhoe, a modern Korean critic of *Three Kingdoms*, such idealized depictions of Confucianized Korean heroes represent an overly naïve reception of a Han-Chinese nationalistic cult that has marginalized Koreans. Kim, one of the coauthors of “*Samguk chi*” haeje (Annotated Reference to *Three Kingdoms*; the other two authors being Chang Chŏng’il and Sŏ Tonghun), feels strongly that *Three Kingdoms* stimulates the aggressive nationalism of the Chinese. In his more recent book, *Samguk chi paro ilkki* (How to Read *Three Kingdoms* Properly), Kim further observed that in *Three Kingdoms*, non-Han ethnic minorities are invariably depicted as uncultured barbarians who threaten Han-Chinese orthodoxy. Since Kim believes that this Han Chinese ethnocentrism is still influential in modern China today and masks a desire to suppress smaller neighbors like Korea, he argues that all "barbarian" peoples who are

\(^{281}\) Ibid. Slight modification added.

\(^{282}\) Sun Weiguo, 47.
China's neighbors should collaborate to resist it. By the same token, Kim alerts Korean readers of the work not to take any of the ideological, nationalistic, or political values in the novel at face value. Chang Chŏng’iŏl, who co-authored “Samguk chi” haeje (2003) and published his translation of Three Kingdoms in 2004, agrees with Kim’s analysis concerning the nationalistic nature of the novel. Accordingly, Chang's liberal concern and own sense of nationalistic pride are uniquely marshaled to “rectify” these “wrongdoings,” by positing Koreans as a marginalized minority.

In this sense, “Kŭmhwasa mongyurok” (金華寺夢遊錄, Record of an Adventure in a Dream at Jinhua Temple; hereafter “Adventure in a Dream”) is a work that would surely offend Chang and Kim, in that it explicitly reveals a blatant Han Chinese-centered ideology as its theme. The storyline can be summed up as follows:

A Chinese student has a dream while he sleeps at Jinhua Temple in Jinling (modern Nanjing). In the dream, he attends a feast hosted by the four greatest founders of dynasties in Chinese history--Han Gaozu 漢高祖, Tang Taizong 唐太宗, Song Taizu 宋太祖, and Ming Taizu 明太祖. These dynastic founders then enumerate those emperors who possessed the merit of being "dynastic restorers"

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283 See Kim Unhoe, Samguk chi paro ilkki (How to Read Three Kingdoms Properly), 1: 18-107, 124-141, 174-189, 2: 100-121, 194-287, and passim.

284 Also titled “Kŭmsansa mongyurok” (金山寺夢遊錄) in some editions, this work has several versions that differ in minor details, and has circulated in both colloquial Korean and classical Chinese. Scholars have yet to clarify the exact date of first publication and authorship, although they agree that it was widely read by the nineteenth century at the latest. See Kim Chŏngnyŏ, 173-5 and Chŏng Yongsu, 177-82 for the issue of dating.
(中興之主). Of these, they agree unanimously that Liu Bei be given the title Emperor Zhaolie (昭烈帝, "Illustrious Integrity"), while Cao Cao is deemed to be a mediocre figure. Among retainers with the most outstanding achievements in Chinese history, they select Zhuge Liang as the single most qualified prime minister who will lead the all-time most outstanding cabinet members. Upon learning that he was not invited to the feast honoring exceptional emperors, the Yuan founder Yuan Taizu (Genghis Khan) is so outraged that he mounts an assault using Jurchens (Mohe靺鞨) and Turks (Tuque突厥) as his soldiers.285 This attack is soon quelled by the Han-Chinese emperors.

“Adventure in a Dream” is a case in point of a Han Chinese-centered approach to the issue of legitimacy and evaluation of the Shu-Han heroes based on it. The four who host the feast are all founders of the Han-Chinese dynasties endorsed as legitimate by Zhu Xi in his Outline and Digest (except the Ming founder, for obvious reasons). Although founders of great dynasties that unified China, Genghis Khan and Nurhaci are excluded from the feast. That Liu Bei is honored as a great restorer reveals clearly the acceptance of Shu-Han legitimacy rooted in Neo-Confucian moralism in late Chosŏn.

285 Kim Unhoe asserts that such titles as Mohe, Tuque, Suzhen肅慎, Nūzhēn女真, Xiongnu匈奴, Xianbei 鮮卑, Tong’i 東夷, and Yemaek 楷貊 are all used to refer to one and the same identical nomadic people by the Chinese in different contexts, and that therefore it is utterly contradictory for Koreans to discriminate against other ethnic minorities around the Chinese borders as barbaric, since they are all from one identical root. See Kim, 2: 194-259. Kim’s argument is not based on scientific research, and can be rendered as a type of overly nationalistic Korean Sanguo zhi yanyi dufa 三國志演義讀法 (how to read Three Kingdoms) against Han-Chinese nationalism.
Liu Bei, unlike many other emperors who do not make the list of candidates for this title of "dynastic restorer," is far from being a capable ruler who unified China; nor was he able to successfully claim the Central Plain as his prize. Rather, the state he founded at the western end of China lasted only about four decades (from A.D. 221 to 264)—a mere two generations. Rather than being a "dynasty that accomplished national restoration," it deserves to be defined as a short-lived local regime. Cao Cao, on the other hand, whose legitimacy is approved in both the *Three Kingdoms Chronicle* and *Comprehensive Mirror*, for accomplishments far superior to those of Liu Bei, is evaluated as mediocre in “Adventure in a Dream.” As the Han founder puts it, “You quelled great disorders and acquired eight parts of the world…By these merits, you can be called a heroic literatus.”

Here, with all his accomplishments, Cao Cao is not even called a ruler; rather, he is regarded merely as one of many outstanding literati and is even called by his given name. His acquisition of eight parts of Chinese territory does not count as a significant factor for securing legitimacy. Here, too, is reflected the Chosŏn literati’s attitude against the Manchu Qing concerning the issue of legitimacy.

In like fashion, Zhuge Liang is selected to lead the all-time cabinet members of Chinese dynasties, outstripping many other famous prime ministers who helped their rulers found unified dynasties. This radical elevation of Kongming’s status to a place even higher than in *Three Kingdoms* seems to derive both from an insecurity Korean Confucians felt as a non-Han Chinese people living in a China-centered world (Kunio, 415), and from a desire to claim Han-ness for themselves. In this wise, Zhuge Liang appears in quite a few late Chosŏn literary works, as a

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286 操艾夷大亂，分天下有其八…可謂豪傑之士也. *Quoted in Kim Chŏngnyŏ*, 182.
figure used to make the case for Chosŏn Korea’s sacred duty to "respect the Zhou and reject the barbarians." 287

By contrast with the favoritism toward Han Chinese dynasties and those who founded them, deliberate disparagement of non-Han Chinese dynasties and their founders is also apparent in the “Adventure in a Dream.” Chosŏn literati’s self-identification as culturally Han-Chinese (zhonghua 中華), blunt preference for a Han-Chinese centered world view, and reluctance to acknowledge their non-Han (allegedly barbarian) ethnic roots, can also be seen at the point where Genghis Khan is excluded from the banquet and his military retaliation is effortlessly quelled. These scenes reveal a sharp dichotomy of Han Chinese versus non-Han barbarians and the prevailing Confucian moralism of the late Chosŏn period.

Thus far we have reviewed the influence of the legitimacy issue encoded in Three Kingdoms on fictional narratives in the late Chosŏn period. It is worth noting that the identification of Chosŏn Korea with the kingdom of Shu-Han in terms of Confucian cultural legitimacy rather than territorial superiority appealed to the Chosŏn literati seeking consolation for having been thwarted by the Manchu Qing. The Korean sympathy for Shu-Han legitimacy in this particular sociopolitical context greatly helped the dissemination of Three Kingdoms in the period after the Pyŏngja War period. From that time onward, the novel's popularity steadily grew, becoming the basis for securing its status as the number-one bestseller in modern Korea, the subject of the next chapter.

287 See Mueller-Lee (2007) and Chapter 3.1 of his Ph.D. dissertation for details on how Zhuge Liang’s image is depicted in premodern Korean literary works.
5. The Advent of Modern Translations and Adaptations of *Three Kingdoms*

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I examine the readership and circulation of *Three Kingdoms* in Korea during the Japanese colonial period (1910–45) with regard to the critical social changes in that era, which include modernization, development of printing technology, and cultural influences from Japan and the West. I also endeavor to encompass some relevant aspects of the circulation of novels in vernacular Korean (including works created in vernacular Korean and works translated into vernacular Korean) during the period from the 1850’s to 1950’s with an emphasis on translations of *Three Kingdoms* in that period.

First, I investigate how *Three Kingdoms* survived the downfall of classical stories during the colonial period, when the popularity of many classical novels was eclipsed by that of modern novels with Western influence. During this period, *Three Kingdoms* was more widely sold in cheap printed editions, and various adaptations of *Three Kingdoms* appeared in inexpensive printed books as well. I will investigate some notable examples of these adaptations.

It was also during the colonial period that the full-length modern colloquial translations of *Three Kingdoms* appeared. In terms of literary style and vocabulary, the differences between these translations and the contemporary ones are so insignificant that some colonial-period translations are still being printed and read now.\(^{288}\) The modern Japanese rewriting of *Three Kingdoms* by Yoshikawa Eiji was introduced to Korean readers almost simultaneously with its appearance in Japan, and the success of Yoshikawa’s work brought about the creation of some

\(^{288}\) For example, Pak T’aewŏn’s translation of *Three Kingdoms* was serialized from 1941 until 1943 in a magazine. His work was recently re-published in South Korea in 2008.
important modern Korean translations of the work, a matter I will discuss in further detail in the following sections.

In short, the colonial period can be viewed as a transitional period for *Three Kingdoms*, when it underwent a change in status from Chinese classic to modern colloquial novel. It was also during this period that complete translations and adaptations of the entire work became readily available, as opposed to just partial translations and adaptations of certain chapters of the original work. Thanks to the legacy of this period, we can see the blossoming of complete translations and adaptations of *Three Kingdoms* beginning from the post–Korean War period up to the present day (1953–present).

5.2 Translations of *Three Kingdoms* in Late Chosŏn and the Early Colonial Period

5.2.1 *Three Kingdoms* Became Widely Available in the Forms of *Panggakpon*, *Sech’ae*, and *Ttakchibon*

In chapters 3 and 4, I relied heavily on the references in literati’s collected works and historical records to examine the popularity and dissemination of *Three Kingdoms* in the Chosŏn dynasty. After the Japanese and the Manchu invasions in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, Chosŏn Korea gradually recovered from the damage, and in the course of its economic recovery, Seoul, the capital city, became the most developed and largest in population by the late seventeenth century. While Seoul saw its commercial development, the circulation of

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289 Pu Kilman, “Ansŏngp’an, Kyŏngp’an, Wanp’an panggakpon ŭi pigyo yŏn’gu,” 75. See also Chŏng Pyŏngsŏl, “Chosŏn hugi han’gŭl sosŏl ŭi sŏngjang kwa yut’ong” (Development and Circulation of Korean Vernacular Novels in the Late Chosŏn), *Chindan hakpo* 100 (2004): 281–82.
xiaoshuo fiction in Seoul and other large cities such as Chŏnju 全州 and Ansŏng 安城 drastically increased from the early eighteenth century on, largely due to the appearance of woodblock printings by private publishers (panggakpon 坊刻本) and of rental books, mostly in the form of hand-copied manuscripts (sech’aek 貰冊), which will be discussed below. What draws our attention here is that there is evidence showing that Three Kingdoms, mostly in the form of abridged translations and adaptations, was one of the most popular stories circulated in the book market in this period. Although existing studies of xiaoshuo fiction publication in late Chosŏn and the colonial period are still meager, and the studies of Three Kingdoms in this period even scarcer, it is still possible to speculate about the popularity and circulation of Three Kingdoms in this period by examining the circulation and sales records of Three Kingdoms published in the form of rental books (sech’aek), panggakpon, and ttakchibon.290

Publication of xiaoshuo (or sosŏl) fiction by private publishers, mostly in woodblock printings, or so-called panggakpon 坊刻本, began to flourish from the early eighteenth century.291 Before the eighteenth century, all printed books in Chosŏn Korea were published either by the central or provincial government, and most xiaoshuo fiction circulated was in the

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290 The definition of panggakpon and ttakchibon will be discussed shortly.

291 Panggakpon, a term first used by Maema Kyōsaku 前間恭作 (1868-1942) in Chōsen no hanpon 朝鮮の 板本 (1931), refers to books that were published by private publishers, mostly in the form of woodblock printings. For further discussion of panggakpon books, see Ōtani Morishige 大谷森繁, Chosŏn hugi sosŏl tokcha yŏn’gu (Seoul: Koryŏ Taehak Minjok Munhwasa Yŏn’guso, 1985); Chŏng Pyŏngsŏl, 275–77, 281; and Pu Kilman, “Ansŏngp’an, Kyŏngp’an, Wap’an panggakpon ŭi pigyo yŏn’gu” and “17 segi Han’guk panggakpon ch’ulp’an e kwanhan koch’al.”
form of manuscripts. *Xiaoshuo* fiction was mostly hand-copied by women in the inner chambers and circulated among their family members, relatives, and friends.\(^{292}\)

Scholars such as Chŏng Pyŏngsŏl assert that the circulation of printed *xiaoshuo* fiction did not imply the end of hand-copied manuscript *xiaoshuo*. Rather, hand-copied *xiaoshuo* manuscripts vied with the printed *xiaoshuo* books until the early colonial period (around 1920), mostly in the form of rental books, or *sech’aekpon*.\(^{293}\) In a recent essay (2004), Chŏng speculates that rental bookstores in Seoul started to appear around 1710, and there is evidence showing that the rental bookstores in Seoul were popular among various classes of readers.\(^{294}\) A large rental

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\(^{292}\) See the examples of Lady Yi from Hamp’yŏng 成平李, the mother of Kwŏn Sangha, and O Hŭimun, respectively, in chapter 3 herein. For further examples of men and women reading novels in Chosŏn Korea, see Ōtani Morishige, “Chŏsen chŏ shōsetsu no jitsuzō” 朝鮮朝小説の実像, *Chŏsen gakuhō* 朝鮮学報, nos. 176–77 (2000): 67–100. Ōtani notes the case of Kim Manjung’s mother (1617–89), who was a reader of *Kuun mong* 九雲夢 (Dream of Nine Clouds), and of Cho T’aeŏk’s mother (1647–98), who transcribed ten volumes of *Xi Zhou yanyi* 西周演義 (Romance of Western Zhou) and then circulated them to her daughters-in-law and other female friends. See Ōtani, 87–90. Chŏng Pyŏngsŏl notes that less than two decades later, rental bookstores appeared in Seoul. See Chŏng, 263–97. For the printing and circulation of books in that period, see Kang Myŏnggwan, *Ch’aek pŏlle dŭl Chosŏn ŭl mandŭlda*, 5–71, 112–31.

\(^{293}\) Chŏng Pyŏngsŏl, 263–97. See also Chŏng Myŏnggi, “Sech’aek p’ilsabon kososŏl yŏn’gu,” 474.

\(^{294}\) For Chŏng Myŏnggi’s discussion of rental book readers, see “Sech’aekpon sosol ŭi yut’ong yangsang,” 84–90.
bookstore usually had thousands of *sech’ae kpon xiaoshuo* copies, mostly in the form of hand-written manuscripts in Korean.295

Both Ch’ae Chegong 蔡濟恭 (1720–99) and Yi Tŏngmu 李德懋 (1741–93), in their collected works, cite evidence that there were numerous ardent readers of rental *xiaoshuo* fiction, some of whom were literally addicted to reading rental books, neglecting their other duties.296 As

295 Ch’ŏng Pyŏngsŏl, 284–85. For example, in 1919, when *sech’aek* were already being replaced by *ttakchibon*, a book rental store at Hyangmoktong investigated by Ch’oe Namsŏn had 120 book titles in 3,221 volumes. Ch’ŏng asserts that in mid-nineteenth-century Seoul, there were about five to ten large rental bookstores, one of which had about 5,000 volumes.

296 Ch’ae Chegong 蔡濟恭 (1720–99), King Chŏngjo’s prime minister, also comments on the exceptional popularity of rental books among women in his collected works, *Pŏn’’amjip* 樓巖集:

I realized that recently [women] in the inner chambers compete to read stories. These stories increase in number day by day, and [the titles of] these stories have reached to hundreds and thousands in number. The rental bookstore owners hand-copy these stories tidily, and profit from renting them. Since these women [readers of the rental books] lack discernment, some sell their hairpins or bracelets, and some borrow copper coins [to rent books]. They compete with each other to rent storybooks for the purpose of whiling away their time. As a result, we often see women who forget their duties of preparing liquor and meals or weaving cloth.

(竊觀近世閨閤之競以爲能事者。惟稗說是崇。日加月增。千百其種。

偷家以是赤寫。凡有借覽。輒收其直以爲利。婦女無見識。或賣釵釧。或求債銅。爭相貰來。以消永日。不知有酒食之議紡織之責者往往皆是。) (*Pŏn’’amjip*, juan 33, “Yŏsasŏ sŏ” 女四書序. Text available at http://db.itkc.or.kr.)

Ch’ae’s observation shows that by the early to mid-eighteenth century, women with reading knowledge of Korean had emerged as major readers of *xiaoshuo* narratives.
Yi Tŏngmu (1741–93) also mentions:

Women should not indulge in eerie tales written in the vulgar script [stories translated into colloquial Korean]. [When reading stories], they quit taking care of domestic affairs, and neglect their duties. Some even pay money to rent storybooks. Deeply obsessed, some of them never cease to borrow the books, eventually squandering family property.

(諺翻傳奇。不可耽看。廢置家務。怠棄女紅。至於與錢而貰之。沈惑不已。傾家産者有之。) (Ch’ŏngjanggwan chŏnsŏ 青莊館全書, juan 30. Text available at http://db.itkc.or.kr.)

It is notable that, in China, the 1791 publication of the Cheng Gao edition of Honglou Meng was a milestone for women’s reception and production of vernacular novels; some women were even “addicted” to reading fiction. (See Roland Altenburger, "Fatales Lesen: Berichte über exzessive Lektürepraktiken mit dem Hongloumeng und ihre Bedeutung für eine Geschichte des Lesens in China." See also Ellen Widmer, The Beauty and the Book: Women and Fiction in Nineteenth-Century China.) As the above-mentioned examples show, women’s involvement with fiction as readers and critics in Chosŏn Korea seems to have started earlier. Since women almost exclusively hand-copied manuscripts of fiction (mostly in the form of Korean vernacular versions) before the sech’aek and panggakpon books became popular, women as copyists also functioned as critics and revisers of the text. This tradition of hand-copying fiction was well preserved until the early twentieth century in most areas of Korea other than in Seoul where rental bookstores were popular and in Ansŏng and Chŏnju where panggakpon books were printed. Yi Chiyŏng notes that the copyists of traditional novels played a far more critical role than that of mere readers; in the course of copying the text, they tended to manipulate it as partial creators. In this respect, changes were invariably made (some in the forms of miscopyings), especially in case of vernacular Korean novels. In this sense, every act of hand-copying is akin to a rewriting of the text. (See Yi Chiyŏng, “Hangŭl p’ilson sosŏl e nat’anan hangŭl p’ilsa ŭi munhw–chŏk maengnak” (Cultural Context of Korean Vernacular Novels in the Form of Manuscripts). See also Ch’oe Yŏnmi, “Chosŏn
noted earlier, *panggakpon* books started to appear almost simultaneously with the dissemination of *sech’aekpon* manuscript *xiaoshuo* in the early eighteenth century. However, in the eighteenth century, most of them were in classical Chinese; it was not until 1800 that *panggakpon* *xiaoshuo* in vernacular Korean became widespread.297

5.2.2 *Three Kingdoms* *sech’aek* Editions

According to Chŏng Pyŏngsŏl, either by 1812 or 1872 (the year of Imsin 壬申), tens of thousands of volumes of *sech’aek* *xiaoshuo* were circulating in Seoul.298 As we can see from the following examples, one of the most popular items was *Three Kingdoms*. A rental account book written in 1905 and discovered in the Tōyō Bunko 東洋文庫, the earliest extant rental account

sidae yŏsŏng p’yŏnjŏja, ch’ulp’an hyŏmnyŏkja, tokja ŭi yŏkhal e kwanhan yŏn’gu” (A Study of Women’s Role as Writers, Editors, Collaborators, and Readers in Chosŏn). This explains Korean women’s close involvement with fiction reading and reproduction. There is evidence of women’s participation in fiction writing by the early eighteenth century in Korea. Chŏng Pyŏngsŏl asserts that *Wanwŏlhoe maengyŏn* 玩月會盟宴, arguably the lengthiest traditional Korean novel comparable to *Honglou meng* in some aspects, was created by a Madam Li from Chŏnju (全州李氏), who was from a noble family and is attributed as author of some other Korean stories. (See Chŏng Pyŏngsŏl, “Wanwŏlhoe maengyŏn yŏn’gu” (A Study of *Wanwŏlhoe maengyŏn*). Ph.D. dissertation, Seoul National University, 1997.) It was an established tradition for Korean women, mostly in the case of *kyusu* 閨秀 (gentlewomen), to hand-copy novels to practice calligraphy. See Yi Wŏnju, “Kojŏn sosŏl tokja ŭi sŏnghyang” (The Tendency of Traditional Novel Readers).

297 Chŏng Pyŏngsŏl, 277.

298 Chŏng Pyŏngsŏl, 285.
book, includes *Three Kingdoms* in Korean translation and its adaptation, *Hwang puin chŏn* 黃夫人傳 (*The Story of Madam Hwang*).\(^{299}\) The Tōyō Bunko collection has 31 titles of *sech’ae* xiaoshuo purchased in Seoul in 1927, one of which is *Three Kingdoms*. This is a work of 69 volumes, more than twice the length of *Lieguo zhi* 列國志 (*Romance of the Eastern Zhou*, 33-volumes), another Chinese novel in this collection.\(^{300}\)

In addition, among the rental bookstores Chŏng Myŏnggi investigated, three out of four had *Three Kingdoms* in their collection, an indication of its popularity.\(^{301}\)

It is also possible to figure out who the readers of *Three Kingdoms* were by investigating the renters of rental books. The rental account books analyzed by Chŏng Myŏnggi show that various classes of people, including commoners, women, officials, and even slaves (*nobi* 奴婢), were readers of *sech’aek xiaoshuo*.\(^{302}\) Both *sech’aek* and *panggakpon xiaoshuo* were relatively cheap to rent or purchase,\(^{303}\) and commoners or people of the lower classes who had little or no knowledge of literary Chinese were more familiar with vernacular Korean in which rental books

\(^{299}\) Yi Yunsŏk, “Tongyang Mun’go-bon *Hong Kiltong chŏn yŏn’gu*,” 283–84.

\(^{300}\) As for the length of rental books, one volume is about 30 to 35 pages. Publishers of rental books normally preferred short stories for quick circulation. Although *Three Kingdoms* often circulated in partial translations or adaptations, it also circulated in its entirety due to its popularity.

\(^{301}\) Chŏng Myŏnggi, “Sech’aekpon sosŏl ŭi yut’ong yangsang,” 84. The rental account lists are partially extant records, which include only a few titles. Considering that the title of *Three Kingdoms* often appears even in these fragmentary records, it is possible to infer that most rental bookstores had the novel in their collections.

\(^{302}\) Chŏng Myŏnggi, “Sech’aekpon sosŏl ŭi yut’ong yangsang,” 84–90.

and woodblock printed books were written. Considering that tens of thousands of volumes of sech’aek xiaoshuo were circulating in Seoul by the mid-nineteenth century and that each volume was rented out about ten to twenty times,^{304} it is safe to say that a great number of people were familiar with Three Kingdoms and its adaptations, in Seoul. According to Chŏng Myŏnggi, ardent readers of sech’aek xiaoshuo frequently rented multiple titles, and of these more than half had rented Three Kingdoms, which suggests that the novel was a must-read for frequenters of the rental bookstores.^{305}

5.2.2.1 Three Kingdoms sech’aek Edition at Harvard-Yenching Library

Among the old Korean books that recently became available electronically through the Harvard-Yenching Library Korean rare book digitization project is a hand-copied manuscript of a Korean translation of Three Kingdoms. It consists of 19 volumes (1652 pages) and bears the date of 1906 according to the publisher’s notes.^{306} Upon examination, I conclude that this manuscript is a sech’aek rental book set. However, in several respects it is quite distinct from sech’aek rental books described so far in the scholarly literature.

To get at these differences, I have examined its publication notes, or copying notes (kan’gi 刊記 or pilsagi 筆寫記), which indicate a publication date of 1906. This date means that this is not one of those manuscripts that were hand-copied by women in literati households or the

^{304} Chŏng Pyŏngsŏl, 285.


^{306} Its bibliographical information is as follows: Luo Guanzhong, Samguk chi. (Ch’yŏngp’ung: Paegundong, Taehan Kwangmu 10 (1906)). Volume 8 is missing. The digital copy is available at http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:FHCL:3355471.
palace. Well before the turn of the twentieth century, sech’aek manuscripts copied by rental bookstore owners had completely replaced privately copied manuscripts and were competing with panggakbon storybooks.\footnote{Sech’aek storybooks started to be replaced by ttakchibon prints from the 1910’s. See the following section on ttakchibon editions of Three Kingdoms for further discussion.} In addition, this Harvard Library Three Kingdoms copy demonstrates the typical page format of sech’aek rental books; each page contains twelve lines, and every line contains twenty-one to twenty-three han’gul characters with no Chinese characters added.\footnote{Refer to the section on page formatting of sech’aek books, 448-50 in Chŏng Myŏnggi, “Sech’aek p’ilسابon kososŏl e taehan sŏsŏl-jŏk ihae” ( Preliminary research on sech’aek rental traditional novels in the form of hand-copied manuscripts), Kososŏl yŏn’gu 12 (2001).}

The presence of typical sech’aek-style publication notes on the last page of each volume also indicates that this book circulated as a sech’aek storybook set. Each sech’aek rental book had a copying note (p’ilسابagi 筆寫記) on the last page that indicated the date the copy was made and the name of the rental bookstore, a common method for clarifying ownership of the item.\footnote{Chŏng Myŏnggi (2001), 455-68.}

The aforementioned 69-volume edition Three Kingdoms in the Tōyō Bunko collection includes a copying note that reads "hand-copied by the Hyangsyudong [rental bookstore] in the eleventh month of the year of Imin [either 1842 or 1902].”\footnote{"Syeimin chiwŏril Hyangsyudong p’ilسابо 세임인 지월일 향슈동필서 (歲在壬寅十一月，香水洞筆書),” The note is quoted in Chŏng Myŏnggi (2001), 473. Chŏng mentions that the Chinese characters (inserted in brackets above) were added later by a reader, not by the rental book owner. See Ibid. As noted above, texts of sech’aek rental books, including copying notes, were written only in} Likewise, the last page of the first volume of
the Harvard edition of *Three Kingdoms* includes a copying note that reads, “[This book is] copied by Ch’yŏngp’ung [rental bookstore] at Paegundong [name of a district] in the fifth month of the tenth year of the Korean Empire.” In other words, the copying note in the Harvard edition *Three Kingdoms* follows the pattern typical of sech’ae k copying notes.

But, in other ways the Harvard copy also displays features that are distinct from other sech’ae k books studied to date. For one thing, other sech’ek books examined by scholars thus far have 30-40 pages per volume or are even shorter in some cases. However, each volume of the Harvard sech’ae k edition of *Three Kingdoms* is about one hundred pages long, with volume seven the lengthiest at 109 pages. This is unprecedented in any known sech’ae k rental books. The total length of the work, at 19 volumes and 1652 pages, is significant for a sech’ae k novel title, of a kind with the 69-volume copy of *Three Kingdoms* in the Tōyō Bunko sech’ae k collection discussed above.

In addition, this *Three Kingdoms* sech’ae k title at Harvard is not found among the list of sech’ae k collections updated by scholars of this area. Nor is the name of the rental store, Ch’ong (2001), 468-76. Ch’ong (2001, 472) mentions that he did not find any Chinese copying notes in the Tōyō Bunko sech’ae k collection.

311 “Taehan kwangmu simnyŏaehan k’o haow kwan’y hao’ung Paegundong sim 대한광무십년병오하오월 청풍백운동서,” which can be rendered in Chinese as “大韓光武十年丙午夏五月, 清風白雲洞書.”

312 After the 1890s, the length of sech’ae k books tended to become even shorter, with many volumes only twenty-five pages long or so and sometimes even shorter. Ch’ong Myŏnggi (2001), 455.

313 Ch’ong Myŏnggi (2001), 450-66. 77 titles of sech’ae k novels in 514 volumes collected in 19 places (including libraries outside of Korea) had been located by 2001. This Harvard edition of *Three Kingdoms* is not among the two sech’ae k titles at Harvard catalogued by Korean scholars, and is not listed.
Paegundong in this case, among the twenty-seven stores that had multiple titles of *Three Kingdoms* or its adaptations—based on what scholars have clarified so far. \(^{314}\) In short, information on the very existence of this *sech’ae*k, its producer, and circulator is nonexistent in academia.

Given that this so-called Paegundong rental bookstore had such a lengthy *Three Kingdoms* title in its collection, it would not be inappropriate to speculate that its operations were rather large-scale. The Harvard edition may challenge current theories by Korean scholars about *sech’ae*k books, especially regarding their length and circulation.

\(^{314}\) Chŏng Myŏnggi (2001), 466-68. 2 of the 27 were Hyangmoktong and Hyangsyudong rental bookstore.
Figure 2 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was the first page of volume 1 of the Havard sech'aek edition of Three Kingdoms. Original source: http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:FHCL:3355471.
Figure 3 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was the last page of volume 19 of the Harvard sech’aek edition of *Three Kingdoms*. Original source: http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:FHCL:3355471.
If we look at the contents of this Harvard edition, it seems to be a slightly abridged translation of the entire 120 chapters of the Mao edition. Each volume covers narratives approximately equivalent to five to seven chapters in the Mao edition. Being sech’aek rental books, any component in the original other than the text itself--the preface, fanli (General Principles), and commentary by Mao on “How to Read Three Kingdoms”--are dropped. All chapter titles in the Mao edition are also dropped to save space, as are all poems. In fact, the chapter divisions in the Mao edition are ignored and no chapter titles or divisions of any kind are used; each volume ends on or around page 100. Some place names and proper names in the original are dropped, as are some less significant narrative details. These abbreviations do not seriously affect the narrative presentation. Occasionally, either the translator or the copyist incorporates typical Korean colloquial expressions prevalent in traditional Korean novels. The copyist also shows familiarity with the novel, occasionally adding details about the characters or

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315 Given that the Mao edition was the predominant edition of Three Kingdoms by the nineteenth-century, it is very likely that the Harvard text was based on the Mao edition. However, to confirm this, I have also compared its text with that of the Shulin Zhou Yuejiao edition--the only other extant Three Kingdoms edition in Chosŏn Korea--and conclude that the text of the Harvard edition, with some abridgement and revisions, is likely to be based on Mao edition.

316 For an example, see the part in italics in the translation below, which reads, “All members of the Dong clan were blessed with wealth and honor beyond measure (pugwi kongmyŏng i chigyang ŭpdŏra).” This is an example of the clichéd expressions used in traditional Korean stories to conclude the story plot with a happy ending. See the endings of the Story of Simchŏng and the Story of Yu Ch’ingnyŏl.
situations in the translated text. Overall, this translation betrays a tendency to “domesticate” the original text.\textsuperscript{317}

To illustrate these features, I compare a paragraph in the Mao edition (early part of Chapter 8) with the equivalent part of the Harvard.sech’aek edition of \textit{Three Kingdoms} (first paragraph of the volume 2) as follows:

\textbf{Mao edition}

In Chang’an, Dong Zhuo learned of Sun Jian’s death and said, “I am well rid of a mortal enemy. But how old is his first son?” “Seventeen,” someone said. This answer persuaded Dong Zhuo he need not fear the south.

Dong Zhuo’s behaviour became more arbitrary and arrogant than ever. He had himself addressed as Honorary Father, and in his public appearances usurped the regalia of the Emperor. He appointed his brother, Min, general of the left and lord of Hu, and his nephew, Huang, privy counsellor with overall command of the Palace Guard. All members of the Dong clan---whether young or old---were honored with titles.\textsuperscript{318}

\textbf{Harvard.sech’aek edition of \textit{Three Kingdoms}}

Dong Zhuo learned of Sun Jian’s death and said with great pleasure, “I have always been worried about the presence of Sun Jian, an unrivalled hero of the Jiangnan area.”\textsuperscript{319} Now that he

\textsuperscript{317} In the next chapter, I discuss the strategy of domesticating a foreign text in further detail.

\textsuperscript{318} Translation cited from Moss Roberts, trans., \textit{Three Kingdoms}, 1: 124-5.

\textsuperscript{319} Emphasis mine; this example shows that the translator sometimes provides information on the heroes not present in the original text.
is dead and his son is young and weak, I am greatly relieved of anxiety.” And then Dong Zhuo’s state of mind became more arrogant and rude than ever. He appointed his younger brother, Dong Min, general of the left, and his nephew, Dong Huang, privy counsellor with overall command of the military. All members of the Dong clan---whether young or old---were blessed with wealth and honor beyond measure [pugwi kongmyŏng i chigyang ŭpdŏra].

Despite these touches, there seems to be no significant difference from the Mao edition in terms of the narrative presentations of critical plots. Judging from the handwriting, there was more than one copyist, and the copying notes reveal that this book set was copied over a period from the second to the fifth month of 1906.

Taken together, the Harvard Three Kingdoms sech’aek set and the 69-volume Three Kingdoms sech’aek book set in the Tōyō Bunko show that translations of the entire 120 chapters were circulating, even though most Three Kingdoms sech’aek books in circulation between the mid-1800s and the 1920s were abridgements or adaptations. Moreover, their exceptional length, well in excess of the norm for sech’aek books, indicates that Three Kingdoms had strong entertainment value in the sech’aek book rental markets. Accordingly, some exceptions and privileges for this work were recognized and accepted by the rental book owners and readers.

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5.3 *Three Kingdoms* Panggakpon Editions

Although Koreans produced metal type in the thirteenth century, it never came into wide use except in some government-funded publishing projects.\(^{321}\) The first *panggakpon* books appeared around the mid-seventeenth century, and all *panggakpon* books were woodblock prints.\(^{322}\) Most *panggakpon* prints were books for entertainment, *xiaoshuo* being an example.\(^{323}\) Kwŏn Sun’gŭng asserts that the appearance and spreading of *panggakpon* accelerated dissemination of *Three Kingdoms* and its adaptations.\(^{324}\)

Scholars generally classify *panggakpon* into three groups based on the place of publication, which are Kyŏngp’an 京板 (prints published in Seoul), Wanp’an 完板 (prints published in Chŏnju), and Ansŏngp’an 安城板 (prints published in Ansŏng).\(^{325}\) There are ninety-eight Kyŏngp’an, fifty Wanp’an, and thirteen Ansŏngp’an titles extant.\(^{326}\) Among these books, thirteen Kyŏngp’an, four Wanp’an, and three Ansŏngp’an titles are historical novels.\(^{327}\) To narrow it down further, six among the thirteen Kyŏngp’an historical stories were classical

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\(^{321}\) For instance, in 1511, the Chosŏn court printed in metal type 2,940 copies of *Samgang haengsil to* 三綱行實圖 (Illustrated Conduct of the Three Bonds) to distribute nationwide. See Academy of Korean Studies, ed., *Chosŏn sidae ch’aek ŭi munhwasa*, 34.

\(^{322}\) Pu Kilman, “17 segi Han’guk panggakpon ch’ulp’an e kwanhan koch’al,” 65.

\(^{323}\) Pu Kilman, “Ansŏngp’an, Kyŏngp’an, Wanp’an panggakpon ŭi pigyo yŏn’gu,” 75.

\(^{324}\) Kwŏn Sun’gŭng, “*Samgukchi yŏn’ŭi* ŭi suyong kwa kŭ chihyang,” 297.

\(^{325}\) For further references on these three types of block prints, see Skillend, 22-4.

\(^{326}\) Pu Kilman, “Ansŏngp’an, Kyŏngp’an, Wanp’an panggakpon ŭi pigyo yŏn’gu,” 76.

\(^{327}\) Ibid., 79.
Chinese novels.\textsuperscript{328} And among these six Kyŏngp’an panggakpon classical Chinese novels, two are translations of \textit{Three Kingdoms}.\textsuperscript{329} And among the Wanp’an classical Chinese novels published between 1803 and 1910, three out of four are translations and adaptations of \textit{Three Kingdoms}.\textsuperscript{330} As for the Ansŏngp’an, one out of two classical Chinese novels published is also \textit{Three Kingdoms}.\textsuperscript{331} \textit{Three Kingdoms} was the only Chinese traditional novel published in all three -- Kyŏngp’an, Wanp’an, and Ansŏngp’an--edition types.\textsuperscript{332}

During the colonial period (1910–45), Western literary trends were rapidly introduced to Korea by the Japanese, which resulted in a situation whereby traditional Korean stories had to compete in the book market with modern stories from the West and Japan, and also with new Korean novels written by writers with a modern Western education.\textsuperscript{333} While the popularity of a number of traditional Korean stories was eclipsed by that of modern novels with Western influence or translations of Western and Japanese stories, \textit{Three Kingdoms} managed to survive

\textsuperscript{328} Ibid., 79.

\textsuperscript{329} Min Kwandong, “Chosŏn sidae Chungguk kojŏn sosŏl ūi ch’ulp’an yangsang,” 60, 70.

\textsuperscript{330} For a complete list, see ibid., 60–61, 70.

\textsuperscript{331} Ibid., 61, 70–71.

\textsuperscript{332} Sosŏl fiction published as panggakpon were mostly short Korean stories, since each panggakpon print was only about 20–30 pages long. That \textit{Three Kingdoms}, being a novel, was circulated as panggakpon demonstrates its enduring popularity. Among the Four Masterworks of Ming Novels, \textit{Shuihu zhuan} was available only in Kyŏngp’an and Ansŏngp’an, and \textit{Xiyouji} only as a Kyŏngp’an edition. There is no evidence showing that \textit{Jin Ping Mei} was published in premodern Korea. For more details, see Kwŏn Sun’gŭng, “Samgukchi yŏn’ŭi ūi suyong kwa kŭ chihyang,” 297–98; Min Kwandong, “Chosŏn sidae Chungguk kojŏn sosŏl ūi ch’ulp’an yangsang,” 60–61, 70–71.

\textsuperscript{333} For further discussion, see chapter 3 of Ch’ŏn Chŏnghwan, \textit{Kŭndae ūi ch’aek ilki}.
the downfall of classical stories, and was sold widely in cheap printed editions that became available during this period.

During the Japanese colonial period (1910–45), modern printing technology was introduced to Korea, and with the spread of movable-type printing, relatively cheap printed books (*ttakchibon*) became the mainstream in the book market. *Xiaoshuo* fiction was the most popular feature of *ttakchibon* books, and among the *ttakchibon xiaoshuo* published, *Three Kingdoms* was one of the most popular; more specifically, it was the second most published novel in the colonial period.

5.4 *Ttakchibon* Editions of *Three Kingdoms*

*Ttakchibon xiaoshuo* refer to *xiaoshuo* books printed with metal type that became available along with the modernization of Korea in the early twentieth century.334 Not all the *xiaoshuo* circulating as manuscripts were published as *ttakchibon*. Rather, publishers selected only those works whose marketability had already been demonstrated, which implies that if a work was published in this form it was a work of some popularity.335 Among 249 *ttakchibon* titles investigated by U K’waeje, I have identified sixteen titles that are translations or adaptations of *Three Kingdoms*.336

According to Kwŏn Sun’gŭng’s study, among the 249 *ttakchibon xiaoshuo* published during the colonial period, these sixteen editions were published sixty-one times in total. Min

335 Ibid., 141. U confirms that among 860 titles of *xiaoshuo* narratives available as either manuscripts or *panggakpon*, less than one-third of the titles—249—were published as *ttakchibon*.
336 Ibid., 122–38.
Kwandong also asserts that *Three Kingdoms* was not only the most published traditional Chinese novel in the Chosŏn period, but also the most published Chinese novel during the Japanese colonial period, too. This shows that while *Three Kingdoms* circulated mostly as manuscripts or as *panggakpon* in the late Chosŏn period, it became more widespread in the format of *ttakchibon* during the colonial period. The record of sixty-one printings is exceeded only by *Ch’ünhyang chŏn* (The Tale of Ch’unhyang), which was printed ninety-seven times during the colonial period. Among the sixteen *ttakchibon* editions of *Three Kingdoms*, one was an abridged translation, another was a *hyŏnt’obon* translation, and others were adaptations consisting of episodes of famous figures or popular scenes from the work, which tended to be much shorter than those in the original work. As a matter of fact, *Three Kingdoms* was the single item most favored by the major publishers of the colonial period, namely, Hoedong Sŏgwon, Pangmun Sŏgwon, and Taech’ang Sŏgwon.

Due to their exceptionally cheap price, *ttakchibon xiaoshuo* were read by various classes of people, especially by factory laborers, women, and seniors. Typically a single *ttakchibon*

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338 Kwŏn Sun’gŭng, “*Samgukchi yŏn’ŭi* ēi suyong kwa kŭ chihyang,” 299; and U K’waeje, “Ku hwalchabon kososŏl ēi ch’ulp’an mit yŏn’gu hyŏnhwang,” 138.

339 *Hyŏnt’o Samgukchi* is a modified reprint of the Mao-edition of *Three Kingdoms*, which adds Korean grammatical particles to the sentences in classical Chinese to enhance readability for Koreans who have some reading knowledge of classical Chinese.

340 A news article in the *Taehan maeil sinbo* 大韓每日申報 in 1910 observes that *xiaoshuo* fiction is the favorite of women with no particular job, and of ruffians in the street (市井無識輩). See Ch’ŏn,
cost only 6 chŏn (0.06 wŏn), while a factory worker earned around 1 wŏn a day.\textsuperscript{341} \textit{Ttakchibon} were much cheaper than the so-called \textit{sin sosŏl} 新小說, or modern novels, which cost around 45 chŏn a volume.\textsuperscript{342} Thanks to such a price advantage, \textit{ttakchibon xiaoshuo} gained a wide range of readers, with some popular titles selling more than tens of thousands of copies a year. For example, in 1935, \textit{Ch’unhyang chŏn} alone sold about 70,000 copies.\textsuperscript{343} Although \textit{Three Kingdoms} did not make the bestseller list, we cannot assume that the novel was not as popular as the bestsellers of this period, because \textit{Three Kingdoms} was published in various translations and adaptations with distinct titles. However, as noted above, \textit{Three Kingdoms} translations and adaptations were the second most published \textit{xiaoshuo} between 1912 and 1942, not to mention the fact that it was the most popular traditional novel in this period.\textsuperscript{344}

Another example showing \textit{Three Kingdoms}’ increasing popularity during the colonial period is a record made by the Japanese Colonial Government (Chosŏn Ch’ŏngdokpu 朝鮮總督府). According to a government survey of bestsellers in the city of P’yŏngyang 平壤 in 1929,

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\textit{Kŭndae ŭi ch’aek ilkki}, 82. Ch’ŏn observes that although the literacy rate was low during this period, about 33–35 percent of households in the 1930s had one or more person in the family who could read Korean. See page 84. Such a literacy rate also contributed to the general readers’ preference for abridged editions of \textit{Three Kingdoms} rather than the complete translation.

\textsuperscript{341} Kwŏn Sun’gŭng, “Ttakchibon kososŏl ŭi suyong kwa 1920 nyŏndae sosŏl taejunghwa,” 65.

\textsuperscript{342} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{343} Ch’ŏn Chŏnghwan, \textit{Kŭndae ŭi ch’aek ilkki}, 70–71.

\textsuperscript{344} Ch’ŏn, 72.
Three Kingdoms is listed as one of the top 22 most popular books.\textsuperscript{345} This survey targeted the residents of P’yŏngyang and included Japanese as well as Koreans. Some scholars note that the Japanese colonial government maintained a high level of censorship about even potentially nationalistic literary works, with Three Kingdoms being an exception.\textsuperscript{346} The example of Yoshikawa Eiji’s rewriting of Three Kingdoms, discussed below, which was serialized in Japan and Korea simultaneously, illustrates that the Japanese colonial rulers favored Three Kingdoms, just as the Manchu rulers had in the Qing period.\textsuperscript{347} The above-mentioned scholars argue that the high popularity of traditional novels such as Three Kingdoms at this time is at least partly due to the banning of other “meaningful” or “educational” readings by the Japanese.\textsuperscript{348}

5.5. Stories Adapted from Three Kingdoms in Chosŏn Korea

As noted above, certain popular sections of Three Kingdoms have been reproduced continuously in Chosŏn Korea. The lengthiness of the work and the complexity of its classical Chinese vocabulary made it difficult for Korean commoners to enjoy full access to all 120 chapters.\textsuperscript{349} That most heroes in Sanguozhi yanyi have died by chapter 85 also made many

\textsuperscript{345} Ch’ŏn, 91. No ranking is specified among the top twenty-two popular books. The record also notes that people who were middle-aged or older had a strong preference for historical war stories, and only two novels among the books listed, Three Kingdoms and Shuihu zhuan, fit such a description.

\textsuperscript{346} For example, see U, 141, and Ch’ŏn, 72.

\textsuperscript{347} Regarding the Manchu rulers’ preference for Three Kingdoms in the Qing period, see Moss Roberts’ afterword to his Three Kingdoms translation, 461–64 and passim.

\textsuperscript{348} U, 141, and Ch’ŏn, 72.

\textsuperscript{349} Kwŏn Sun’gŭng, “Samgukchi yŏn ’ŭi ŭi suyong kwa kŭ chihyang,” 294.
readers lose interest in the complete edition, whether they were reading a Chinese version or a Korean translation. Instead, translations and performances of selected popular chapters became the norm. These were often accompanied by free modifications and revisions to accommodate the sentiments of the Korean people; many translators felt no need to translate all the lengthy verses in the original work, and some simply lacked the literary skills to do it. These translations of *Three Kingdoms* with modifications are so diverse that they are now classified by scholars as a subgenre called “stories adapted from *Three Kingdoms*” (*Samgukchi yŏn’ŭi ŭi pŏnan sosŏl 三國志演義의 體案小說*). After examining research by Kwŏn Sun’gŭng and other scholars on *ttakchibon* editions of *Three Kingdoms*, I conclude that eighteen editions of *Three Kingdoms* translations or adaptations were published eighty-three times as *ttakchibon* in the colonial period.\(^350\) As can be noted from the list of these eighteen editions given below, fourteen are partial translations or adaptations, or partial translations with some revisions. Among the adapted stories, I will examine the most common type---the biographical stories of popular heroes from the *Three Kingdoms*.

The following is a list of *ttakchibon* editions of *Three Kingdoms* translations or adaptations (in order of title, publisher, and date of publication).\(^351\)

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\(^{350}\) Refer to the list and footnotes below for more detailed discussion of each title.

\(^{351}\) For the list, I referred to the following essays: U K’waeje, “Ku hwachabon kososŏl ŭi ch’ulp’an mit yŏng’gu hyŏnhwang,” 120–38; Kwŏn Sun’gŭng, “*Samgukchi yŏn’ŭi ŭi suyong kwŏ kŭ chihyang,*” 299–300; Min Kwandong, “Chungguk kojŏn sosŏl ŭi kungnae ch’ulp’ansa yŏng’gu,” 259; Kim Tohwan, “*Samgukchi yŏn’ŭi ŭi ku hwachabon kojŏn sosŏl lo ŭi kaejak yangsang,*” 195–96. In addition, I examined library catalogues of major universities and research institutes in Korea and added nineteen additional publications.
1) *Sansu Samgukchi* (Essence of Three Kingdoms). Chosŏn Sŏgwan 1913 (1 volume; incomplete edition), 1914 (5 volumes) / name of publisher unknown 1914 (9 volumes) / Po'ŏnggwan 普成館, 1913 (5 volumes) / Kyŏngsŏng Sŏgwan 京城書館, 1915.


In reference to the abovementioned research, I have added to my list titles 1, 4, and 20, which were not included in Kwŏn Sun’gŭng’s list. Kwŏn noted that *Sanyang taejŏn* and *Cho Charyong silgi* are one and the same work with two titles and treated them as one title in his list. In addition, *Monggyŏl Ch’o-Han song* and *Chema Mu chŏn* are also the same work published under two titles. Therefore, I conclude that among the 249 *ttakchibon xiaoshuo* published in the colonial period, eighteen editions of *Three Kingdoms* translations or adaptations were published eighty-three times in total. Considering that the study of *ttakchibon* books is still in its infancy, it is very likely that more *Three Kingdoms* adaptations will be located and added in the future.

352 It seems that some readers still prefer this Hyŏnt’o edition of *Three Kingdoms*, which had been published many times until 1994. Hwang Sŏgyŏng also mentions that he read this edition while imprisoned. See the preface to his *Three Kingdoms* translation in the next chapter.
5) *Monggyŏl Ch’o-Han song* 夢決楚漢訟 (Judging the Case of the State of Chu versus the State of Han in Dream; also called *Chema Mu chŏn* 諸馬武傳). Sin’gu Sŏrim 新舊書林, 1914 (87 pages) / Sŏngmundang Sŏjŏm 誠文堂書店, 1914 / Chosŏn Tosŏ Hoesa 朝鮮圖書會社, Sinmun’gwan 新文館, Chosŏn Sŏgwan, 1925. 353


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353 As for *Monggyŏl Ch’o-Han song*, or *Chema Mu chŏn*, some scholars argue that it is a Korean translation with some revisions of the thirty-first story of *Gujin xiaoshuo* 古今小說 (Stories Old and New), “Nao yinsi Sima Mao duanyu” 鬧陰司司馬貌斷獄 (Sima Mao Disrupts Order in the Underworld and Sits in Judgment). For an English translation of this story, see Yang Shuhui and Yang Yunqin, trans., *Stories Old and New: A Ming Dynasty Collection* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000), 537–56. “Sima Mao Disrupts Order in the Underworld and Sits in Judgment” can be seen, in some respects, as a prequel to *Three Kingdoms*. Sima Mao, a scholar summoned to the netherworld to temporarily replace Yama, meets with plaintiffs such as Han Xin, Peng Yue, and Ying Bu, heroes who had been involved with the establishment of the Han dynasty. After listening to their complaints, Sima divides the Han empire into three kingdoms and decrees that each plaintiff be reincarnated as the leader of them. In *Chema Mu chŏn*, a Korean revision of the Sima Mao story, Chema Mu makes a similar judgement.


pages) Printed a total of eleven times.\textsuperscript{354}

16) \textit{Cho Charyong silgi} 趙子龍實記 (Veritable Record of Zhao Zilong) (also called \textit{Sanyang taejŏn} 山陽大戰), Yŏngch’ang Sŏgwan, Sech’ang Sŏgwan, 1918 / Hoedong Sŏgwan, 1925 / Pangmun Sŏgwan 1926 (49 pages) / Imundang 以文堂, 1935/ Yŏngch’ang Sŏgwan 1936 (49 pages).

17) \textit{Chŏkpyŏk taejŏn} 赤壁大戰 (The Great Battle of Red Cliffs), Hoedong sŏgwan, 1925 (73 pages).


\textsuperscript{354} Shanyang is a fictional place name that is not found in the \textit{Sanguo zhi yanyi}. In the Battle of Shanyang, Zhao Yun single-handedly defeats Cao Cao and his troops using his superhuman abilities. This author created a battle not found in the original in order to depict Zhao Zilong as the most outstanding \textit{Three Kingdoms} hero, a departure from Chinese versions. For further discussion, see Kim Tohwan, 207-12.
Below I examine the biographical stories of popular heroes, the most common type of

*Three Kingdoms* adaptations.

● *Kwan Unjang silgi* 關雲長實記 (Veritable Account of Guan Yunchang)

*Kwan Unjang silgi* is a translation of chapters 1–81 of the *Sanguo zhi yanyi*; modifications and omissions are found throughout the text. The translator/author of *Kwan Unjang silgi* deliberately left out or significantly reduced all accounts that detract from Guan Yu’s heroic image, such as the story of Guan Yu fleeing to Mai 麦城 in defeat in chapter 76 of the *Sanguo zhi yanyi*. 
Figure 4 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was the front cover of *Kwan Unjang silgi*. Original source: Seoul: Kwangdong Soguk, 1919).
Cho Charyong silgi 趙子龍實記 (Veritable Record of Zhao Zilong) (also called Sanyang taejŏn 山陽大戰 [The Battle of Shanyang])

The author of Cho Charyong silgi deliberately confuses the kingdom of Shu (established by Liu Bei) with the Han empire. Throughout the work, the author replaces every instance of Shu with Han. Although in official history Cao Cao is commander of the Han forces and prime minister of the Han empire, here he is cast as a traitor against the Han empire, thereby exposing a strong sense of the historical legitimacy of the Shu-Han dynasty founded by Liu Bei (as described in Shu-Han zhengtong sixiang 蜀漢正統思想). In this story, Zhao Zilong is again the hero who defeats Cao Cao and embodies Shu-Han legitimacy.

Another characteristic feature of this work is that the author often stresses certain heroes’ abilities over those of other heroes.355 Whereas in Sanguozhi yanyi it is difficult to argue which hero serving Liu Bei excels in martial skills, especially among the "Tiger Generals" Zhao Yun, Ma Chao, and Guan Yu, in Cho Charyong silgi, the author describes Ma Chao as Guan Yu's inferior in martial skill, and, in turn, Guan Yu as Zhao Yun's inferior. Similarly, heroes accomplished only in wu 武 (martial valor) in the original work combine wen and wu (文武, cultural attainment–martial valor) in the Cho Charyong silgi. In this adaptation, Ma Chao, Zhao Yun, and Guan Yu excel not only as fighters but also have expertise in astrology and topography. In other words, the author of Cho Charyong silgi invests the traditional wu heroes in the original work with the strategic skills of Zhuge Liang, a typical wen hero in Three Kingdoms, making them multitalented superheroes in a manner typical of heroes in war novels of the Chosŏn period.

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355 Yu, 34–35.
Chang Pi Ma Ch’o silgi (Veritable Account of Zhang Fei and Ma Chao)

Chang Pi Ma Ch’o silgi is a modified translation of chapters 27–73 of the Sanguozhi yanyi. To emphasize the superheroic abilities of Zhang Fei and Ma Chao, the protagonists of this work, the author allows them to claim all combat prowess and feats on the battlefield, including the accomplishments originally performed by Guan Yu and Zhao Yun in Three Kingdoms. These modifications of the original story, which overemphasize the merits of Zhang Fei and Ma Chao, often result in awkward storyline developments. For example, the author re-arranges the story plot, making Zhang Fei fight the battles assigned to Guan Yu in the original. By the same token, Ma Chao takes all credit for the battles involving Zhao Zilong in the Mao edition. As a result, although Liu Bei has quite a few able generals, almost always it is Zhang Fei and Ma Chao who claim all merits accomplished in battle. In the Mao edition, it is not uncommon for several generals at Liu Bei’s side to execute complicated tactics as part of the plan of battle. This revision reveals a weakness in the treatment of these scenes, resulting from the redactor’s fondness for Zhang Fei and Ma Chao and determination to transfer credit for all victories from Liu Bei’s other generals to them.

Chegal Ryang chŏn (The Story of Zhuge Liang)

As one can speculate from the title, this adapted story focuses on the heroic features of Zhuge Liang, often exaggerating them. A unique aspect of this work is that the author utilizes not only the relevant parts in Three Kingdoms, but also incorporates pertinent facts from

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357 Yu Yŏnhwan, 56.
histories, such as *Sanguo zhi* and *Zhuge Zhongwu shu* 諸葛忠武書 (Collected Works of Zhuge Liang) edited by a Ming literatus Yang Shiwei 阳時偉 in 1619. Since the author often cross-checks the images of Zhuge Liang in the *Sanguozhi yanyi* with his accomplishments in reality, he tends to reduce fictional embellishment in his adaptation. An example is the author’s remark on the Battle of Red Cliffs, about which he says, “I choose not to follow the episodes in the *Sanguozhi yanyi*, since it is not advisable to use occurrences not in official histories.”

Therefore, the author focuses on Zhuge Liang’s unparalleled loyalty to Liu Bei and the kingdom of Shu-Han rather than on his superhuman strategies. He even blames his contemporaries (people in the 1910s) for their lack of loyalty and integrity, comparing them to the example of Kongming. Overall, *Chegal Ryang chŏn* is a work that re-interprets accounts on Zhuge Liang in the novel according to official histories. Similar attempts by modern rewriters of *Three Kingdoms* are common; in this sense, *Chegal Ryang chŏn* was a pioneering work.

● *Hwang puin chŏn* 黃夫人傳 (The Story of Madam Hwang)

*The Story of Madam Hwang* is quite distinct from other adapted stories of *Three Kingdoms* in that the protagonist is not a *Three Kingdoms* hero familiar to the readers, but the

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358 Chegal Ryang chŏn, 54.

359 For further discussions of *Chegal Ryang chŏn*, see Yi Ênbong, “Ku hwalchabon Chegal Ryang chŏn üi ch’angjak yangsang yŏn’gu.”

360 Zhuge Liang is styled “Kongming” (his hao 号) and is often called by both names.
wife of Zhuge Liang, a figure hardly ever mentioned in *Three Kingdoms*. Accordingly, the storylines are the creation of the anonymous author.

*The Story of Madam Hwang* can be divided into two parts. The first half concerns the married life of Zhuge Liang and Madam Hwang, whereas the second half is a summarized translation, with modifications, of chapters 36–39 of the *Sanguozhi yanyi* where Zhuge Liang makes his entrance into the novel. What deserves our attention, of course, is the first half where the author’s creativity is most apparent. The only clue to *The Story of Madam Hwang* is a reference in *Sanguozhi yanyi* that Kongming’s wife is an ugly woman from a prestigious family. Based on this reference, the author assumes that Madam Hwang is even more brilliant than Kongming, despite her hideous appearance. The climax of the story occurs when Madam Hwang turns into a beautiful lady and demonstrates her hidden talent to her husband.\(^\text{361}\) It turns out that she has been concealing her beauty and talent until Zhuge Liang is in sincere need of her help. For example, Madam Hwang teaches Zhuge Liang how to deploy the Eightfold Ramparts Maze 八陣圖, which traps Lu Xun 邱遜, a high commander of the kingdom of Wu, in chapter 84. The author seems to have attributed this talent to Madam Hwang, since in Chinese versions of this chapter it is her father Hwang Chengyan who enters the Eightfold

\(^{361}\) This kind of story development is reminiscent of Madam Pak in *The Story of Madam Pak* noted earlier. These two women have similar characteristics in that they have an ugly physical appearance and were married to high government officers responsible for military affairs during war time—Pak’s husband Yi is vice minister of war and Kongming is the prime minister of the Shu kingdom. They are also alike in that they demonstrate military skill superior to that of their husbands at a time of national crisis and also reveal fine-looking appearances once their talents are unmasked.
Maze and saves Lu Xun from danger. It can be argued that this story operates as an unofficial history (C. *waishi*, K. *oesa* 外史), complementary to *Sanguo zhi yanyi*.

**Taedam Kang Yu silgi 大膽姜維實記** (*Veritable Account of Courageous Jiang Wei*)

*The Veritable Account of Courageous Jiang Wei* is a *Sanguozhi yanyi* adaptation published in the early 1920s by an anonymous author. It is a modified translation of the latter half of chapter 105 up to chapter 120 of the *Sanguozhi yanyi*. *The Veritable Account of Courageous Jiang Wei* differs from other adaptations of stories in *Three Kingdoms* in that the author/translator focuses on the final fifteen chapters of the novel where the great heroes have all died off—therefore, this adaptation has traditionally received less attention. Why did the author/translator choose to focus on this “less interesting” part? That this story was written by a Korean intellectual who lived in the 1920s, when Korea was occupied and ruled by Japanese forces, can provide an answer. Influenced by Western nationalistic ideologies,\(^{362}\) the author/translator highly evaluates Jiang Wei’s loyalty to Shu-Han, which remains unchanged even after Shu-Han has already been annexed by the kingdom of Wei. Considering the situation of Korea in the 1920s, the Japanese armies can be compared to the Wei forces, whereas Korean independence fighters might be comparable to Jiang Wei and his followers. Jiang Wei is a commander who begins to lead the army of Shu-Han after Kongming’s death in chapter 104, as

\(^{362}\) Leaders of the March First Movement of 1919, the greatest nationwide protest for the independence of Korea, were deeply influenced by the idea of national self-determination first advocated by J.-J. Rousseau and later supported by US President Woodrow Wilson in 1918. It is plausible that the author, their contemporary, was also inspired by Western nationalistic ideologies.
the national power of Shu clearly begins to deteriorate. He struggles to rebuild the kingdom of Shu-Han, attempting to recover former Shu territory even after he formally surrenders to the Wei army at the order of Liu Shan, Liu Bei’s heir and Second Emperor of Shu-Han. When Jiang’s secret plan to make a surprise attack on the Wei army is revealed, he faces a tragic but heroic death. In his preface, the author/translator reveals his strong sympathy for Jiang’s undying pursuit of independence for his country and sacrifice for the nation.363

The patriotic message of The Veritable Account of Courageous Jiang Wei demonstrates that Three Kingdoms was appreciated by early modern Koreans for its idea of defensive nationalism, just as it was accepted by the masses after the Japanese and Manchu invasions in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.364 In the official history of the Three Kingdoms as well as in the Sanguozhi yanyi, Jiang Wei’s unusual pluck (literally, “huge gallbladder,” dan dan 大膽) was highlighted.365 The author seems to have been deeply impressed

363 “While reading the Sanguozhi yanyi and reaching the part where Jiang Wei’s subjugation of the Central Plain (Zhongyuan 中原) for the ninth time proved all in vain, I could not refrain from sighing and slapping the desk in grief” (Taedam Kang Yu silgi, 3).

364 This nationalistic interpretation of Jiang Wei’s relentless struggle against the Wei has a much longer tradition. The Mao edition of Sanguozhi yanyi is more supportive of Jiang’s struggle and reputation than is Sanguozhi tongsu yanyi, since he “carried on Kongming’s policy of war against Wei,” thus demonstrating the author’s approval of Shu-Han legitimacy. For further details, see Roberts, 1095.

365 Jiang Wei’s “huge gallbladder” is noted twice in the Sanguozhi yanyi: “The northern soldiers, vying to take revenge on Jiang Wei’s corpse, cut open his stomach and exposed his gall, which was found to be larger than a chicken’s egg (其膽大如鷄卵). … So great in courage (大膽應無懼), what had he to fear? / His hero’s heart was pledged to hold the field.” Translation cited from Moss Roberts, 919. That
by Jiang’s unusual valor, cited in the title of the work, even when confronted with a hopeless
situation.

5.6 Appearance of Complete Modern Translations of *Three Kingdoms* and
Competition with Yoshikawa’s Rewriting of *Three Kingdoms*

Modernization brought about many changes in early twentieth-century Korea, one of
which was the appearance of daily newspapers and magazines.366 Upon their appearance,
newspapers and magazines soon became a popular means for writers to publish their literary
works, mostly novels. With Japanese influence, newspapers usually serialized romantic stories or
detective fiction.367 It seems that *Three Kingdoms* was the first Chinese historical novel to be
serialized in a major newspaper; this tradition started in 1929 and still continues.368

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one has a gallbladder as big as an egg is a typical expression used to emphasize exceptional courage.

Yenna Wu introduces a story satirizing a henpecked husband, in which a friend of the henpecked husband
mocks him by saying, “How strange! Your gallbladder was as big as an egg a moment ago, but now it’s
as small as a mustard seed.” See Wu, 193.

366 *Taehan maeil sinbo* 大韓每日申報 was established in 1905, and *Chosŏn ilbo* 朝鮮日報 and
*Tong’a ilbo* 東亞日報 were established in 1920.

367 For instance, upon its foundation, *Chosŏn ilbo* serialized a romantic story, *Ch’umong* 春夢
(Spring dream), beginning in March 1920, and a detective story, *Pakchwi usan* (Bat umbrella), from July
14, 1920 to September 5, 1920. *Chosŏn ilbo* also serialized *Im Kkŏkchŏng* by Hong Myŏnghŭi from
November 21, 1928 to March 11, 1939 and a translation of *Honglou meng* in 1930. The newspaper also
often inserted advertisements for detective or romantic stories.

368 Yang Kŏnsik started to serialize *Three Kingdoms* in *Taehan maeil sinbo* from 1929. See below.
With the exception of Yang Kŏnsik’s *Three Kingdoms* translation that started in 1929, this trend seems to have been influenced by Yoshikawa Eiji’s Japanese translation of *Three Kingdoms*, which was serialized in a Korean newspaper concurrently with its appearance in Japan from 1939 to 1942. Ever since then, the tradition for celebrity writers to serialize rewritings of *Three Kingdoms* in newspapers or magazines and then publish them as books became a formula for success in the book market.\(^{369}\)

Unlike the anonymous translators of *Three Kingdoms* in the Chosŏn period, these writers were never shy about unveiling themselves in public as translators/revisers of the classical novel; they were also distinct from the anonymous Chosŏn literati in that they were equipped simultaneously with modern education as well as education in the Chinese classics and had already acquired some fame in literary circles.\(^{370}\)

As a result, it is only natural that they often, though not always, interpreted *Three Kingdoms* in a modern Western context. Furthermore, their translations are more revealing of the characteristics of each translator than the translations made by anonymous Chosŏn literati. The early celebrity writers were also aware that translating the famous Chinese classic under their own names would bring not only financial profit but literary fame, and these concerns are still prevalent among the contemporary rewriters of *Three Kingdoms*.

With respect to *Three Kingdoms* in the colonial period, we cannot avoid mentioning Yoshikawa Eiji’s rewriting of the Chinese work. The translation of *Three Kingdoms* by Yi Munyŏl, discussed in the next chapter, was motivated by the commercial success of Eiji’s work

\(^{369}\) Celebrity writers who fit this description, such as Yi Munyŏl, Hwang Sŏgyŏng, and Chang Chŏngil, along with notable characteristics of their works, will be discussed in the next chapter.

\(^{370}\) Hong Sanghun, “Yang Kŏnsik ŭi *Samguk yŏn’ŭi* pŏnyŏk e taeıyŏ,” 53.
and went on to become the most sold of all Korean translations of the work. The popularity of Yoshikawa Eiji’s *Three Kingdoms* demonstrated that the Chinese novel's marketability, proven over many years in the Chosŏn period, was even more valid in colonial Korea. Yoshikawa’s *Three Kingdoms* literally influenced all subsequent Korean translations, with each translator or rewriter highly conscious of that work's status and success.

Thus, the appearance of Yoshikawa’s rewriting of *Three Kingdoms* marks a divide between premodern and modern translations of *Three Kingdoms* and between word-for-word translations and creative rewritings of the work. Yoshikawa’s work was a turning point, in also that, after its appearance, the majority of Korean translations/rewritings of *Three Kingdoms* were based on it rather than on the so-called Mao edition.

The colonial period eventually witnessed the appearance of three modern translations of *Three Kingdoms*, all of which were serialized either in newspapers or magazines. Of the three translators, Yang Kŏnsik was a Sinologist who had studied in China and spent several years there, Pak T’aewŏn, a famous novelist, and Han Yong’un a well-known poet, Buddhist monk, and independence movement leader.

371 In a recent internet television interview, Yi mentions that he decided to produce his translation when he learned that Yoshikawa Eiji’s *Three Kingdoms* translation had sold far better than all of his other historical novels combined. Refer to Yi’s interview with Chung’ang ilbo at http://tvout.joins.com/main.asp?categoryID=101001001&movieID=2008_0517_003710&.

372 Among the modern Korean translations and revisions of *Three Kingdoms* that were published between 1920 and 2004, the number of Mao edition–based translations and revisions was fifty-eight, while Yoshikawa edition–based translations and revisions was fifty-nine. See Yi Yŏngt’ae, “Samgukchi han’gugŏ yŏkpon sŏmun koch’al,” 140.
Yang Kônsik’s work was the first modern Korean translation of *Three Kingdoms*. Among all modern Korean translations, only this one (serialized 1929–31) predates Yoshikawa Eiji’s Japanese translation (serialized from September 20, 1939 to September 14, 1942). Yang is unique among Korean translators in being better known as a sinologist than as a novelist or poet. *Three Kingdoms* was not the only traditional Chinese novel that he was interested in; Yang also serialized translations of *Honglou meng* (Dream of the Red Chamber) and *Shuihu zhuan*.373

His translation stands apart in that it is also the only modern Korean translation free from the influence of Yoshikawa’s rewriting of the novel, having predated it by a decade. Yang serialized his translation in *Maeil sinbo* (Maeil Daily Newspaper) from 1929 to 1931 for a total of 859 episodes.374 However, since his translation was never published as a book, we cannot conclude that it exerted the influence that Yoshikawa’s work did. Rather, it would make more sense to regard Yang’s translation as part of his project to introduce notable Chinese traditional novels to Koreans. The most noteworthy point regarding Yang’s work is that it is the first attempt to fashion a modern colloquial translation of *Three Kingdoms* with punctuation (*kündahwach’e* 近代化體), rather than relying on old translation clichés (*kuhwach’e* 舊話體).375

As for modern Korean translations of *Three Kingdoms*, those by Han Yongun (serialized 1939–40) and by Pak T’aewŏn (serialized 1941–43) appeared within a decade of Yang’s, but were abruptly interrupted before they could be completed.


374 Hong Sanghun, “Yang Kônsik ŭi Samguk yŏn’ŭi pŏnyŏk e taehayŏ,” 63.

The direct motivation for Han Yongun to start his translation of the novel was the popularity of Eiji’s *Three Kingdoms*. Beginning in 1939, Yoshikawa’s rewrite was serialized in *Kyŏngsŏng ilbo* 京城日報 in Seoul and almost immediately attracted attention. Soon, (after less than six weeks to be exact), Pang ŭngmo 方應謨 (1890–1950), the president of *Chosŏn ilbo* (one of *Kyŏngsŏng ilbo*’s competitors), hired Han Yong’un so that he could also serialize a translation of *Three Kingdoms*, and his work began to appear on November 1, 1939, 42 two days after Yoshikawa’s work began to be serialized. However, Han’s translation was discontinued on August 10, 1940 when the Japanese regime shut down *Chosŏn ilbo*. It covered up to chapter 57 of the Mao edition and was never published.

In turn, Pak T’aewŏn’s translation of *Three Kingdoms*, serialized from 1941 to 1943 in *Sin sidae* 新時代, a monthly magazine, was affected by the translations of both Yang Kŏnsik and Yoshikawa. Yang was Pak’s teacher of literary Chinese, and based on what he had learned from his teacher, Pak began to translate Chinese literary works from the late 1930s.

He embarked on his translation thinking that his project was, in some sense, a continuation of his teacher’s unfinished project. He also thought that since Yoshikawa’s work was more of an adaptation of the novel than a pure translation, it would be a meaningful task for

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376 Cho Sŏngmyŏn, “Han Yongun *Samgukchi* ŭi p’anbon sang ŭi t’ŭkching kwa ŭimi,” 92. See also the preface by Pak Iryŏng, Pak T’aewŏn’s grandson in Pak T’aewŏn, trans., *Samgukchi*, 1:6.

377 Cho Sŏngmyŏn, “Han Yongun *Samgukchi* ŭi p’anbon sang ŭi t’ŭkching kwa ŭimi,” 92.

378 Cho Sŏngmyŏn, “Han Yongun *Samgukchi* ŭi p’anbon sang ŭi t’ŭkching kwa ŭimi,” 97.


380 Ibid.
him to translate the novel “in his own literary style.” Pak T’aewŏn’s work covered from chapter 37 up to chapter 57 of the original work, the episode of the Battle of Red Cliffs. He then temporarily ceased serializing his translation in 1943, and published his partial translation as a separate book in 1943 and 1945 through Pangmun Sŏgwan. In 1948, after publishing three volumes of his Shuihu zhuan translation through Chŏng’ŭmsa 正音社, Pak returned to his Three Kingdoms translation at the request of Ch’oe Yŏnghae, the president of Chŏng’ŭmsa, and in 1950 published a two-volume translation of the work. Pak was working on translation daily after publishing his partial translation in 1950, but the manuscripts for the later parts (equivalent to volumes 3 and 4) were lost during the Korean War. During the war, Pak voluntarily joined the communist party of North Korea. His complete translation of Three Kingdoms...
Three Kingdoms was published in 1964 in North Korea, but re-published in South Korea only in 2008 by Kip’ŭnsaem, based on the North Korean edition.\textsuperscript{387}

Yang Kŏnsik’s attempt to translate Three Kingdoms into a modern-style work was not merely following the Japanese trend—rather, it was an independent and pioneering effort in its own right. However, it is also worth noting that the second earliest modern Korean translation of the novel by Han Yongun was initiated by the immediate popularity of Yoshikawa’s work, and also that many modern Korean translators/rewriters of Three Kingdoms up to Yi Munyŏl in the late 1980s were aware of Yoshikawa’s work, with some of these being little more than re-translations or modifications of Yoshikawa’s work.\textsuperscript{388} Since 1939 when Yoshikawa’s work came

\textsuperscript{387} Pak voluntarily joined the communist party of North Korea and became a high official there, and his translation of Three Kingdoms was not published under his own name until very recently. Instead, it was published under the name of Ch’oe Yŏnghae, the president of Chŏng’ŭmsa, with the later chapters translated by anonymous translators hired by Ch’oe. See Yun Chinyŏn, “Pak T’aewŏn Samgukchi p’anbon yŏn’gu,” 109–19, for further details of Ch’oe’s role in revising and publishing Pak’s work in the post–Korean War period. Due to this political situation, Pak’s translation could never be an influential work among many translations of Three Kingdoms prevalent in the book market.

\textsuperscript{388} For example, Hwang Sŏgyŏng recalls in the preface to his Three Kingdoms translation that the first Three Kingdoms translation he read as a child was a re-translation of Yoshikawa’s work: “There was a juvenile magazine called Hagwŏn 學院 at the time [in the early 1950s], in which a Three Kingdoms [translation] by Kim Yonghwan was serialized under the title of Big Nose’s “Three Kingdoms.” Later I learned that it was based on Yoshikawa Eiji’s Japanese translation of Three Kingdoms, the dominant Three Kingdoms translation during the Japanese colonial period. See Hwang’s preface to his Three Kingdoms in the next chapter for further details. Min Kwandong also points out that many modified re-translations of Yoshikawa’s work have been published in Korea, with a recent example being Pak
out, quite a few of the *Three Kingdoms*–related works that have appeared in Korea were more or less under the influence of Japanese predecessors.

Another noteworthy difference between the three modern Korean translations in the colonial period and those that came after is that, these translators were equipped with a solid knowledge of classical Chinese as well as an understanding of modern literature. However, unlike Yoshikawa Eiji, none of them had much influence on those who followed them. As a matter of fact, the translations by Yang Kŏnsik and Han Yongun were discontinued (and therefore incomplete) and were never published in book forms. Although Pak T’aewŏn managed to complete his translation and had it published, his translation was not published in South Korea until very recently for political reasons, or has been circulating in South Korea as a compromised translation made public in the name of the director of the publishing house. In short, even with the relatively high level of literary accuracy and artistic perfection, none of these three translations are remembered by many contemporary Korean readers. Ironically, among all the modern translations of *Three Kingdoms* that came out in the colonial period, it is the work of Yoshikawa Eiji that has affected Korean readers and translators of the novel for several decades. Accordingly, I will discuss Yoshikawa’s work in the following section.

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Chŏngsu’s eight-volume translation of *Three Kingdoms* published in 1994 by Ch’ŏngmok. See Min (1995), 409–10. Sŏ In’guk’s translation of *Three Kingdoms* published in 1953 by P’yŏngbŏmsa is thought to be an early re-translation of Yoshikawa’s work, which is another case in point showing that Yoshikawa’s work has been plagiarized by Korean publishers ever since its serialization.
5.7 Yoshikawa Eiji’s Rewriting of *Three Kingdoms*

Although Yoshikawa’s Japanese rewriting of *Three Kingdoms* gained immediate popularity upon its serialization in 1939, it was not until 1965 that a Korean translation of it officially appeared.\(^{389}\) Apparently, most readers of modern newspapers in the late 1930s did not need a Korean translation of it. Ch’ŏn Chŏnghwan points out that during the late colonial period (1930s–40s), many Korean intellectuals, especially those who read newspapers, knew Japanese language, and it was these intellectuals who led the literary and cultural circles of colonial Korea.\(^{390}\) Yoshikawa’s work was appreciated and consumed by these colonial intellectuals.

\(^{389}\) The first official Korean translation of Yoshikawa’s rewriting seems to be *Three Kingdoms* by Yi Yongho, published by Paekcho in 1965. The first appearance of a Korean translation of Yoshikawa’s work came much earlier; Sŏ In’guk’s translation of *Three Kingdoms* published in 1953 by P’yŏngbŏmsa is a modified re-translation of Yoshikawa’s work. This translation was re-published in 1958 by Pagyŏngsa with the names of Kim Tongni 金東里 (1913–95) and Hwang Sunwŏn 黃順元 (1915–2000), two of the literary magnates of the time, listed as the alleged translators. For a further list of Korean translations of Yoshikawa’s work, see Kwŏn Yongsŏn, “Yoshikawa Eiji *Samgukchi* ŭi suyong kwa sa-jŏk ŭimi,” 199–200.

\(^{390}\) Ch’ŏn Chŏnghwan observes that the Korean book market grew significantly from the 1920s, once Chosŏn came under the influence of the Japanese publishing industry. By 1930, about 99 percent of imported books in Korea were from Japan, and about 90 percent of the books used in schools (elementary to university) were in Japanese. Many Korean writers published their works in Japanese in this period, and continued to read publications in Japanese long after liberation and the Korean War. For further discussion, see Ch’ŏn, 172, 227–28, and chapter 4, “Reading in Japanese.”
Re-translations or modifications of Yoshikawa’s work have appeared many times subsequently in Korea. Although Yoshikawa’s rewriting turned out to be most influential for modern Korean translations of *Three Kingdoms*, Korean translations of Yoshikawa’s work itself sold very few copies. The reputation of Yoshikawa Eiji in Korea rests mostly on his other samurai novels, *Taiko* and *Musashi*, which were published in a series named *Taemang* 大望.

Yoshikawa Eiji (吉川英治, 1892–1962) was a historical novelist, one of the most famous authors in the genre, along with Yamaoka Sohachi. Yoshikawa had already established his reputation as a samurai novel writer before he published his rewriting of *Three Kingdoms*. Yoshikawa’s *Three Kingdoms* was the first full-scale attempt to revise *Three Kingdoms* thoroughly according to the translator’s taste, and his rewriting followed the narrative tradition of his samurai novels such as *Taiko* and *Musashi*. As for Yoshikawa’s famous historical novels, he serialized *Musashi* from 1935 to 1939 in *Asahi shimbun* 朝日新聞, and worked on *Taiko* and *Three Kingdoms* in the late 1930s. The fact that his *Three Kingdoms* sold more copies than all his other novels put together shows the popularity of his rewriting of *Three Kingdoms*.391

Among his best-known novels, most are revisions of past works, and his rewriting of *Three Kingdoms* was no exception; for his historical novels, he never created an entirely new work of his own. Rather, Yoshikawa revised preexisting works into modern styles, dropping the boring episodes and adding new ones that could appeal to modern readers.

In his rewriting of *Three Kingdoms*, Yoshikawa did not hesitate to change the plot while rendering a traditional Chinese novel into the style of a samurai novel. For instance, his novel does not start with the famous phrase in the original, “The empire, long divided, must unite; long

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united, must divide.” Instead, it starts with the scene where Liu Bei confronts the Yellow Scarf
Army as he carries tea leaves purchased for his mother with money he had earned from selling
bamboo mattresses, a scene which is entirely Yoshikawa’s creation. 392

The opening of the novel as revised by Yoshikawa has served as a cliché for his followers,
including Yokoyama Mitsuteru 横山光輝 (1934–2004) and Ko Uyŏng 高羽榮 (1938–2005), the
most well-known Three Kingdoms manga (or manhwa) artists in Japan and Korea,
respectively. 393 Numerous Korean translations (in many cases, merely re-translations or
modifications of Yoshikawa’s work) have “borrowed” Yoshikawa’s revised plot for their
versions of Three Kingdoms, since they decided that his modernized version suited modern
readers better than the original. As a result, quite a few Korean readers still believe that Three
Kingdoms starts with the scene of Liu Bei buying a pot of tea for his beloved mother.

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392 Hwang Sŏgyŏng also notes the change of the starting scene in a re-translation of Yoshikawa’s
work in the preface to his Three Kingdoms translation. See his preface in the next chapter.

393 The Three Kingdoms comics by Yokoyama Mitsuteru were first published in Japan in 1974,
recording 69 printings in just eight months. His Three Kingdoms manga is based closely on Yoshikawa’s
work and was published in Korea as a 60-volume work by Taehyŏn in 1993, and is still in circulation. Ko
Uyŏng serialized his cartoon-revision Three Kingdoms from 1978 to 1980 in Ilgan sŏp’och’ŭ (Daily
sports), and it was published as a separate set of books and CD-ROMs in 2002 by Aebi Books. Although
Ko more or less copied Yoshikawa’s revision for the starting scene of his Three Kingdoms, his manhwa is
distinct in many aspects and includes his own interpretations, one of which is a more balanced portrayal
of Cao Cao that predates that of Yi Munyŏl by about a decade. For further discussion of Ko’s comic book
revision of Three Kingdoms, see Chŏng Houng, “Ko Uyŏng Samgukchi wa Samgukchi ūi sŏsa
pyŏnhwan.” Ko’s Three Kingdoms comic remains a steady seller in the Korean book market.
Figure 5 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a cover page with an image of Zhang Fei in Ko Uyŏng's comic book edition of *Three Kingdoms*. Original source: Ko Uyŏng, *Samgukchi* (Seoul: Aebi-books, 2002).

5.7.1 Yoshikawa’s *Three Kingdoms* and the Tradition of the Samurai Novel

One outstanding feature of samurai stories is that the relationship between the feudal lord (shōgun 將軍 or daimyō 大名) and his retainers functions as an underlying principle of the work. This feudal relationship has survived the downfall of the bakufu 幕府. Indeed, it has taken on new connotations regarding the relation between corporate leaders and so-called sararīman (“salary man,” i.e. male salaried employees), a new social class in modern Japanese society. Since the Second World War, the social norm for the ordinary Japanese man involves becoming a sararīman at a big corporation and getting promoted step by step while owing loyalty to the company life, thus insuring a stable, middle-class lifestyle for himself and his family. Japanese men often compare themselves to a retainer and their boss to a shōgun or
daimyō. By the same token, rivalry between factions in a company can be compared to a power struggle between smaller daimyōs or subordinates under a bigger daimyō or shōgun.

In their advertising, writers and publishers of samurai fiction have taken the line that, by reading samurai novels, the sararīman gains survival skills in a society characterized by constant power struggles. As a matter of fact, many corporate CEOs have also bought this argument and encourage their subordinates to read samurai fiction, particularly Yoshikawa-style rewritings of *Three Kingdoms*.

This model applies to modern Korean society as well and arguably even more so. Following the Second World War, Korea has seen the emergence of business conglomerates, or chaebŏl. While creating a great deal of Korea’s wealth, these chaebŏl have been controlled by founding families. Thus, large international corporations such as Samsung and Hyundai have been controlled mostly by the founders and their sons and grandsons. Therefore, members of these companies other than the direct male descendants of the founders, irrespective of their managerial skills, are not in a position to be promoted higher than the middle echelons, and leaders of conglomerates tend to appreciate their sararīman’s loyalty to the founding families more than their business skills. In such circumstances, samurai stories that emphasize notions such as the relationship between feudal lord and retainer and related survival skills under such situations are recognized as having a value that goes beyond simple entertainment.  

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394 Shibata Renzaburō (1917–78), a well-known Japanese historical novelist who wrote novels about Miyamoto Musashi and Toyotomi Hideyoshi, commented on this trend, “Once it was very popular for people to study managerial skills by reading *Tokugawa Ieyasu* [by Yamaoka Sohachi], which is laughable. *Xiaoshuo* literally is ‘small talk’ rather than ‘big talk’ [大說]; isn’t it absurd to count on *xiaoshuo* for management? Real reading is reading Sherlock Holmes sitting in a rocking chair by the
Yoshika’s rewriting of *Three Kingdoms*, such notions as the relationship between a lord and his subjects and choosing the right lord and paying loyalty to him are more emphasized than in the original work. This partly explains why the Yoshikawa-style revisions of *Three Kingdoms* have been more popular and influential in Korea than the translations based on the Mao edition.

For instance, in chapter 50 of the Mao edition, at the Huarong Trail, Guan Yu encounters Cao Cao and his troops defeated miserably at the Battle of Red Cliffs. Persuaded by Cao Cao’s remark on an anecdote in the *Spring and Autumn Annals* aimed at touching Guan Yu’s exceptional sense of honor, alongside his moral indebtedness to Cao Cao for having slain his commanders at five passes when he left Cao’s side to join Liu Bei, Guan Yu softens and lets Cao and his troops pass without hurting them. However, in Yoshikawa’s revision, it is mostly the loyalty of Cao Cao’s vassals that moved him rather than Cao’s persuasion.

Yunchang raised his head again. Behind Cao Cao, his vassals, with a pathetic look of defeated soldiers on their faces, were begging Guan’s mercy for their lord on bended knees with head bowed to the ground, while weeping. “Oh, what a piteous sight of loyalty between lord and retainer! How could I slay them mercilessly?” At fireside. Let us not be petty and read a novel for some immediate profit.” These comments are quoted from his afterword to *Yuryŏng sinsa* (a Korean translation of *Ureisinsi* 幽靈信士, Ghost gentleman), 295–96. Renzaburō was a competitor and colleague of Yoshikawa Eiji and Yamaoka Sohachi in that all three wrote novels on the same (or similar) historical figures and published them in a similar period. Being a popular historical novelist, Renzaburō thought that *xiaoshuo* narratives should be valued for their entertainment value rather than for other “petty” purposes, and his historical novels were not promoted as guides for acquiring survival or managerial skills in Korean corporate life.
last, Guan Yu was moved by their loyalty. He silently turned his horse away and looked the other way.395

In Yoshikawa’s revision, it is clear that the loyalty of Cao Cao’s retainers saved his life. Many examples in Taemang, which I discuss shortly, show that a retainer’s fate depends mostly on his lord. In the context of samurai novels, it is not unnatural for a vassal to do anything necessary to save the lord that he serves.

This trend also explains why Yoshikawa’s Three Kingdoms and its epigones were more welcomed in post-war capitalistic Korean society than when it was first introduced to Korean readers in the colonial period. Thus far, I have examined the common keyword that links Yoshikawa’s rewriting of Three Kingdoms and Japanese historical novels; the survival skills for subordinates in premodern society or for sararīman in modern society.

As noted above, Yoshikawa’s reputation in Korea has benefited mostly from his samurai stories, Taiko and Musashi, rather than from his rewriting of Three Kingdoms. Taiko and Musashi have been bestsellers in Korea for about three decades. More importantly, these novels were often advertised by publishers along with Yoshikawa-style rewritings of Three Kingdoms.

Tokugawa Ieyasu 徳川家康, Yamaoka Sohachi’s (1907–78) best-known historical novel, was first published in Korea in 1970, shortly after its serialization was completed in 1967 in Japan (serialized 1950–67). Given the virulent anti-Japanese nationalism in Korea, the Korean publisher decided to avoid the Japanese-sounding title and instead titled it Taemang 大望 (meaning literally “Great Ambition” [for unification of Japan], a theme can also be used for the

395 Yi In’gwang, trans. Samgukchi, 3:323-4. (Translation of Yoshikawa Eiji’s Sangokushi.)
Upon its publication, Taemang proved to be an immediate success in the book market, and the publisher decided to introduce other famous Japanese historical samurai novels as sequels to Taemang. Taiko and Musashi by Yoshikawa Eiji were published as sequels to Taemang I (Tokugawa Ieyasu), and have sold millions of copies so far.

Thus, in the 1970s both the Taemang series and various editions of Three Kingdoms were advertised as the same kind of story, satisfying the same purpose: teaching survival skills to readers.397

This marketing strategy turned out to be so successful that readers of Three Kingdoms and readers of the Taemang series cross-recommend their favorite historical war epics to each other.398

396 Refer to the afterword by Pak Chaehūi, the translator, for why the publisher altered the title. See Taemang, 1:429.

397 Publishers have often introduced the Taemang series as the “Japanese Three Kingdoms” and compared the three protagonists in Tokugawa Ieyasu (published in Korea under the name of Taemang)--Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and Tokugawa Ieyasu--to the three protagonists in Three Kingdoms, Cao Cao, Sun Quan, and Liu Bei. See, among many examples, page 5 of Tong’a ilbo, December 25, 1970 and page 5 of the same paper, December 15, 1979. These commercials also claim that those who aspire to be business leaders like the leaders in Three Kingdoms or Taemang should learn from them by reading these historical novels.

398 According to page 7 of Kyǒnghyang sinmun, September 26, 1983, male sararīman listed Three Kingdoms, the Bible, and Taemang as the top three books recommended for junior sararīman. Even now, references to and recommendations for each other can be found frequently in online book reviews of these titles. In addition, the vice chairman of Samsung Electronics, Yi Haksu (October, 14, 2006 in Chosón
In this way, the secret of *Three Kingdoms*’ success in modern Korean society has largely depended on the survival skills originating from Japanese samurai stories, and *Three Kingdoms* helped to secure the readers of Japanese historical war novels, which numbered in the millions. This in part explains why repeat readers of *Three Kingdoms* are predominantly male.\(^{399}\) I discuss publishers’ marketing strategies for *Three Kingdoms* in the following chapter in further detail.

\(^{ilbo}\), once mentioned, “I have always told the presidents of Samsung to learn from *Tokugawa Ieyasu*.\)” For the interview with Yi Haksu, see http://wikistory.co.kr/index.php?url=cc&no=19289.

Furthermore, book reviews on the major online bookstores often compare *Tokugawa Ieyasu* to *Three Kingdoms*, and Yokoyama Mitsuteru to Ko Uyŏng.

\(^{399}\) According to Yi Sŭngeh’ae, there is a huge gap in *Three Kingdoms* readership between male and female college students in Korea. 41.2 percent of male students who answered his survey had read *Three Kingdoms* more than twice, while only 4.2 percent of female students had done so. If we take this survey at face value, repeat male readers of *Three Kingdoms* are about ten times more numerous than the female
In this chapter, I have examined the advent of modern translations of *Three Kingdoms* in the forms of manuscripts, *panggakbon*, and *ttakchibon* editions that appeared in late Chosŏn and early colonial period. I have showed that, while many traditional novels were eclipsed by modern novels, translations and adaptations of *Three Kingdoms* gained more popularity with each passing year, which eventually led to the appearance of complete translations by modern Korean writers during the colonial period. The three modern translations that appeared in this period competed with Yoshikawa Eiji’s version of *Three Kingdoms*, which remained influential since it was first serialized in 1939. Rewritings of *Three Kingdoms* in the post-colonial period will be discussed in the following chapter.

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readers. See Yi Sŭngch’ae, “Taehaksaengdŭl ŭi panbok toksŏ kyŏnghŏm e kwanhan yŏn’gu” (A Study on Repeat Reading Practice of College Students), 172–75.
6   Rewriting *Three Kingdoms*: The Practice by Modern Korean Writers of Translating/Revising a Chinese Classic

“Translation is, of course, a rewriting of an original text. All rewritings, whatever their intention, reflect a certain ideology and a poetics and as such manipulate literature to function in a given society in a given way.”

6.1 Introduction

Ever since *Three Kingdoms* was introduced to Chosŏn Korea several centuries ago, it has remained one of the Koreans’ favorite novels. Moreover, the popularity of Korean translations of *Three Kingdoms* has not diminished in modern and contemporary Korean society. Rather, it has become even more spectacularly popular: *Three Kingdoms* has held its position as the number one Korean best-seller of all time for several decades and has recently topped worldwide best-sellers, such as the *Harry Potter* series, in sales. Moreover, the most famous translators of *Three Kingdoms* in the Korean book market have all been renowned novelists rather than scholars of classical Chinese literature or professional translators. Although there is now a complete translation into Korean of *Three Kingdoms* available by a scholar of Chinese literature, it has received little attention.

These "amateur" translations are read by millions of Koreans of all generations. So great is their popularity that publishing one’s own unabridged translation of *Three Kingdoms* has become a yardstick for defining prestigious Korean novelists. A great number of major Korean

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400 Andre Lefevere, cited from the general editor’s preface to the *Translator’s Invisibility*, vii.

401 Kim Kuyong’s translation that came out in 1974 is the first and the only complete modern translation of the Mao-edition *Three Kingdoms*. 

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writers of fiction have not only published a *Three Kingdoms* translation but have also taken the liberty of modifying the narrative based on their philosophical and historical viewpoint. The success of Yi Mun’yŏl’s translation of *Three Kingdoms* is a case in point. Since its first publication in 1988, it has gone through 145 printings and sold some 17 million copies. In addition to Yi Mun’yŏl, well-known writers such as Pak Chonghwa, Chŏng Pisŏk, Cho Sŏnggi, Kim Hongsin, Hwang Sŏg’yŏng, and Chang Chŏng’il have all published translations of *Three Kingdoms*. Except for Pak Chonghwa and Chŏng Pisŏk, who have already died, all the other writers are among the most popular and influential novelists in Korea since the 1980s.

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A survey of these “retranslations” of *Three Kingdoms* demonstrates that each of them “rewrites” *Three Kingdoms* rather than translating the source text into Korean. In what follows, my discussion of three of them—those of Yi Mun’yŏl, Hwang Sŏg’yŏng, and Chang Chŏng’il—will elucidate Lefevere's assertion by showing how each rewriting manipulates the source text in accord with an ideological agenda. By way of examples drawn from these works, I will demonstrate that such ideological rewriting either conforms to or rebels against the dominant ideology of contemporary Korean society. I will then elucidate the cultural politics that underlie these enterprises and contribute to making *Three Kingdoms* into a national novel of
Korea. In this sense, the prefaces by the three above-mentioned celebrity writers to their *Three Kingdoms* translations are a case in point. In their prefaces, these writers unveil the justification for their decision to rewrite the novel, given numerous translations of the work available already; they also explain specifically why they chose certain translation strategies. These celebrity writers, who also happen to be amateur translators of the Chinese classic, endeavor to clarify in their prefaces why their translations need readers’ attention and how professional they have been in terms of selecting the source text, illustrations, and the ability to read and analyze the original. For these reasons, I begin my discussion of their works with translations of the prefaces by these three writers below, and also provide observations and analysis about their translation strategies revealed in them.

I conclude with some thoughts about how the translations of these "amateur" sinologists have achieved their dominant status in the book market, a development that raises questions regarding the nature of translation and the role of the traditional literary translator.

6.2 The First Full-scale Attempt to Re-create the *Three Kingdoms* Story

Yi Mun’yŏl’s translation of *Three Kingdoms* was first published in 1988. In his preface, remarks concerning the Japanese translations of *Three Kingdoms* by Yoshikawa and Chen Shunchen 陳舜臣 reveal that he was aware of their commercial success in Japan. Yi is the first Korean writer to make a full-length re-creation of *Three Kingdoms*, and to some extent his undertaking was prompted by the translations of Yoshikawa and Chen Shunchen. Chen, a Chinese historical fiction writer who lives in Japan and writes in Japanese, has produced a Japanese translation of *Three Kingdoms* that has influenced Korean translations of *Three Kingdoms*. It is worth noting that Yoshikawa and Chen are the first professional historical fiction
writers to re-create their own versions of *Three Kingdoms*. Although titled *Three Kingdoms*, their translations are actually re-creations based on their historical viewpoint and ideology, and preserve only the basic story plots of the Mao edition of *Three Kingdoms*.

As noted in my introduction, Yi’s translation of *Three Kingdoms* has achieved the most authoritative standing among the modern Korean translations of *Three Kingdoms*, despite recent releases of *Three Kingdoms* translations by other famous novelists. Indeed, the recent boom of *Three Kingdoms* translations can be attributed to the success of Yi's venture in 1988. Since then, Yi has become a celebrity with a strongly “authoritarian” cultural influence, an advocate of traditional ideology rooted in a staunchly anti-communist sentiment that became dominant after the Korean War. His *Three Kingdoms* translation is now attacked by some younger writers and critics for being unbalanced; that is, for championing established authority and outdated social and political systems in the critical notes appended to each chapter.

6.3 Yi Mun’yŏl’s Preface to His *Three Kingdoms* Translation

On my translation of *Three Kingdoms* with critical notes:

There seems to be no need to provide wordy explanations here for *Sanguo zhi yanyi*, which we often call *Samguk chi* [in Korean]. *Three Kingdoms* is a historical novel that has been developed and orchestrated by numerous people including oral storytellers, idlers at the street market, frustrated scholars, and leisured literati. Luo Guanzhong 羅貫中, whom we often recognize as the author, seems to be the person who appeared at the final stage of development of the *Three Kingdoms* story and managed to bring to 

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403 For the commercial success of Yi’s translation, refer to footnote 403.

404 Translated from Yi’s preface to his *Three Kingdoms* translation, 1: 5-8.
completion the novel as we know it today after collecting, editing, and rearranging all accessible materials.

Yet there seem to be many distinct editions that circulated even after Luo Guanzhong’s magnificent production, a work often described as “seven parts truth and three parts fiction” (qishi sanxu 七實三虛), which was brought to completion by his meticulous comparisons with and investigations of Sanguo zhi (Chronicle of the Three Kingdoms) by Chen Shou 陳壽. The Three Kingdoms editions considered significant nowadays in terms of such differences as structure, critical notes, and embedded poems include the Hongzhi edition 弘治本 (or 嘉靖本), Li Liweng edition 李立翁本, Li Zhuowu edition 李卓吾本, and Mao Zonggang edition 毛宗崗本.

My curiosity about the missing or hard-to-acquire editions [of Three Kingdoms in Korea] led me to Taiwan before starting the translation project. During my relatively short stay in Taiwan, thanks to those who showed kindness to me, I was able to obtain all editions mentioned above except the Li Liweng edition. However, after examining those texts, I arrived at the conclusion that later editions [of Three Kingdoms] mostly outshine earlier ones, which explains why only the Mao edition survives until now.

In the Mao edition, Mao Zonggang replaced the critical notes and poems in the then-widespread Li Zhuowu edition [Li Zhuowu xiansheng piping sanguo zhi 李卓吾先生批評三國志] with his own and added a new preface signed by Jin Shengtan 金聖嘆 (which is often said to have been written by someone else). Nowadays most Three Kingdoms translations [in Korea] are based on this Mao edition. For the reader’s reference, among the Three Kingdoms translations [available now], the one by Mr. Kim
Kuyong is a close word-for-word translation of the Mao edition, while Pak Chonghwa’s translation seems to be a relatively free one that conveys the gist of the original work.

Accordingly, upon deciding that the Mao edition would be the one for me to translate, I came up against the problem of how to translate it; if I translated it plainly and literally, the outcome would be no different from the two *Three Kingdoms* translations mentioned above, and therefore would be a waste of effort.

Then what came to mind were the methodologies used by Yoshikawa Eiji and Chen Shunchen in Japan. For the reader’s information, I would like to mention that as for the Korean translations of *Three Kingdoms* published so far (excepting the brilliant originality seen in the beginning chapters of the late Mr. Kim Kwangju’s translation), other translations more or less smack of being inferior imitations of Yoshikawa Eiji’s translation; they sometimes expose Japanese understanding of China as well as occasional anachronisms. As for Chen Shunchen’s recently published translation, I have yet to find anything epigonic. However, I did not feel inclined to slip into the sort of facile sensationalism found in his version.

Upon consideration, I decided to adopt several different methodologies. For the plot of the story as a whole, I decided to follow the Mao edition, either replacing, adding, or erasing the embedded poems and taking the liberty of transforming or reconstructing [the storyline] as necessary.

What I would like to emphasize firmly here is the intention of transforming and reconstructing [the storyline], not to differentiate my *Three Kingdoms* from others but

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405 Kim Kwangju, father of the famous novelist Kim Hun, published his *Three Kingdoms* translation in 1968 (Seoul: Samjungdang).
rather to enhance it with the more lively “feel” of modern fiction. I suppose that the opposing impression of *Three Kingdoms*—we feel it is fun and wholesome reading on the one hand but at the same time feel it is a fantastic legend or myth—is brought about by the way characters enter the stage: out of nowhere appears a hero under heaven, a benevolent and graceful ruler, a prodigy with the ability to control the harmony between heaven and earth, or a legendary warrior with the power of ten thousand. I, accordingly, tried to add some reality to the important figures by transforming and reconstructing the beginning part and other parts as necessary. Based firmly on official history, these changes, I believe, will not lead to distortions of history or mislead readers with empty eloquence.

Another aspect of my *Three Kingdoms* translation that I would like to mention is the critical notes I have provided. With the provision of these critical notes there is nothing that one cannot discuss; not only revolution, the legitimacy of political power, and war, but even history, philosophy, and science can all be incorporated. This is also where I have been most ambitious [for my translation project]. As for the outcome of my effort, honestly speaking, I am ashamed. I could not even mention what I initially had intended to, let alone incorporate everything. I, however, dare to say that my critical notes will be a crucial aspect of my *Three Kingdoms* translation.

Finally, I would like to mention the transformation of the closing part. I have abridged the story after the death of Zhuge Liang to one third of the original length. I did not see any need to focus too much on the lengthy and tedious remainder, for it is not even in the official history. However, since it was not a thoughtless deletion but a
meticulous summary, all important details remain the same as the original [Three Kingdoms].

Now I have finally finished a painstaking project that took four years and four months to complete. The reason I describe the project as “painstaking” is because it was far from being a purely literary creation. However, now that I recall all the time and effort spent, I do not feel they were wasted. As time goes by, although the contents remain the same, the ways of expressing them and methods of understanding them change. The [Korean] translations or reconstructions of Three Kingdoms [available] as of now are about a generation old already. I don’t know whether Three Kingdoms is a book worth reading anymore, but if it is, I have completed a project that needed to be done by someone of this era.

There is a Chinese saying that goes, “While [you are] still young, read Three Kingdoms; when [you have already grown] old, do not read Three Kingdoms.”406 In other words, Three Kingdoms contains something that inspires the valor and aspirations of young people and transforms them into more ingenious and thoughtful persons. I believe that my labor of four years and some will not be meaningless as long as young

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406 Li Tonghyŏk asserts that Yi’s quotation of a Chinese saying here is a misquotation of “when young, do not read Shuihu zhuan; when old, do not read Sanguo yanyi (shao bukan ‘Shuihu’ lao bukan ‘Sanguo’ 少不看水湖, 老不看三國),” since a young man in full vigor is likely to be influenced by the bad examples of bandits in Shuihu zhuan, while an old person, as Yi mentioned, might become even more cunning in addition to the wisdom of age he already has. See Li, “Samguk chi” ka ulgo inne (Cry the Three Kingdoms), 12-14. On the other hand, Yi’s misleading reference is already widespread among readers of Three Kingdoms in Korea, becoming one of the most typical recommendations for the work.
readers are able to reap the fruits of *Three Kingdoms* through my project, even with the side effect of making the old even more cunning.

March 1988

Yi Mun’yŏl

6.4 First Response to Yi’s Translation: Hwang Sŏg’yŏng’s “Back to the Original”

Hwang Sŏg’yŏng, whose achievements and influence as a novelist can be compared to those of Yi, has taken an ideological position quite the opposite of Yi’s. Themes in Hwang’s works (in the realm of contemporary Korean literature) closely involve victims of capitalism and the hardships of social minorities. His active participation in the anti-autocracy movement and his covert visit to North Korea led to his being imprisoned for several years until the early 1990s, facts that contrast with Yi’s virulently anticommmunist ideology and engagement with the most extreme right-wing political party in Korea.

In the preface to his *Three Kingdoms* translation, Hwang says that he did his best to produce a translation that does not tarnish the “spirit” and “atmosphere” of the original work, meaning either the Luo Guanzhong or Mao Zonggang version407, and criticizes Yi’s excessive

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407 The Luo Guanzhong version and Mao Zonggang version often identified by the Korean rewriters of *Three Kingdoms* as the original works that they referred to in fact seem to refer to the Jiajing Renwu edition (1522 edition) and the Mao edition that came out in the mid-seventeenth century, respectively.
interference in the original work as a result of adding too much of his own viewpoint. Hwang also argues that too much interference on the part of the translator should be seen as a total “re-creation” rather than translation, asserting therefore that Yi has no right to call his revised work *Three Kingdoms* anymore.

Hwang also criticizes a relative but apparent pro-Cao Cao tendency found in some recent translations, including Yi’s. Opposed to excessive manipulation or alteration, Hwang repeatedly emphasizes the importance of making a translation that is faithful to the original. However, he also criticizes translations that are faithful to the point of lacking “aesthetic flexibility.” This apparently contradictory perspective results from Hwang’s effort to seek proper justification for undertaking his own translation project. If a translation faithful to the original is the most ideal one, there is no need for anyone to retranslate *Three Kingdoms*, since complete Korean translations of the Luo Guanzhong and Mao Zonggang versions are already available. To back up his case for retranslation further, Hwang asserts that these earlier “word-for-word” translations are often absurd and inaccurate. Accordingly, his new translation both faithfully sustains the gist and spirit of the original work and also incorporates enough sophistication and stimulation to attract contemporary readers.

However, it must be said that Hwang largely fails to give the work "his own" stamp; his *Three Kingdoms* lacks the distinct traits and characteristic reinterpretations of other writers' reinterpretations of the source text. Nor, as an “amateur” sinologist at best, can he surpass professional literary translators of Chinese literature in accuracy and meticulousness, even though he repeatedly argues that he does. His translation seems to be meaningful only as a critical alternative to Yi’s translation, especially for those readers who do not appreciate
excessive interventions by the translator but still want to read *Three Kingdoms* as rewritten by their favorite novelist.

6.5 Hwang Sŏg’yŏng’s Preface to His *Three Kingdoms* Translation

My Heyday as “*Three Kingdoms* Storyteller”\(^{408}\)

I first got to know *Three Kingdoms* in Taegu as a refugee during the Korea War when I was still an elementary school student. There was a juvenile magazine named *Hagwŏn* 學院 at the time, in which a *Three Kingdoms* [translation] by Kim Yonghwan was serialized under the title of *Big Nose’s Three Kingdoms*.\(^{409}\) Later I learned that it was based on Yoshikawa Eiji’s Japanese translation of *Three Kingdoms*, the dominant *Three Kingdoms* translation during the Japanese colonial period. Accordingly, Kim’s translation starts from the scene where Liu Bei confronts the Yellow Scarf Army as he carries tea leaves purchased for his mother with money he had earned from selling bamboo mattresses.

By the time Seoul was reclaimed and a truce for the Korean War was concluded (I was a fifth-grader in elementary school then), I rented a thick ten-volume *Three Kingdoms* from a book rental store during the summer vacation. Book rental stores at that time could be found at night markets, with books displayed in bookshelves on the street; anyone who paid a certain amount of deposit could rent books of his or her choice. The books I had read randomly up until then were mostly those called “World

\(^{408}\) Translated from Hwang’s preface to his *Three Kingdoms* translation, 1: 5-15

\(^{409}\) “Big Nose” is Kim’s nickname.
Masterpieces” written by Western authors with Western backgrounds. Only after finishing *Three Kingdoms* did I read such works as *Im Kkŏkchŏng* 林巨正 [The story of Im Kkŏkchŏng],410 *Shuihu zhuan*, and *Xiyou ji*. I remember having read stories such as *Lieguo zhi* 列國志 [History of the states], *Jin ping mei* 金瓶梅 [Plum in the golden vase], and *Honglou meng* 紅樓夢 [A dream of red mansions] during my middle school years as I began to appreciate Asian masterpieces more and more.

I read *Three Kingdoms* during my elementary school years as well as in middle school and high school, and even after finishing my military service; in other words, I

410 *Im Kkŏkchŏng* --arguably the most well-known and influential Korean vernacular novel--was serialized in the *Chosŏn ilbo* (a daily newspaper) from 1928 to 1939 by Hong Myŏnghŭi. It is about the legendary Robin Hood–like bandit leader Im Kkŏkchŏng and his fellow bandits and their adventurous struggle against the government and corrupt officials in the mid-Chosŏn period. People compare the righteous bandits in this novel to Korean independence fighters during the colonial period and the corrupt government officials to the Japanese oppressors. Hong's novel is also well-known for containing the most extensive and wide-ranging Korean vocabulary ever. However, it was banned in South Korea until the early 1990s, since Hong held a high office in North Korea after liberation. *Chang Kilsan*, the most representative novel of Hwang Sŏg’yŏng, which was serialized in the *Han’guk ilbo* from 1974 to 1984, resembles *Im Kkŏkchŏng* in many respects. As a story of Chang Kilsan, another famous bandit leader in late seventeenth-century Chosŏn, Hwang openly admits that he referred to *Im Kkŏkchŏng* for the creation of his own multi-volume novel. When Hwang visited North Korea in 1989, Hong Sŏkchung, the grandson of Hong Myŏnghŭi, also a novelist, praised him, saying that Hwang was the real successor of Hong in that *Chang Kilsan* alone deserves to be acclaimed as the sequel to *Im Kkŏkchŏng* in terms of its artistic perfection and ideological stance. Hwang’s meticulous investigation and appropriate use of North Korean vocabulary in his novel was also praised by North Korean writers.
have repeatedly read it from childhood until young adulthood. During the postwar period when I attended elementary school, classrooms were seriously deficient since the schools were either nearly destroyed or were being used as military bases. Studying without a teacher was quite common; teachers often did not come to work. Sometimes the appointment of new teachers was delayed. One teacher often taught several grades simultaneously. In a situation like this, I habitually proceeded to the podium and told the whole class stories I’d read, with my own modifications. It can be said my heyday as a storyteller began the moment I told classmates my *Three Kingdoms* stories. These stories became so instantly popular that kids from other classes often rushed to my classroom. The secret of my success as a storyteller lay in stopping the story whenever it reached a really interesting or heartbreaking moment and saving that for next time. It took great patience not to reveal any clue whenever friends asked about the next episode.

Why I Decided to Translate *Three Kingdoms*: My Disappointment with the Available Translations

It was in 1997 when I was still in prison for having visited North Korea and then having stayed in Europe as a political refugee,\(^{411}\) it was a hard time for me since the government did not allow me to write in prison. When fellow writers, such as the poet Yi Siyŏng and literary critic Ch’oe Wŏnsik, paid me a visit, they felt sorry for my

\(^{411}\) Hwang visited North Korea in 1989 and stayed in Europe—mostly in Germany as a visiting scholar—to avoid arrest by the South Korean government for his illegal visit. He voluntarily went back to South Korea in 1993 and was arrested and imprisoned until being released by a special presidential pardon in 1998.
situation—I was sentenced to seven years’ imprisonment and banned from writing—and suggested that I translate Three Kingdoms. After hearing this, I asked them to fetch me the Chŏng’ǔmsa edition of Three Kingdoms I had read a long time ago and received a 1955 edition. The Chŏng’ǔmsa edition I read when still a child was written by Pak T’aewon the novelist; after he went to North Korea, his Three Kingdoms had been published by Chŏng’ǔmsa, using the director of the company’s name as the author’s.\footnote{As in the case of Im Kkŏkchŏng by Hong Myŏnghŭi, all literary works written by authors who chose the future North Korean government rather than South Korea in the pre-Korean War period were strictly banned in South Korea until the late 1980s, mainly because of ideological conflicts with the anticommmunist South Korean administration. In these cases, it was not uncommon to see popular works published in South Korea under pseudonyms.}

While flipping through this edition, I realized that many anecdotes and poems were left out; therefore, it failed to present the “pleasure of reading” it once offered me long ago.

As I compared and examined many different translations \[of Three Kingdoms\] provided by visitors to the prison, I gradually came to feel that every translation was unsatisfactory in one way or another. One translator overemphasized faithful translation of the original and produced a word-for-word translation with absurd metaphors and inaccurate interpretations of quotations. Or another version was jointly translated by many people who divided the text into several parts and translated them simultaneously. As a result, discrepancies in names and places abounded and literary styles also varied from chapter to chapter.\footnote{This kind of translation project by multiple translators was often spearheaded by the publishing companies in order to save money and time. For example, it is well known that every year when the recipient of the Nobel Prize in Literature is announced, any of his or her works that has not yet been}
Inaccurate or imperfect translations of poems were prevalent, as were inappropriate or misleading interpretations of historical particulars in remaining poems and anecdotes.

While I stayed in Europe I saw parents there encouraging their children to read more classics. I also noticed that Latin is taught at the middle and high school levels and the original texts of such books as *A History of Greece and Rome* and *Bioi Parallēloi* (Parallel lives of illustrious Greeks and Romans) were used as textbooks. I also read *Bioi Parallēloi* in my childhood and young adulthood. As for translations of this classic, the French translation by Jacques Amyot and the English translation by Thomas North in the fifteenth century greatly inspired the works of Shakespeare and Goethe. The key when translating a classic is to ensure a faithful rendering of the original; if the translator wants to add his own interpretation, he can create a fictional work of his own, just as Shakespeare created *Antony and Cleopatra*. Therefore, if one wants to criticize [*Three Kingdoms*] according to his own ideology or add new interpretations, he may as well create a new work of fiction such as *Cao Cao and Zhuge Liang*.

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published in Korean gets published the next day. This is possible since major publishing companies hire dozens of translators to render quick translations, dividing the text into many small parts. The overall quality of this kind of translation work has been brought into question many times. Of course, these “minor” translators, unlike the celebrity novelist translators of *Three Kingdoms*, are not paid handsomely at all and are excluded from any rights over their work. Of translators in North America, possibly with slightly better working conditions, Venuti observes, “Such translations are compensated by a flat fee per thousand English words, regardless of the potential income from the sale of books and subsidiary rights.”

*The Translator’s Invisibility*, 10. For a more detailed discussion, see pages 10–14.

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414 Apparently, the “overly creative” translator of *Three Kingdoms* Hwang criticizes here is Yi Mun’yŏl. Hwang argues that Yi’s excessively ideological notes and reinterpretations manipulate the
Since I was disappointed with available translations, it was actually a fortunate occasion for me to decide to start my translation while I was closely examining the original. It made me review my knowledge of Korean and classical Chinese and also facilitated my imaginative power and writing skills as a novelist, while I was still burdened with the bleakness and suffocation of prison life. I absorbed myself in translation, recalling anecdotes such as Cervantes’ creating *Don Quixote* while he was a prisoner of war in a Turkish penitentiary or Dante’s completion of the *Divine Comedy* in prison.

*Three Kingdoms*: A Classic That Absorbs Contemporary Peoples’ Dreams and Expectations

As mentioned, in any source on *Three Kingdoms*, the storyline of *Three Kingdoms* originated from Chen Shou’s writings on the history of the Three Kingdoms: Wei, Shu, and Wu. *Three Kingdoms* as we know it today emerged not only from historical records but from oral storytelling, idle talk, dramatic recitation, plays, and revisions made in popular literature as well as by literati writers. It is said that *Three Kingdoms* is “seven parts fact and three parts fiction.” These very three parts are precisely where the dreams original. By suggesting that the author opt to create a new fictional work under a different title rather than manipulate a classic and still call it a translation, he also implies that Yi’s *Three Kingdoms* translation should be understood as his fictional invention, not a “traditional” translation. That Hwang was offended by Yi’s *Three Kingdoms* translation seems largely to have prompted his decision to make his own, in which he refrains as much as possible from adding “misleading” notes.
and expectations of the populace have long been reflected; in a sense, seen from the viewpoint of historical consciousness, they are more important than the factual truth. While Chen Shou, who served the Jin dynasty that succeeded the Wei, treats Wei as the legitimate state in his historical writing, it is worth noting that in *Three Kingdoms*, the historical novel, Shu-Han becomes the legitimate regime. If seen from the viewpoint of [Chen's] contemporaries, it would have been reactionary to support the legitimacy of the Han empire, which was heading toward collapse with its social disorder resulting from struggles between eunuchs and feudal lords as well as peasant rebellions. However, it is also worth noting that this Shu-Han legitimacy has solidified over many eras and generations.

I recall the statement I mentioned when I started to write *Chang Kilsan*, my multi-volume historical novel, which goes, “The significance of a historical novel lies not in the historical background it deals with, but in the era the author lived in; while *Im Kkŏkchŏng* is a work created under Japanese colonial rule, *Chang Kilsan* is a work produced during the period of national division.” This indicates that what the contemporary readers want from the author and where they are headed are of utmost importance.

*Three Kingdoms* as we know it today has gone through numerous revisions and modifications. Among them, two major revisions are worth noting. *Three Kingdoms* was compiled into a book by Luo Guanzhong in the late Yuan and early Ming period, and later was edited into a 120-chapter edition by Mao Zonggang with a preface by Jin

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415 For a discussion of *Im Kkŏkchŏng* and *Chang Kilsan*, and their thematic resemblances, refer to footnote 451 above.
Shengtan in the Qing dynasty. Some say that Luo participated in peasant rebellions against the Yuan regime and was also involved with Zhang Shicheng [張士誠, 1321-1367], one of the leaders of rebel troops. Besides, Zhu Yuanzhang [朱元璋, 1328-1398] the founder of the Ming dynasty, had political conflicts with Zhang Shicheng and was often compared to Cao Cao; from this we can deduce the origin of Luo Guanzhong’s Shu-Han legitimacy. After Jin 金 and Yuan forces, originally nomadic tribes [to the north], had captured the Central Plains [in 1115 and 1279, respectively], claims to legitimacy were transferred to the Eastern Jin 西晉 [317-420], the southern dynasties between Han 漢 and Sui 隋 [420-589], and the Southern Song 南宋 [960-1127].

Especially interesting is that the political stand of Luo Guanzhong [1330?-1400?], the author of *Three Kingdoms*, was rooted in contemporary peoples' support for [Liu Bei’s] righteousness and principle as well as for Han Chinese legitimacy. By the time Mao Zonggang revised [*Three Kingdoms*], the northern heartland was under Manchu Qing rule. It is natural that, in Mao’s *Three Kingdoms* [too], the pivotal figure for the entire story plot is Liu Bei rather than Cao Cao, who by establishing the Wei 魏 had paved the way for the reunification of China. While Cao Cao was of aristocratic birth and Sun Quan 孫權 was also a scion of a prominent Jiangnan feudal family, Liu Bei, Guan Yu, Zhang Fei, and even Zhuge Liang of Shu-Han were of humble origins like the contemporary populace, which included ruined literati and local villains.

Through reading the scenes where Liu Bei keeps faith even in an extremely disadvantageous situation and as a result is constantly bothered by Lü Bu 呂布, and where he declines to occupy Hanzhong 漢中 using unjust means against the cardinal
principle of public righteousness (dayi mingfen 大義名分), one can realize what values were pursued in *Three Kingdoms* by the contemporary populace. We are also moved to warm tears while reading the scenes where Guan Yu departs from Cao Cao, leaving behind all the glory offered to him by Cao Cao and going in search of Liu Bei, killing five guards at the passes on the way; or where Zhuge Liang submits a petition to take the field (*chushi biao* 出師表) to Liu Shan 劉禪 [r. 223-64], an unwise ruler whom he serves to fulfill his promise to Liu Bei, the first ruler. However, the Shu-Han kingdom, along with heroes such as the three sworn brothers and Zhuge Liang who all pursued virtue and righteous solidarity, failed [to reunite China] in the end.

The tendency of the populace to praise and applaud heroes who pursued righteousness but failed has been the same in all ages and countries. Examples of this tendency can be found in the copious legends about Joan of Arc and El Cid. Generals Ch’oe Yŏng 崔瑩 and Nam Yi 南怡 are also worshipped in local shrines according to Korean shamanistic traditions.\(^\text{416}\)

In Japan, there is a tendency to regard Cao Cao highly. Some [*Three Kingdoms* translations] regard him as the most pivotal figure in terms of story plot, and this kind of translation is being attempted subtly even in some Korean translations as well. I believe that these [kinds of translations] originate in values that attach importance to attaining actual hegemony and power. I value the “universal dream of the populace” much more than this kind of so-called modern interpretation. I, therefore, fully agreed with the point

\(^{416}\) Ch’oe Yŏng was a famous general and national hero of the late Koryŏ period as was Nam Yi in early Chosŏn. They were both wronged by false charges and executed.
of view and flow of the story set forth in the original version of [Three Kingdoms]⁴¹⁷ and this is the fountainhead of my consistent affection for Three Kingdoms, which I have maintained from my youth until now.⁴¹⁸

However, there is no reason to devalue Cao Cao or Sun Quan. Although all characters [in the novel] are given plausible and lively characteristics, Cao Cao’s are all the more attractive, even though he plays a villain. Although we are pleased to read the scene where Cao Cao barely escapes from a near-death situation after losing the Battle of Red Cliffs, we also come to realize the transitoriness of life and gape in awe when reading the scene where, lying on his deathbed and haunted by ghosts, he distributes incense to the maids-in-waiting.

⁴¹⁷ The “original version” that Hwang mentions refers to the Luo Guanzhong (Jiajing edition) and Mao Zonggang versions (the Mao edition). Refer to footnote 448.

⁴¹⁸ Again, Hwang reveals his discontent with Yi Mun’yŏl’s Three Kingdoms translation. First of all, he points out that Yi’s pro–Cao Cao attitude is not his own viewpoint but merely one influenced by Japanese translators of Three Kingdoms. He also indirectly criticizes Yi’s engagement in political issues with his comment about “values that attach importance to attaining actual hegemony and power.” In reality, Yi does enjoy some political influence. He was the director of the candidate nomination committee for the Grand National Party in the 2004 National Assembly election, and he also writes political columns in major newspapers frequently. On the other hand, Chang Chŏng’il also shares Hwang’s viewpoint in that he also attaches importance to the “universal dream of the populace” in his rendition of Three Kingdoms. However, Chang strongly opposes Hwang’s viewpoint that this “universal dream of the populace” is fully preserved in the Luo Guanzhong and Mao Zonggang versions of Three Kingdoms, a point I discuss in more detail later.
In this book, some will see justice and righteous solidarity, some will see trickery and machinations, yet others will read it as management and a guide to worldly wisdom for survival and success in society. While carefully rereading *Three Kingdoms* for this translation project, I realized that each time I read it, the feelings I received varied significantly, depending on the situations I was in and my age as well. In the past, by the time Liu Bei’s sworn brothers all die out, my passion to read on also faded, and I felt rather too empty to finish the book and ended up just skimming through the remaining part. Now, the more I read through the latter half, the more I perceive a profound reflection on life. Unquestionably, the significance of reading *Three Kingdoms* lies in the poignant realization of the vicissitudes of life, the realization that history nevertheless flows on at its own pace and will judge between right and wrong in due course, and in the introspection that even for this ephemeral existence one should make the most out of his or her life.

The Spirit and Historical Consciousness of *Three Kingdoms* That I Would Like Our Youth to Appreciate

In addition to the Chŏng’ŭmsa edition that I read in prison, I also acquainted myself there with the *Hyŏnt'o Three Kingdoms* [懸吐三國志] published by Yŏngch’ang Sŏgwan [永昌書館], which was popular with readers from the late Chŏson to the

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419 One of the most noticeable differences between the *Three Kingdoms* translations of Hwang and Yi lies in how the author treats the story after the major characters have died. Whereas Yi abridges the story after Zhuge Liang’s death by almost two thirds, Hwang keeps this “seemingly boring” part intact, perhaps implying that Yi’s decision to abridge it is rather immature and based on commercial interests.
Japanese colonial periods. It is a modified edition that adds Korean particles to the classical Chinese to enhance readability for Koreans. I regained the classical Chinese reading skills that I had failed to maintain ever since I completed Chang Kilsan, my multi-volume historical novel. I read up to the second volume [of Hyŏnt’ŏ Three Kingdoms 懸吐三國志] while I was in jail.

Once released from prison, I was busy for a while writing novels and other serialized works. Finally, in the winter of 1999, I started the translation of Three Kingdoms [proceeding] inch by inch through my meticulous examination of the original. I used the Xiuxiang Sanguo zhi yanyi 繡像三國志演義 published by Shanghai guji chubanshe 上海古籍出版社 in 1999 as my source text. I thought this text was the most reliable one since it was identical to the Sanguo yanyi 三國演義 published by Renmin wenxue chubanshe 人民文學出版社 in 1953, except that it changed simplified characters into traditional ones. Unlike the Sanguo yanyi published by Sanmin shuju 三民書局 in Taiwan, which has been used as a source text for all Korean translations of Three Kingdoms but mine, the Renmin wenxue edition of Sanguo yanyi has corrected typographical errors, supplied missing characters, and also corrected other errors seen in the Mao Zonggang edition.

When I first embarked on the translation project, I did it simply for my own entertainment. However, as I progressed, I began to feel the responsibility to pass on the spirit and historical consciousness of Three Kingdoms to the next generation. All the while thinking that other people would feel the same discontent that I felt over the available Three Kingdoms translations, I learned after my release from prison that since Three Kingdoms [mostly Yi Mun’yŏl's version] had met the “market for essay writing
for the college entrance examination,” many young people did in fact come to read it.420

As I mentioned previously, in reading any classic, a faithful translation of the original is most crucial. By so doing, anyone who reads [a translation of a classic] should be able to interpret, criticize, and re-create it according to his or her own values. Especially for young people, the spirit of a classic is a treasure-house of inexhaustible reproduction.

Just as the process of formation of *Three Kingdoms* has been respected, so too the dreams and expectations of the populace, which have survived many eras and dynasties for more than one thousand years, deserve to be historically respected. In addition to preserving the authentic spirit of the classic, I also thought of ruminating on East Asian peoples' view of the world and humankind, which views somehow have vanished. I thought that we need to look back on values that had dissipated long ago in our lives, ever since we began to face unilateral globalization. We are losing the roots of our culture and the solution to dealing with [globalization] in East Asia. In our society, such cultural studies and world view have been greatly neglected since modernization, and isn’t it true that everywhere in Asia, including in Islamic culture, we are still drawn into the maelstrom of social experiments?

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420 The huge success of Yi Mun’yŏl’s *Three Kingdoms* translation was greatly aided by the brilliant marketing strategy of the publisher, Minǔmsa, who used an interview with a successful applicant to Seoul National University in its commercials for Yi’s *Three Kingdoms*. This student, a modern-day top graduate 壯元, mentioned that reading Yi’s *Three Kingdoms* was most helpful when preparing for the essay-writing examination. Yi’s *Three Kingdoms* was also selected as one of "One Hundred World Masterpieces" recommended for first-year college students by Seoul National University. Belief that Yi’s *Three Kingdoms* is a must-read for the college entrance examination is still quite widespread, as demonstrated by book reviews on Yi’s *Three Kingdoms* to be discussed below.
Bearing these points in mind, I did not hasten the translation project but continued to work on it step by step. The publishers, although they must have been quite anxious, waited patiently, maintaining their trust. This is how this book came into being over seven years.

As I worked on the translation, I realized that the literary style of *Three Kingdoms* is succinct, objective, poised, and realistic. In particular, the masculine reality of the battle scenes, depicted sometimes like a documentary film and sometimes like a bird’s-eye view seen from above the skies over a vast open field, is characteristic of *Three Kingdoms*. As for the major battle scenes, I added my own excitement to the dry original text to enhance the breathtaking thrills. I also deliberately used the present tense instead of past tense to enhance vividness. Another major characteristic of *Three Kingdoms* is that at each major scene, the subjective emotions and feelings [of the commentator] are expressed in feminine poems, something comparable to the role of a commentator or chorus in a classical tragedy. I would call this the skill of retaining both cultural attainment and martial valor (*wenwu jianbei* 文武兼備).

Above all, I realized that I am too ignorant of the anecdotes and figures quoted in *Three Kingdoms*, to say nothing of my poor knowledge of classical Chinese. I had to change my prescription glasses twice, since my eyesight became worse as I struggled with Chinese dictionaries. Also, I had to keep pestering people, e-mailing them questions each time I stumbled upon an ambiguous part. For instance, when the figures cite pre-Han anecdotes, it is imperative for me to ascertain the source so as not to be misled in my translation. Indeed, the project made me study Chinese classics once again.
After I turned in the first draft, Professor Chŏn Hong-ch’ŏl of Usŏk University corrected errors with his scrupulous counter-examination of the Renmin wenxue chubanshe edition of *Sanguo yanyi*. The embedded poems, which I consider as important as the main text, were corrected by Professor Im Hyŏng-t’aek; some were retranslated by him. In addition, Mr. Wang Hongxi 王宏喜, an influential senior painter in Chinese art, painted 150 illustrations and portraits. Mr. Wang has painted illustrations for many premodern Chinese narratives such as *Honglou meng*, and his painting skills and historical examination [of costumes] have been praised as number one in our time. Besides, the staff members of Ch’angbi Publishing House have also corrected errors by repeatedly examining and comparing my draft to the original text. In this way, many people have participated in the project and I think I can call this translation a group creation, just as the *Three Kingdoms* had been. We have worked on this project inflexibly and uncompromisingly to make it the classic of our time--one which shall remain the readers' favorite even after a considerable lapse of time. If there are any errors or mistakes, I am solely to blame and take full responsibility.

June 25, 2003

Hwang Sŏg’yŏng
Another Response to *Three Kingdoms* Translations: Chang Chŏng’’il’s Liberal and Nationalistic Translation

Both Hwang Sŏg’yŏng and Chang Chŏng’’il have published translations of the novel, criticizing the conservative ideological bias of Yi’s translation pursued in the critical notes he appended to each chapter. However, the remedies that Hwang and Chang offer to correct this bias differ significantly from each other. Whereas Hwang tries to “go back to the original” by restoring the “authentic” *Three Kingdoms* that first appeared five centuries ago, thereby reconstructing an orthodox “Korean” edition of *Three Kingdoms*, Chang tries to redefine *Three Kingdoms* as a national novel of Korea. Chang was once prosecuted for “licentious” expressions in his fiction; his pursuit of artistic perfection based on his liberal views has often opened him to severe attacks from conservative critics, readers, publishers, and fellow novelists such as Yi Mun’yŏl. Chang’s *Three Kingdoms* translation reveals both ideologically liberal views and nationalistic aspects, two seemingly contradictory features.421

Well aware that Yi’s *Three Kingdoms* translation promotes conservative values, Chang boldly subverts and deconstructs those values, which he feels betray too masculine a bias.

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421 Chang’s main concern in his rendition of the work is marginalized social minorities, which include peasants, women, and the non-Han ethnic minorities. Because he believes that hegemonic Han Chinese–centered ethnocentrism is still influential in modern China and used as an excuse to suppress smaller neighbors like Korea–just as Koreans were demeaned as “uncivilized barbarians” in the original work–his liberal concern and nationalistic beliefs are uniquely amalgamated to “rectify” these “wrongdoings” in his revision, by positioning Koreans as a marginalized minority. For a more detailed example of the modern-day practice of Han Chinese hegemony, see footnote 437 and passim.
Specifically, influenced by deconstructionists such as Derrida, Chang sets out to dismantle the hegemonic Han Chinese–centered ethnocentrism that he feels has been championed by mainstream *Three Kingdoms* translations such as that of Yi Mun’yŏl. He accomplishes this by identifying the means by which Han Chinese repress, marginalize and “Other-ize” non-Han peoples (including Koreans) in the novel. Chang also removes those Chinese poems in *Three Kingdoms* that he feels reflect an orthodox Chinese view of history, thereby “domesticating” the text by adopting a strategy that “involves an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values.”

He also opposes the traditional view that history is determined by significant national heroes such as Liu Bei, Cao Cao, and Zhuge Liang. Instead, Chang argues that the real heroes who deserve credit for history’s progress are the ordinary grassroots people (minch’o 民草) sacrificed on the battlefield.

6.7 Chang Chŏng’il’s Preface to His *Three Kingdoms* Translation

In Memory of Innumerable Anonymous Grassroots People’s Lives and Sacrifices

People say that there is nothing we cannot discuss with respect to *Three Kingdoms*. Indeed, if we compare many classics of the East and West, we will realize that no other classic shows the abundant wisdom and profound understanding of human beings as much as *Three Kingdoms* does. This is the reason why *Three Kingdoms*, which deals with things that happened more than a thousand years ago, is still popular in the

422 Venuti, The Translator’s Invisibility, 20.

423 Translated from Chang’s *Three Kingdoms* translation, 1: 4-11.
time of biotechnology and the Internet. Unquestionably, in times like this when we keep losing readers of fiction, *Three Kingdoms* is an exemplary model that shows what a novel is supposed to be, and is also a treasure-house of cultural content that can be applied in areas other than literature. However, it is always a pity that some serious obstacles hinder the various possibilities that *Three Kingdoms* offers.

*Three Kingdoms* is one of the Koreans’ most favorite novels. As a result, there are numerous translations and even a revised work with so-called critical notes. Knowing that from the late colonial period on, the big names in the literary world all scrambled to attach their names to *Three Kingdoms*, I nevertheless decided to rewrite it rather than remain an ordinary author. This is because I have always believed that classics widely read should be reinterpreted in the spirit of the time. Such being my belief, I was not content with the way in which *Three Kingdoms* has been translated to date.

It is very clear that those numerous dated [*Three Kingdoms*] translations that have already been forgotten by readers and several relatively new translations available on the market all share some common problems. Having absolutely no professional ability to translate classical Chinese, I dare not blame the errors in [*Three Kingdoms*] translations on top-notch scholars of classical Chinese and novelists. I am not saying that their

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424 Almost certainly, the “revised work with so-called critical notes” refers to Yi Mun’yŏl’s *Three Kingdoms*.

425 Yi Mun’yŏl, Hwang Sŏg’yŏng, and Chang Chŏng’il all mention their discontent with the available *Three Kingdoms* translations and revisions as their common motivation for rewriting/retranslating their own versions of *Three Kingdoms*. This, of course, further shows that Hwang could not approve of Yi’s translation, while to Chang, both Yi’s and Hwang’s translations were unsatisfactory.
translations were not substantial, but I would rather question the recurring translations themselves.

One of the common myths about *Three Kingdoms* prevalent in Korea is that an orthodox edition [正本] of *Three Kingdoms* exists. However, the truth is that the Luo Guanzhong and Mao Zonggang editions, the favorites of Korean translators, are just some of the many *Three Kingdoms* editions read in China. Therefore, the belief that there is an orthodox edition of *Three Kingdoms* is misleading. For instance, there are numerous interpretations of the famous anecdote of Liu Bei’s three visits to Zhuge Liang’s thatched hut. In other words, the Luo Guanzhong edition or the Mao Zonggang edition created in the late Ming and early Qing period merely reflect the values and historical viewpoints of their respective times.

Given the facts noted above, why are people translating the Luo and Mao editions of *Three Kingdoms* again and again, as if they were sacred books? And why do they take such pains to argue over minor details and petty inaccuracies of the translations? [*Three Kingdoms*] translation projects accomplished thus far have merely added new mistranslations to earlier ones (while correcting some errors of the earlier versions) or simply dressed up the text in accord with stylish contemporary literary trends.

I presume that those translators who were scholars of classical Chinese felt that it was their sacred duty to uphold the essence of East Asian cultures, something I do not condemn. The problem is that these translation projects, as they blindly follow the original text as the most sacred, smack of the Han Chinese–centered ideology [中華中心主義] that has plagued our nation for more than five hundred years. I am troubled to see people mindlessly translating and reading the *Three Kingdoms* imbued with this
ethnocentrism while we witness the impending rise of Han Chinese hegemony in the twenty-first century.

Here, as an example [of Han Chinese ethnocentrism], let me discuss the anecdote of Kongming’s seven captures and seven releases 七縱七擒 of Meng Huo 孟獲, chieftain of the Southern Man 南蠻. Many readers are moved by the talent and integrity of Zhuge Liang, who succeeded in obtaining the sincere submission from Meng Huo by releasing him seven times. However, when I think of the way that this anecdote is interpreted by the Chinese, I become frightened from the tips of my hair to the marrow of my very bones. The anecdote of Kongming’s seven captures and seven releases of Meng Huo reveal the Chinese people’s arrogant claim to the Mandate of Heaven, and in this anecdote is condensed their time-honored strategy for controlling neighboring countries. Once we take this into consideration, we can find the wisdom innate in the seemingly stubborn and audacious Meng Huo. The only way to secure a nation’s integrity and independence is persistent resistance [against the Shu-Han army] based on a subjective spirit. In the end, Zhuge Liang withdraws his army from the Southern Man 南蠻, a campaign that has cost him enormous effort and manpower, and acknowledges their autonomy.

There are numerous other defects in [Three Kingdoms] translations, not to mention a tendency to submit to the powerful (shida 事大) evident in the practice of

\[426\] Submission to the powerful (shida 事大) was the fundamental diplomatic policy of the Chosŏn government when it came to its relationship with China. It was based on a passage in Mencius that reads, “Only a benevolent man can submit to a state smaller than his own…Only a wise man can submit to a state bigger than his own…He who submits to a state smaller than his own delights in Heaven; he who
mindlessly following the [Luo or Mao editions]. Above all, *Three Kingdoms* is full of prejudiced interpretations and misrepresentations of historical fact. Zhang Xuecheng [章學誠, 1738-1801], a Qing historian, once mentioned that *Three Kingdoms* is “seven parts truth and three parts fiction.” However, when we compare *Three Kingdoms* to the *Chronicle of the Three Kingdoms* written by Chen Shou, one can realize that Zhang’s remark is much too generous and even exaggerated with respect to *Three Kingdoms*’ accuracy. “Seven parts fiction and three parts truth” would be a more appropriate way to describe it. According to official history, neither Diaochan’s 響蟬 beautiful woman snare [*meirenji 美人計*] nor the trick of linking boats at the Red Cliff [*lianhuanji 連環計*], nor the three brothers’ pledging mutual faith in the peach garden ever actually happened. Thus, no matter how strenuously one might discuss the accuracy of their translations, as long as they are based on a distorted source, they cannot lead to a productive agenda.

In addition to misrepresenting historical facts, another critical defect of translations of the original text is the prejudiced interpretations that might have been valid in Luo Guanzhong’s and Mao Zonggang’s time but have lost validity nowadays. Although a belief in Shu-Han legitimacy with a pro–Liu Bei and anti–Cao Cao viewpoint might have been useful for idealizing Han Chinese kingdoms in the past, from submits to a state bigger than his own is in awe of Heaven. He who delights in Heaven will continue to enjoy the possession of the Empire while he who is in awe of Heaven will continue to enjoy the possession of his own state.” Cited from D. C. Lau, trans., *Mencius* 1:26. Chosŏn rulers accepted the Chinese claim to the Mandate of Heaven in order to maintain peaceful diplomatic relations and autonomy in internal affairs.
today’s viewpoint it is merely an absurd dichotomizing of good and evil. Besides, defining the Yellow Scarf Army [黃巾軍] using the derogatory Yellow Scarf Outlaws [黃巾賊] is also based on an elitist view of history influenced by Confucian ideology. Insofar as we now live in an era where the derogatory "Tonghak Disorder" [東學亂] has been redefined as the "Tonghak Revolution [東學革命], there is no reason for us to refrain from using “The Righteous Uprising of the Yellow Scarves" [黃巾起義], even though it happened a long time ago in a distant country, namely China, and might seem quite remote and irrelevant to us today.427

Only after one overcomes Han Chinese hegemony, and the dichotomy adapted from Chunqiu bifa [春秋筆法]428 that simply distinguishes all characters as either good or bad, can the reader enter the exciting and vast expanse of the novel. Only after standing in the vast expanse of the novel can he or she escape from the same old patterns

427 The Tonghak Revolution, also called the Tonghak Peasant Movement 東學農民運動, began in 1894 as a revolt against corrupt officials. It soon became a nationwide movement for social reform based on egalitarianism. Although it failed within a year, it became the starting point for the independence movement against Japanese colonial rule and the first full-scale attempt of the populace to accommodate modern Western ideas. "Tonghak Disorder" was a derogatory title used by the Chosŏn rulers who suppressed it.

428 Chunqiu bifa (evaluative rhetoric in the Spring and Autumn Annals) refers to the guiding principle of Confucius when writing this classic. It emphasizes the cardinal principle of public righteousness (dayi mingfen 大義名分) based on objective historical facts. Here, it refers primarily to a Neo-Confucian interpretation of history that emphasizes legitimacy based on the Chinese emperor’s Mandate of Heaven, thereby defining all other marginal tribes as unorthodox.
of the characters based on Han Chinese hegemony and Chunqiu bifa, notions developed
to protect imperial authority. Only then can we encounter realistic, reasonable, and lively
characters. The interpretation that dichotomizes each character according to whether he
follows the same destiny as his lord or not is far from realistic and out of date,
considering that nowadays we can analyze each character’s state of mind with in-depth
psychology. The more we free ourselves from the original texts [Luo and Mao editions],
the more we realize that Liu Bei, whom we used to recognize as a symbol of the
restoration of the Han empire, is also merely another arriviste who tried to conquer the
whole of China with the nominal moral justification of restoring the Han.

I would like to emphasize that Three Kingdoms is a history expressed in the
present progressive tense, thus enabling us to discern all kinds of people around us and
the specific time in which we read it. Therefore, we are not supposed to take it as a
“historical fact,” as some routine translations do, but to attain “historical teachings” from
it. While reading Three Kingdoms, one can notice that both the Wei and Shu states
requested barbarian forces to enter the major wars on their side, something they despised
during peaceful times. No matter how powerful a country may be, when it comes to
warfare, it wants to share its risk and burden with neighboring allies, since unexpected
loss in war can jeopardize the empire’s security. Given the tragic circumstance where we
[The Republic of Korea] were forced to send our troops to Vietnam and Iraq following
the request of the United States of America, the moral of Three Kingdoms is especially
valid “here and now.”

429 Under pressure from the United States government, 320,000 Korean soldiers were sent to
Vietnam in five separate deployments from 1964 to 1973, maintaining troop levels of approximately fifty
Given that Korean scholars of Chinese classics were not in a position to freely rewrite *Three Kingdoms* [as pure translators], how are *Three Kingdoms* translations by famous novelists distinct from mindless translations of the original? Since, unlike Western classics, Chinese narratives share the common culture and history of East Asia [with us], and given that the most famous novelists of our time have already produced more than ten translations of *Three Kingdoms*, we should be able to call it *our* novel. Nevertheless, no one has ever taken up the challenge of translating *Three Kingdoms* bearing this issue and confidence in mind. Ever since the Chosŏn period, we have already had numerous shamans worshipping Guan Yunchang or Zhao Zilong as gods thousand soldiers during the Vietnam War. Among foreign troops sent to Vietnam, Korea’s force was the second largest in number behind the U.S. army. President Roh Moo-hyun (No Muhyŏn), when visiting Vietnam in 2004, officially expressed his regret for the “ill-fated past” toward the Vietnamese people. Again in 2003 and 2004, according to the request of the United States government, Korean forces numbering about 3,800 soldiers were sent to Iraq. Civil resistance actions against helping the “unjust war” arose nationwide and are still continuing. Upon dispatching the forces, the president of Korea implied the presence of political pressure by saying that the decision was made “under unavoidable circumstances.” As of late 2004, Korea maintained the third largest number of foreign troops stationed in Iraq behind the United States and United Kingdom. Hwang Sŏg’yŏng fought in the Vietnam War as a marine and later published a novel portraying tragic and ironic aspects of the Vietnam War, *Mugi ū kŭmul* (Shadow of Arms), which is considered one of his most representative works. At the Second Seoul International Literature Forum on May 24, 2005, he also divulged his opposition to sending Korean troops to Iraq, asserting that it also makes Koreans victims of war. Hwang also added that his opposition to the aggression of wars is based on humanitarian and cosmopolitan concerns rather than on a nationalistic standpoint.
possessing their bodies.\textsuperscript{430} Then why, among so many Korean novelists, has not a single person ever declared that \textit{Three Kingdoms} “belongs to us”?

When all Korean translators of \textit{Three Kingdoms} unanimously stuck to mindless translation of the original without disclosing the various possibilities of the text, there was one individual who boldly reconstructed \textit{Three Kingdoms} and tried to communicate it to contemporary [readers]. However, it is very regrettable that the critical notes in his work deliberately constituted a counterattack on the civil consciousness that championed democracy in Korea in the 1980s. Moreover, with the critical notes themselves being mere childish nonsense and idle prattle, his work ended up even worse than a mindless translation of the original.

When an author says he is reconstructing or reinterpreting \textit{Three Kingdoms}, what exactly does the author redo? “The very reconstruction and reinterpretation of history” would be the answer, and the historical viewpoint of the author would be the appropriate cornerstone. However, if [the translator takes] an elitist view of history [選民史觀], defining, say, the Yellow Scarf Army as the Yellow Scarf Outlaws, he cannot comprehend the aspirations of the people who lived during the \textit{Three Kingdoms} period, let alone the truth about the establishment of the Republic of China 中華民國. Insofar as peasant rebellions made all successive dynasties of China collapse, nowadays Chinese history records the Disorder of the Yellow Scarf Army as a “righteous uprising” [起義]. If the translator does not endeavor to rectify the name that an item properly deserves by seeing through the external appearance to the actual substance of human affairs, it would

\textsuperscript{430} With regard to Guan Yu worship and popular narratives on Zhao Yun in Korea, refer to Chapter 4.
be no different than calling the Tonghak Revolution 東學革命 the Tonghak Disorder 東學亂 and describing the Kwangju Democratic Movement as the Kwangju Riot.\(^{431}\)

Moreover, if an author has decided to rewrite *Three Kingdoms* in vernacular Korean, he should be equipped with the critical view that *Three Kingdoms might be propaganda or doctrine of the Han Chinese, by Han Chinese, and for Han Chinese.*\(^{432}\)

For instance, Dong Zhuo and Lü Bu were not the only figures who were disloyal [to the Han empire] and set up a military government. However, these two characters, compared to other major characters in *Three Kingdoms*, were particularly disparaged as louts lacking loyalty, honor, and decorum, eventually meeting a miserable end. This is because both were more like marginal figures from the frontier rather than established Han Chinese from the central area.\(^{433}\) Therefore, whoever rewrites *Three Kingdoms* here

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\(^{431}\) The Kwangju Democratic Movement (광주 민주화 운동), which can be compared to the Tian’anmen Massacre in several respects, began on May 18, 1980 as an anti-autocracy movement opposed to the military dictatorship led by Chun Doo Hwan (Chŏn Tuhwan), who later became the eleventh and twelfth president of Korea. Chŏn dispatched military troops to Kwangju to suppress the movement, killing hundreds of civilians. This tragic occasion was officially regarded as a riot led by hooligans until the late 1980s. Legal prosecution of those who were responsible for the brutal suppression in Kwangju, including Chŏn, started from the late 1980s. In addition, compensation for victims and rectification of history, although still imperfect, has been made by the government.

\(^{432}\) Chang’s emphasis.

\(^{433}\) Regarding the non-Han aspect of Dong Zhuo, Moss Roberts observes, “Like Liu Yuan [a Sinicized Xiongnu leader who destroyed Eastern Han in the early fourth century], Dong Zhuo had close non-Han ties” (443). Chang and the coauthors of “*Samguk chi*” haeje assert that both Dong Zhuo and Lü Bu were either non-Han peoples or had close ties to non-Han barbarians on the frontier. They also assert
in Korea should be mindful that he is supposed to reconstruct and reinterpret the Chinese
text from a third person’s point of view.

Deconstructing and scrutinizing a foreign classic (a Chinese classic, in this case)
not only helps them (the Chinese), but also helps us attain certain realizations. For
instance, if only [Korean] readers realize that the Donghu [東胡], who appear frequently
in *Three Kingdoms* and who fought the Han Chinese for control of the Liaodong 遼東
[Manchu] area, were actually by origin the Koguryŏ people, our readers would likely
maintain a critical distance from the interpretation that takes conflict between Liu Bei
and Cao Cao as central to *Three Kingdoms*. From the Chinese viewpoint, we are no
different than Dong Zhuo and Lü Bu and their destiny could become ours, too.

It is difficult to deconstruct a classic. However, I can assert that in the case of
*Three Kingdoms*, we are in a better position to handle it than the Chinese, who would
feel a certain burden in deconstructing their treasured cultural heritage. As I have
mentioned previously with respect to the need to have “our own *Three Kingdoms*” and
make it be reborn as our own, first of all we must banish the unconscious misconception
that *Three Kingdoms*, having been all too time-honored and familiar to us, has already
become none other than “our own.” We are not obliged to take sides with either Liu Bei
or Cao Cao. Instead, we need to endeavor to attain the acumen to see through today’s

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*that, although their close ties to the mounted nomadic tribes provided them with superior cavalry, which enabled them to establish a military government, their non-Han aspects also alienated them from the Han Chinese elites at court and brought about racial discrimination against them.*

*434 Koguryŏ 高句麗 (37 B.C.–A.D. 668) is one of the three premodern Korean kingdoms along
with Paekche 百濟 and Silla 新羅, the latter of which unified the former two in the late seventh century.*
troublesome East Asian history by properly interpreting [the Three Kingdoms] period, which was plagued with ceaseless warfare.  

There are numerous *Three Kingdoms* translated into vernacular Korean. However, one interesting phenomenon is that everyone’s favorite translation varies by generation. We can even guess a person’s age by checking whose *Three Kingdoms* [translation] he has read. As mentioned at the beginning of the preface, this reveals a significant fact: a classic needs to be retranslated and reinterpreted, and each generation requires its own version. Haven’t all translators/authors of *Three Kingdoms* unanimously mentioned that unless *Three Kingdoms* is a book that should not be read any more, a *Three Kingdoms* reflecting the spirit of the times needs to be retranslated for each generation?  

435 Recently, the Northeastern Project 東北工程 that officially started in 2002 has become a social issue in Korea. It is a Chinese government–funded project established to study the northeastern part of China with emphasis on history and archeology. The Chinese government officially claims that the history of the ancient nations that existed within current Chinese territory all belongs to Chinese history. By the same token, Koguryŏ, whose territory roughly occupied current North Korea and former Manchuria (the current northeastern provinces of China), is also regarded by China as an ancient local Chinese regime alongside the ancient kingdoms of Tibet, Mongolia, and Taiwan. This interpretation of history created by government-patronized scholars of China caused a strong nationalistic response in Korea, and the South Korean government has officially requested it to be withdrawn several times since 2004.  

436 Here, Chang seems to be deliberately quoting Yi Mun’yŏl’s remarks at the end of his *Three Kingdoms* preface (see p. 13 above). We can see that Chang actually paraphrases Yi’s remark to his taste, although it seems as if he were just quoting what Yi said. Whether Chang did in fact do it deliberately is not clear.
from now on, new versions [of Three Kingdoms] instead of new translations! If the source text of a translation is the Chronicle of the Three Kingdoms by Chen Shou, we need to examine and correct even the slightest translation error and keep retranslating for perfection. Nevertheless, Three Kingdoms, a work that cannot be attributed to a sole author, is always looking for a new author. As mentioned previously, I have no ability to translate classical Chinese, and this enabled me to re-create my own Three Kingdoms instead of producing a plain mechanical translation. What an irony it is! If I had had the ability to read Three Kingdoms in Chinese fluently, I would also have depended on the expediency of translation. On the contrary, my inability to understand the source language enabled my access to a wide range of materials about the Three Kingdoms period, which also facilitated my concentration on the figures and events in the work.

Given the issues raised and arguments made above, a discerning reader might well speculate about the characteristics of my New Three Kingdoms. The characteristics of my New Three Kingdoms are that, in addition to taking the things mentioned above into consideration, I have also tried to make it a more “novel-like” work. As mentioned above, being “novel-like” means that I declined to use the Chunqiu bifa imposed by the [original] Three Kingdoms and instead engaged in a more thorough investigation of

Contrary to what Chang says, all modern Korean novelists who have translated Three Kingdoms commit serious translation errors, resulting mainly from their poor knowledge of classical Chinese as well as vernacular Chinese. Yi Tonghyŏk, in his “Samguk chi” ka ulgo inne (Cry the Three Kingdoms), points out numerous embarrassing errors in Yi Mun’yŏl’s and Hwang Sŏg’yŏng’s translations of Three Kingdoms. Nevertheless, Chang is the first author of a vernacular Korean Three Kingdoms who has publicly admitted his inability to read a text in classical Chinese.
human consciousness through consideration of the law of cause and effect. While completing my *Three Kingdoms*, I was thinking about the contemporary commoners sacrificed by machismo hypocrisy in the pursuit of power, and about empty fame disguised as benevolence, patriotism, and the founding of a new [kingdom], rather than about the discrimination between who are good and who are evil characters. Only when, by the time we are closing the last page of the book we come to think who or what shall remain alive even after the death of numerous heroes, will *Three Kingdoms* finally illuminate our [soul] like a mirror. I write the following as concluding remarks to *Three Kingdoms*:

> The land whereon heroes and feudal lords fell,
> What survived in the end?
> What Heaven cares about
> Are small lamps flickering in the wind.
> What Heaven embraces and rejoices at
> Are the wild flowers blooming and withering according to season.

As Luo Guanzhong, the most famous compiler of *Three Kingdoms*, wrote, history “long divided, must unite; long united, must divide.” Ever since some 1,800 years ago—the *Three Kingdoms*’ background—until very recently, the one who has performed the role of reunification has been the hero. However, we must be aware that every time a hero leads people to complete the task of reunification, numerous anonymous grassroots people have been sacrificed. As we face the unavoidable agenda of reunification [of South and North Korea] in the twenty-first century, to avoid the tragedy [in *Three

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438 It is in fact the Mao edition that incorporates this phrase.
Kingdoms] we can never be too cautious against the one who proclaims, “I will achieve the great task of reunification!” Reunification will come true when each of us performs his or her own part with an independent spirit, without relying on any hero. This, no matter how impertinent it may sound, is what I, after struggling for a long time with the New Three Kingdoms, really have intended to mention in this preface.

As a final point, I would like to commemorate several blessings I enjoyed with regard to Three Kingdoms. My first blessing was the proposal to write Three Kingdoms. Without Kimyŏngsa [a publishing house], I could not have benefited from other blessings. The second blessing was all the Three Kingdoms–related books that have flooded in since I decided to work on Three Kingdoms. Facing “the time of a hundred flowers of Three Kingdoms” [三國志[演義]百花時代], I hardly ever suffered from the lack of materials that senior translators might have experienced. The third blessing was the support from Professor Sŏ Tonghun, who helped me gather materials; he also held relevant discussions with me whenever needed. I am also grateful to the thoughtfulness of Mr. Kim Kijung, the editor-in-chief, and the meticulous editing and

439 Here, Chang refers to a Chinese proverb, baihua qifang 百花齊放, which can be translated as “let a hundred flowers bloom” or “let different views be expressed” to describe the flood of various kinds of essays, dictionaries, and reference books on “how to read” Three Kingdoms. These Three Kingdoms–related books are actually becoming a distinct emerging genre of Korean literature, and also function as a “cash cow” for publishing companies. In actuality, Chang happens to be one of the coauthors of the thickest Korean reference books on how to read Three Kingdoms, “Samguk chi” haeje, which is 621 pages long (date of publication: 2003).
corrections by Ms. Sin Sŏnyŏng and Ms. Chŏng Chinsuk. I also feel extremely lucky to be able to have procured the intrepid illustrations of Mr. Kim T’aegwŏn.

Chang Chŏng’il

6.8 Celebrity Translators Who Are Too Visible

“Invisibility” is a term used by Venuti “to describe the translator’s situation and activity in contemporary Anglo-American culture.” Venuti observes, “A translated text, whether prose or poetry, fiction or nonfiction, is judged acceptable by most publishers, reviewers, and readers when it reads fluently.” In other words, the translator’s effort is to ensure easy readability often at the cost of compromising accuracy. Therefore, “the more fluent the translation, the more invisible the translator.” The translation is indeed mostly read and judged as if it had originally been written in English (by North American readers). An important criterion to judge the quality of modern Korean translations of *Three Kingdoms* is also fluency. However, unlike the “invisible translators” Venuti discusses, translators of *Three Kingdoms* deliberately aim to

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440 Venuti, The Translator’s Invisibility, 1.

441 Ibid.

442 Venuti, The Translator’s Invisibility, 2.

443 For example, among 104 readers who wrote book reviews on Yi’s *Three Kingdoms* translation at www.yes24.com (as of April 18, 2005), the biggest Internet bookstore in Korea, about half unanimously commented that Yi’s translation read more “fluently” and “impressively” than translations by experts in Chinese literature, thanks to his notes and explanations for major events in the work.
demonstrate the uniqueness of their own translations and their translation strategies. While the translator’s identity is often obscure (in the examples Venuti deals with), the modern Korean translators of *Three Kingdoms* tend to demonstrate their distinct traits and characteristics in their translations to attract readers. There is a clear tendency, when it comes to choosing which *Three Kingdoms* edition to read, for Korean readers to prefer a translation done by his or her favorite writer. This explains why, while the quality and accuracy of Korean translations of *Three Kingdoms* that predate the 1980s cannot be said to be inferior to more recent ones, they are not popular on the book market any more. Moreover, advance reviews often accompany the publication of new *Three Kingdoms* translations in the interests of promoting the book. As Venuti observes, such reviews almost always overlook the fact that the book (in this case, a *Three Kingdoms* translation) has ever been translated before. Few reviewers are equipped with the bilingual ability to compare the source text and the target language and even fewer readers are interested in the detailed accuracy of a translation.

6.9 Heyday of Amateur Sinologist Translators: Ezra Pound and His Korean Counterparts

As noted previously, famous and successful (in terms of market sales and cultural influence) translators of *Three Kingdoms* on the Korean book market have all been renowned novelists rather than scholars of classical Chinese literature or professional translators. On the

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444 Regarding this situation, Chang Chŏng’il also provides a similar analysis in his preface.
other hand, modern translations of *Three Kingdoms* by experts in classical Chinese, being more accurate (and of course, more faithful to the original), have never received much attention.\(^{445}\) For instance, although the three novelist translators of *Three Kingdoms* examined above are all celebrities in Korean literary circles, they are nonspecialists in Chinese studies and none has expertise in either classical Chinese, vernacular Chinese, or Chinese history. Nevertheless, their *Three Kingdoms* translations have been favored much more than those of professional translators. Moreover, with each passing year, this popularity stimulates other famous novelists to undertake *Three Kingdoms* translation projects; therefore, publishing one’s own unabridged translation is becoming a yardstick for defining “prestigious Korean writers.”

However, they are not the first “amateur” sinologists whose translations of Chinese classics have been favored by readers: the example of Ezra Pound precedes theirs by almost half a century. Pound, known as one of the greatest American poets of the twentieth century, was in fact an enthusiastic follower of Confucius and his teachings as well. Deeply impressed with Confucianism, Pound believed that it was his mission to “popularize Confucianism in the West” and therefore published many translations of the Confucian canon, which include the complete English translations of *Daxue* 大學 (The great digest, 1947), *Zhongyong* 中庸 (The unwobbling pivot, 1947), and *Lunyu* 論語 (Confucian analects, 1951), the first three of the four quintessential Confucian books 四書.\(^{446}\) He also translated four chapters of *Mengzi* 孟子 (Mencius, 1947) and rendered *Shijing* 詩經 (The book of songs, 1947) into English as well.\(^{447}\) Although his

\(^{445}\) Kim Kuyong’s translation that first came out in 1974 is an example of *Three Kingdoms* translation by a sinologist.

\(^{446}\) Feng Lan, Ezra Pound and Confucianism, 6 and 9.

\(^{447}\) Lan, 6.
translations of these Confucian classics are hardly used for academic references nowadays, due mainly to their numerous inaccuracies and the presence of more refined and precise translations by professional scholars of Chinese studies, “many ordinary readers still find Pound’s translation more readable and memorable.”

To demonstrate the enduring popularity of Pound’s Confucian translations, Feng Lan introduces customer reviews on his works on the biggest online bookstore. He says, “On Amazon.com, customer reviews give consistently high rankings to Pound’s translation of the three Confucian prose works: an average of four stars with James Legge’s three stars.” He further quotes a reader’s review that clearly shows how influential Pound’s translations still remain: “My own copy of Pound’s ‘Confucius’ was purchased many years ago. It’s very well-thumbed and heavily annotated, and I often return to it. I’ve also studied Arthur Waley’s more exact translation carefully, and a few others. But the Confucian lines that stick in my mind always seem to be those of Pound’s.” This review certainly recalls numerous reader responses to the Three Kingdoms translations by Korean novelists found on several Korean Internet bookstores, most of them unanimously commenting that these novelists’ translations read more “fluently” and “impressively” and also deliver more enjoyment than translations by experts in Chinese literature.

By publishing Confucian translations, Pound intended to revive the Confucian tradition in the West that was in hopeless decline after “prominent thinkers like Max Weber discredited it

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448 Lan, 9.
449 Lan, 202.
450 Ibid.
as a backward and irrational value system.”

Here arises a problem: Pound’s insufficient and inadequate knowledge of Chinese. Feng Lan lists five types of “misleading” renderings in Pound’s Confucian translations. Among them, two types were caused directly by his poor understanding of Chinese language, and the remaining three were also related to his arbitrary interpretations of the source text based on imprecise and vague knowledge of Chinese.

First of all, Pound had virtually no knowledge of Chinese when he published his first Confucian translation. What was worse, it seems that Pound did not feel a great motivation to master Chinese in order to translate it, nor did he ever seriously try to study Chinese grammar. Mastery of both the source and target languages, which is considered the most fundamental expertise for a modern translator, did not mean much to Pound. He rather believed that “one does not need to learn a whole language in order to understand some one poem or some dozen poems. It is often enough to understand thoroughly the poem, and every one of the few dozen or few hundred words that compose it.”

Even during the period from the mid-1930s to the late 1940s when Pound’s Confucian translation project was most prolific, there is no evidence that he ever

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451 Lan, 11.
452 For a detailed discussion of these “misleading” renderings in Pound’s translations, see 14–44.
453 Lan points out that although Pound’s first translation of Daxue (his Ta Hio) came out in 1928, he did not read Confucian classics in Chinese until the mid-1930s, and Lan also notes that no evidence exists that Pound actually learned Chinese before the early 1930s. See 18–19.
454 Pound, The Letters of Ezra Pound, 37. See also Susan Basnett-McGuire (1980) for discussion of Pound’s translation practice (pp. 82-3, 93-100). Ming Xie (1999, 230) also notes, “Pound often paid little attention to the grammar of a foreign language and tended to focus his attention on meanings and equivalences.”
tried to learn Chinese grammar with regular textbooks or study materials.\textsuperscript{455} Instead, Pound relied heavily and only on a couple of Chinese-English dictionaries for translation projects, thereby limiting his knowledge of Chinese to the mere lexical level.\textsuperscript{456}

Bearing in mind the “misleading” translations generated by Pound’s insufficient knowledge of Chinese, we come to question the cases of Korean novelists. For instance, Hwang himself admitted, “I realized that I am too ignorant of the anecdotes and figures quoted in \textit{Three Kingdoms}, to say nothing of my poor knowledge of classical Chinese,” in the preface to his translation. His knowledge of both Chinese language and history apparently lacks the required expertise to produce a polished translation of a work of Chinese historical fiction. Furthermore, Hwang even resembles Pound in that, to deal with his deficiency in the Chinese language, he depends heavily on several Chinese dictionaries rather than any books on Chinese grammar.\textsuperscript{457} Kim Hongsin, another famous novelist who published his \textit{Three Kingdoms} translation in 1998, also admitted in the preface that, due to his insufficient knowledge of Chinese language and history, he had to hire an expert in Chinese studies and ask him numerous questions each time Kim encountered expressions he did not understand. In the case of Yi Mun’yŏl, although no reference to his knowledge of Chinese is found in the preface, he reveals his experience of learning classical Chinese in an autobiographical essay. Yi argues that his classical Chinese is extremely strong because, unlike most contemporary children of his time, he went to \textit{sŏdang} 書

\textsuperscript{455} Lan, 20.

\textsuperscript{456} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{457} What follows Hwang’s confession about his poor Chinese is his remedy, which reads, “I had to change my prescription glasses twice, since my eyesight became worse as I was struggling with Chinese dictionaries.”
堂 (village study hall), a small-scale premodern private school in which the entire curriculum consisted of Chinese classical texts, typically starting with the *Qianzi wen* 千字文 and continuing with Confucian classics such as the *Four Books* 四書 as relatively advanced materials. Even if we take his argument at face value, it does not seem likely that he spent a considerable amount of time at a *sŏdang* studying Chinese classics, since he frequently moved from one place to another during his childhood. More importantly, even at the *sŏdang*, one never had the chance to learn Chinese grammar systematically. There is an old maxim in the study of classical Chinese in Korea that says, “There is no grammar in classical Chinese.” Young Kyun Oh observes, “This type of instruction [with no emphasis on linguistic analysis of sentence structure] is not at all foreign to many of those who have studied classical Chinese. Frequent advice has it that reading the *Mencius* a thousand times will lead one to fluency in classical Chinese.”⁴⁵⁸ Thus, repetitive recitation of Chinese classics being the sole method of teaching at *sŏdang*, based on the proverb, “Dushu baibian qi yi zi xian 讀書百遍,其義自現” (The meaning of a sentence will come to mind spontaneously through repetitive reading), nothing more than the accumulation of classical Chinese vocabulary could be obtained from the teaching methodology of classical Chinese in premodern Korea.

As a matter of fact, a book discussing the accuracy of Yi’s *Three Kingdoms* translation recently came out. Yi Tonghyŏk, a Korean-Chinese 朝鮮族 writer, recently published “*Samguk chi*” ka ulgo inne (Cry the *Three Kingdoms*, 2003), dedicated fully to pointing out errors and misunderstandings found in Yi Mun’yŏl’s translation. Yi Tonghyŏk says that he has located about 900 errors resulting mostly from Yi’s inaccurate and insufficient knowledge of Chinese.

⁴⁵⁸ Young Kyun Oh, 193.
and has analyzed several dozen serious errors among them in his book, all of which seem accurate.

Chang Chŏng’’il actually resembles Pound the most in that he also does not think the mastery of both source and target texts is crucial for translation. Rather, he repeatedly emphasizes that his inability to read fluently or translate classical Chinese is the key to his success in creating a unique rendition of his own. Chang even seems to be proud of his ignorance of Chinese. However, just as Kim Hongsin and Hwang Sŏg’yŏng saved themselves from embarrassing errors in translation, Chang also relied on experts in Chinese studies. For his Chinese translations in the early 1950s, Pound likewise relied on help from Achilles Fang (and notes from Fenollosa for Cathay) as well.459

6.10 Various Aspects of Translation Practice

However, with regard to insufficient and inadequate knowledge of Chinese, Ezra Pound was in better shape than modern Korean novelists. For Pound, all that he had to learn to translate Confucian classics was classical Chinese. However, Three Kingdoms, as one of the xiaoshuo 小説 narratives popular in the Ming-Qing period, contains both classical and vernacular Chinese vocabulary. Although the text of Three Kingdoms was written mostly in classical Chinese compared to the other so-called Masterpieces of Ming Novels 四大奇書 (Shuihu zhuan, Xiyou ji, and Jin Ping Mei), it incorporates copious vernacular expressions from the Ming era as well. Surprisingly, not a single Korean writer who worked on the translation of Three Kingdoms seems

459 Lan, 15, 19, and 20. See also Ming Xie (1999), 218-20. For his translation of Cathay, Pound improvised upon and appropriated Fenollosa’s English notes and transcriptions.
to be aware of this fact; the only technical problem that frustrates them is their poor knowledge of classical Chinese, which ironically demonstrates that no serious attention was ever paid to the linguistic aspects of sentence structure of the source text and that the novelist translators often depended on existing translations by experts rather than dealing with the ambiguous parts themselves. The translation of Yi Mun’yŏl contains numerous errors, many of which resulted from his total ignorance of vernacular Chinese. For example, let us examine a scene in chapter 71 of Three Kingdoms (in the Mao Zonggang edition and in Yi’s translation based on the Mao version) where Huang Zhong 黃忠 and Zhao Yun [both Liu Bei’s trusted generals] vie to take the lead in a battle against Cao Cao’s troops. Yi’s translation of this part reads as follows:

Zhao Zilong [Zhao Yun] said, “Both you and I are here to fight for our lord. Isn’t it useless for us to compare our strategies 何必計較?”

Li Tonghyŏk points out that because Yi was not aware that jijiao is a common vernacular expression, he translated it literally into “compare (ji) strategies (jiao).” However, a more accurate meaning of jijiao would be “haggle over” or “have a dispute over petty things,” a meaning that has not changed in modern Chinese. Therefore, Moss Roberts provides a more refined translation as follows:

460 This point will be discussed in more detail later.

461 Yi Mun’yŏl, trans. Samguk chi, 8:61; my emphasis. For the source text in Chinese, see Sanguo yanyi (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 2002), 2:591.

462 Li Tonghyŏk, 109.

463 I referred to the ABC Chinese-English Dictionary for the definition of jijiao; slight modification added.
“What are you *quibbling for*?” Zhao Ziliong retorted. “You and I labor equally for our lord.”

Even more embarrassing mistranslations of colloquial expressions in Yi’s translation are discussed in Li’s book, one such example being the translation of *qi*欺. Throughout his translation of the work, Yi renders the meaning of *qi* as “to deceive” or “to cheat.” However, Li points out that in most cases for the text of *Three Kingdoms*, the meaning *qi* is akin to that of *qifu*欺負 in modern Chinese, which can be translated into “take advantage of,” “look down on,” or “humiliate.” For example, let us examine a scene in chapter 70 where Zhang Fei 張飛 (Liu Bei’s side) deliberately makes fun of Zhang He 張郃 (Cao Cao’s side), who is not willing to fight him because defending the base is his first priority. Greatly agitated by Zhang Fei’s disrespectful behavior, Zhang He says, in Yi’s translation, “Zhang Fei has gone too far in deceiving me 張飛欺我太甚!”

On the other hand, Moss Roberts’ translation reads, “Zhang Fei provokes me beyond endurance.” Here it is worth noting that Yi’s translation of *qi* is not only inaccurate in terms of its lexical definition but seems awkward at best in terms of the context, since Zhang Fei in this scene is apparently playing the “strategy of agitating the enemy leader 激將計,” a strategy quite common and typical in *Three Kingdoms*. In addition, Li demonstrates how Yi’s repetitive mistranslation of the word *qi* has made the target text ambiguous and even preposterous.


467 For example, see 6:243, 5:204, and 5:332 in Yi’s translation.
As noted above, Yi’s translation of *Three Kingdoms* is replete with errors that could have been avoided with even a basic knowledge of vernacular Chinese, as are other novelists’ translations. In this respect, Yi might want to wonder how a Moss Roberts, who has never been to the village study hall (*sŏdang*), could produce a far more precise translation of *Three Kingdoms* than his, although luckily enough (for him), few Korean readers recognize this fact.

On the other hand, Korean novelists have benefited greatly from an advantage that has not been allowed Western translators of Chinese literary works. Because of the cultural and historical proximity of China and Korea, in Korean there are numerous Sino-Korean loanwords adopted from Chinese. Moreover, it has been traditional for Korean literati, when they encountered terms or expressions difficult to render in Korean in the course of annotating Confucian classics, to leave them untranslated and read them in Sino-Korean pronunciation, even though they were not Sino-Korean words widely recognized in Korean.

By the same token, many difficult-to-translate terms and expressions in Chinese fiction, such as nominal terms, address terms (i.e. titles of address), institutional terms, and official titles that have been a perennial headache for Western translators, have largely been ignored by Korean translators and left untranslated in the Korean (target) text. With regard to this tendency of “incomplete” translation of Chinese-based words, Young Kyun Oh observes as follows:

> Another principle that Kim [Korean sinologist Kim Yongok] argued for was the “complete translation” of those Chinese words that had usually been left untranslated. Notwithstanding the fact that a long interval has passed since Koreans imported Chinese-based words, Korean speakers think that those words should still mean what they meant in the original texts of literary Chinese.\(^{468}\)

\(^{468}\) We have already discussed Yi Mun’yŏl’s erroneous translation based on this assumption.
become a part of “everyday Korean language,” but it is merely an orthographic equivalence and most of them do not carry the same meaning in modern Korean as their counterparts did in classical Chinese. Especially when it comes to abstract philosophical concepts [terms and titles in Chinese fiction as well] almost no vernacular translation has appeared. For example, ren 仁 [benevolence] has been left uninterpreted, being read only in the Sino-Korean pronunciation: in. Similarly, wuwei 無為 [non-action] was rendered as muwi; taiji 太極 [the Supreme Ultimate], as t’aegük.469

However, for these problematic terms and expressions created mainly by specific cultural features, Olivia Mok asserts that since they often have no equivalent terms in the west, a Western translator should extensively “rewrite” them according to the context. For example, Mok demonstrates how the English translation of the address term dazhangfu 大丈夫, literally meaning “great husband,” varies in distinct contexts; the English counterparts of this term include “an utterly brazen fellow,” “a very brawny and brazen fellow,” “a man of fortitude and courage,” and “a man of real worth.”470 However, dazhangfu (taejangbu in Korean pronunciation), which appears in the Three Kingdoms text, as well, is also a Sino-Korean word used frequently in colloquial Korean. More importantly, its meaning in premodern Chinese fiction has not changed in modern Korean, either. In the case of this example, Korean translators have been fortunate in that there was no need to “re-create” its meaning in the target text. However, as we can deduce from the examples above, Korean translators of Three Kingdoms have never provided translations for the numerous official titles, place names with specific connotations, or names of weapons and rituals in the work; these terms were merely rendered in

469 Young Kyuh Oh, 190; I have added the Chinese characters.

470 Olivia Mok, 122-23.
hangul, sometimes even without the accompanying Chinese characters. For example, on page 88 of the first volume of Hwang Sŏg’yŏng’s translation, he describes the scene where Dong Zhuo, after having Lú Bu assassinate Ding Yuan 丁原, voluntarily appoints himself as qian jiangjun 前將軍, his younger brother Dong Min as zuo jiangjun 左將軍, and Lú Bu as qiduwei zhonglangjiang 騎都尉中郞將. What Hwang provides here is merely the Korean pronunciation of these titles followed by equivalent Chinese characters, as did his predecessors. However, it is virtually impossible for ordinary readers (except experts on Chinese military history who can possibly read the work in the source language) to discern their ranks or the role of these posts. With no explanations (or translations) of these titles provided, readers are likely to doubt if the translator himself actually understands the difference between all these specific titles, terms, and expressions.

On the other hand, the first and only translator of Three Kingdoms who provides explanations for these titles, terms, and expressions is Chang Chŏng’’il, who recently published his version of Three Kingdoms in 2004. It is highly ironical that Chang is also the only translator who officially announced his total ignorance of Chinese. For example, Chang provides an explanation for the qian jiangjun, namely the senior general among seven generals just below the dajiangjun 大將軍, the highest of all generals.471 Current place names for the old names and explanations of specific Han reign years in the original text are also provided. More importantly, Chang tends to provide “domesticated” explanations for terms and expressions in the work. For example, the post of xianwei 縣尉 given to Liu Bei after he defeated the Yellow Scarves is explained as a position equivalent to a directorship of a police office in a small town in modern

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471 Chang Chŏng’’il, 1:58.
Moreover, whenever possible, Chang replaces those untranslated Chinese words (in other writers’ translations) into more colloquial expressions familiar to Koreans. For example, he sometimes translates zhugong 主公, literally meaning “milord,” into taegam, which is a polite expression used between high officials in the Chosŏn dynasty (especially when an official in a lower rank addresses his seniors), whereas other translators leave it untranslated.

Chang’s detailed (almost scholarly) knowledge of events, figures, terms and other important issues in Three Kingdoms seems to have been facilitated by his involvement with the publication of “Samguk chi” haeje as one of the coauthors. Particularly noteworthy is that the publication of “Samguk chi” haeje (date of publication: 2003) predates that of his Three Kingdoms translation (date of publication: 2004), which demonstrates his meticulous preparation for the translation project.

Olivia Mok, in her discussion of the problems of translating Chinese martial arts fiction 武俠小說, mentions the difficulty of translating vividly described fighting scenes in the story: “Here, the demand of the original is that the translator reproduces as many of the vivid filmic effects of the original as possible. In this translator’s opinion, probably the best way to meet such a demand is extensively to rewrite-to produce a recreative translation.” And she furthers gives an example of the fighting scene she translated, providing both the source and target text. Mok’s translation strategy to enhance the filmic vividness of the fighting scenes strikingly

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472 Chang Chŏng’’il, 1:83.
473 For example, see Chang, 1:82 and passim.
474 Mok, 125; emphasis mine.
475 Mok, 125-26.
resembles Hwang’s creative and deliberate modifications made to his translation of the battle scenes of *Three Kingdoms*. Hwang mentions, “Especially the masculine reality of the battle scenes, depicted sometimes like a *documentary film* and sometimes like a bird’s-eye view seen from above the skies over the vast open field, is a characteristic of *Three Kingdoms*. As for the major battle scenes, I added my own excitement to the dry original text to *enhance the breathtaking thrills*. I also deliberately used the present tense instead of past tense to *emphasize vividness*.“

Mok argues that “the translator will have to be just as creative as the original writer in coining new words or inventing phrases in the target language,” and we can see that the creative modifications of the source text to grasp the vividness of the original are supported by some professional translators of Chinese fiction.

6.11 Textual Manipulation based on the Translator’s Ideology

Pound was able to publish an English translation of *Da xue* even when he had no knowledge of Chinese because his translation was based on Guillaume Pauthier’s French version of the Four Books (*sishu*). So, too, Chang admits that he had sufficient “blessings” in the form of copious reference books and various translations of *Three Kingdoms* to reconstruct the work without the ability to read the source text. Pound’s example of retranslation from French shows that he never ventured to translate a Chinese classic that had never been translated into European languages before, even though he “deemed himself a true ‘Confucian’ believer whose mission

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476 Emphasis mine.

477 Mok, 127.

478 Lan, 18.
was to ensure the effective transmission of the master’s teachings.”479 In other words, even after Pound became able to read in Chinese, he never attempted an independent translation of his own. For his translation projects, available translations of Chinese classics by renowned sinologists such as James Legge and Pauthier were literally “indispensable,” since Pound always referred to them as well to as the source texts to complete his translations.480 Likewise, Korean novelists’ Three Kingdoms translation projects were not a path never trodden before. Just as Pound could depend on and refer to the English, French, and Latin translations of the Confucian classics he was working on, Korean intellectuals had frequent access to Japanese translations of Chinese classics during the colonial period (1910-1945) and even in the 1950s and 1960s. As a result, and as noted above, many Korean translations of Three Kingdoms before the 1980s were in actuality retranslations of Japanese translations of the work, especially that of Yoshikawa Eiji. For example, Sŏ In'guk’s translation popular in the 1950s was more or less a word-for-word retranslation of Yoshikawa’s work. Moreover, those modern novelists who translated Three Kingdoms, including Yi, Hwang, and Chang, all benefited from copious previous translations. With the various translations available, they could compare and investigate the source text and existing translations simultaneously, thereby re-creating unique translations with their own characteristics. This examination of previous translations also improved the easy “readability” of their translations significantly, making it possible for them to be read more “fluently” and “impressively” just as many ordinary Western readers still find Pound’s translation “more readable and memorable.”481

479 Lan, 44.

480 Lan, 18-37 and passim.

481 Lan, 9.
Making efficient use of existing translations is not the only common aspect between Pound and modern Korean translators of *Three Kingdoms*. Pound’s relentless anxiety to differentiate his translation from previous ones is also inherited by modern Korean writers. While benefiting from translations by predecessors such as Jesuit priests (for Latin translations), Pauthier (French), and Legge (English), Pound, “as a late-comer in the enterprise of Confucian translation,” feared “being overshadowed by them.”\(^482\) Therefore, “it was necessary for him to challenge and replace them in order to obtain a confidence in locating his own origin.”\(^483\) Pound’s thorough effort to differentiate his translation from the ones he referred to is demonstrated in his frequent “superimposition of additional meaning on top of a previous version,” which turned out to be “an addition that has no textual basis in the original.”\(^484\) As a result of these kinds of revisions, Pound’s translation tended to become excessively informative, interpretative, and thereby more “manipulative” than the original (both the source text and its translations by his predecessors). The example given by Feng Lan demonstrates how Pound manipulated the original text in his “misleading” interpretation:

*Yì yuè shì zhí zhè xiàn yì* 以約失之者鮮矣. (*Lún yù* 4.23)

[Legge]: The cautious seldom err.

[Pound]: *Those who consume their smoke seldom get lost.* The concise seldom err. (*Con*, 208)\(^485\)

\(^{482}\) Lan, 27.

\(^{483}\) Ibid; my emphasis.

\(^{484}\) Lan, 28.

\(^{485}\) Ibid.
The modern Korean novelists who produced their translations of *Three Kingdoms* are also well aware of the existence of previous translations of the work, and therefore take pains to emphasize how different, and furthermore, how “superior and unique” their “new” translations are from those of their predecessors. Just as Pound tried hard to “locate his own origin” in his translation, Yi Munyŏl, when he started the translation project, was utterly anxious to distinguish his work from the previous ones. Hwang, feeling pressure from the huge success of Yi’s translation in the Korean book market, and realizing like Pound that “he was entering a territory already occupied by ‘giants’ like James Legge,” took pains to explain how his translation is different from those of his predecessors while dedicating a considerable part of his preface to harshly criticizing Yi’s work. Chang, of course, criticizes the plain and mechanical translations of his predecessors, condemning the “hopelessly conservative and backward” views of both Yi and Hwang in his interview on his *Three Kingdoms* translation. All the self-praise of these writers recalls Pound’s unconvincing claim that “what he had accomplished was ‘the first translation of Confucius’ in English by a true Confucian believer” and that “he was ‘nearer the original meaning’ than his masters [such as Pauthier and Legge].” In other words, Pound’s and the Korean novelists’ unusual emphasis on the originality and uniqueness of their translations in fact reveals their anxiety not to be overshadowed by the legacy of existing translations made

486 For example, see Yi’s remark in his preface, which reads, “If I translate it plainly and literally, the outcome will be no different from the two [previous] *Three Kingdoms* translations mentioned above, therefore being a worthless waste of effort.”

487 Lan, 27.

488 See the appendix for details of Chang’s interview on his *Three Kingdoms* translation.

489 Lan, 27 and 29 respectively; emphasis mine.
possible by their predecessors. In this respect, Yi tries to differentiate his work by showing that he is the “first” Korean writer who tried the full-scale re-creation/revision of the story plot of *Three Kingdoms* with his own “interpretations,” while Hwang asserts that he is the “first” Korean novelist who advocated and accomplished a translation most faithful to the original.  

Chang also emphasizes that no one else but him ever incorporated a strong liberal and nationalistic interpretation in rendering the work.

Nevertheless, the most crucial characteristic of Pound’s translation of Chinese classics is the arbitrary textual manipulation based on his ideology. Bearing in mind the “ultimate goal of reestablishing a system of Confucian values, a system whose unity and cogency were validated by his own ideological premises,” Pound never hesitated to exclude, alter, or modify the text to expunge possible readings other than his own rendition, regardless of the context. More precisely, the master’s teaching that Pound aimed to transmit to other Western intellectuals was in actuality the Confucian writing that specifically accorded with his own ideological standing. To maintain this ideological consistency in his translation, Pound took the liberty of making as many “intentional divergences” as necessary. By the same token, we can say with confidence that the disparity of ideological positions between the novelists, especially concerning how to interpret history and its progress (or “how to read *Three Kingdoms*” 三國演義讀法), has

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490 Hwang’s argument also resembles that of Pound in that even after revising many parts of the novel, he still argues that his work is most faithful to the original, just as Pound asserted that he was nearer “the original meaning” than his predecessors, even when his revisions had no textual basis in the original.

491 Lan, 37. Ming Xie (1999, 229) also notes that, for Pound, there seems to be no fundamental distinction between translation or adaptation and original composition.
generated many distinct versions of *Three Kingdoms* translations, since each writer “rewrote” the work according to his own ideological perspective. For example, Chang challenges the conservative ideology revealed in Yi’s translation, saying, “Yi’s *Three Kingdoms* is like a repository or a grave where Yi’s every single conservative aspect is kept.”  

492 He points out the elitist view of history (選民史觀) lurking in Yi’s translation as revealed by defining the Yellow Scarf Army (黃巾軍) as the Yellow Scarf Outlaws (黃巾賊). Whereas Yi regards the poor peasants who formed the Yellow Scarves and brought turmoil to the Han empire as outlaws, and thus treats them as a mere instrument for the successful military career of Liu Bei and his sworn brothers, Chang praises them as grassroots people sacrificed for the progress of history, therefore calling their revolt a “righteous uprising.” This example demonstrates that distinct ideologies affect the practice of translation, often making the translators select totally different (or even opposite) terms, expressions, and notes for the rendition of an identical source text.

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492 Refer to Chang’s interview on his *Three Kingdoms*. 
Figure 8 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was three bold spirits plight mutual faith in the peach garden. Original source: Official website of Hwang Sŏg'yŏng’s *Three Kingdoms* version (www.changbi.com/samgugji).
6.12 Authors of New *Three Kingdoms*

Given the “misleading” aspects discussed above, the practice of Pound’s Confucian translation “raises serious questions regarding the nature of translation and the boundaries of a translator,” a comment that can be applied to the translation of *Three Kingdoms* by modern Korean writers as well.\(^{493}\) What they did would never be approved by sinologists or professional translators.\(^{494}\) However, Pound repeatedly produced his manipulative translations with serious

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\(^{493}\) Lan, 44.

\(^{494}\) Lan asserts that even Achilles Fang, who was most sympathetic with Pound and had helped with his translation, was often critical of Pound’s rendering of Confucius. He continues, “The only credit that
“misleading” aspects because he never saw himself merely as a “traditional” translator. Rather, Pound “deemed himself a true ‘Confucian’ believer whose mission was to ensure the effective transmission of the master’s teaching.”

After all, Confucius himself was best known for explicating and editing classics such as the Book of Poetry and Pound was a true “follower” of Confucius in this respect as well. Moreover, Zhu Xi, in establishing the Neo-Confucian canon, did far more than what a transmitter of the Confucian Way was supposed to do. He “not only rearranged the order of sentences in the Daxue but inserted a whole passage (containing 134 characters) of his own making into the text” to further elaborate on the notions he believed particularly important, which makes us realize that Pound was merely following the established Confucian tradition of “text tampering.” Given this particular Confucian tradition, Feng Lan further argues, “If Zhu Xi could re-edit the classical Confucian texts for the China of the Song dynasty (960-1279), Pound must have assumed, then why could he not do what he considered appropriate for fulfilling his mission in the modern Western world?”

By the same token, Korean novelists who “rewrote” Three Kingdoms according to their ideological orientation also seem to think that they deserve the right to “rewrite” the original work. As a matter of fact, all three novelists discussed above acknowledge that Three

Pound’s expert readers seem willing to give him as a translator of Confucius is the ‘poetic’ appeal of his language.” See 15 and 18 respectively.

Lan, 44.

Martin Huang, 52.

Lan, 44.

Note that Pound also defined his translation of Japanese Noh as a “re-creation.” (See Pound, Selected Letters, 101.)
*Kingdoms* has been edited and compiled by numerous people through many different stages, and the main focus in it has also been challenged, added and altered, which functions as a justification for their relentless “rewriting” of the work. As Yi affirms, were it not for the changes made in the rewriting of the original, there would be no need for modern writers to challenge a work that has already been translated by many precursors. When referring to the exegesis of the classics (*解經*), Li Zhi (李贄 1527-1602), one of the radical iconoclasts of the Ming, remarked, “A definite interpretation is dead language; dead language is [as mechanical as] stamping a seal on the paper. What is the use of that?” Comments such as this support Chang’s argument that a classic needs to be retranslated and reinterpreted and that each generation requires its own version of the work. Therefore, just as the various versions of the popular narratives in the Ming-Qing period were often named after the editors or compilers of the works rather than the original author (e.g., Jin Shengtan edition of *Shuihu zhuan* or Mao Zonggang edition of *Sanguo yanyi*), editions of *Three Kingdoms* in the Korean book market are named after the translators rather than the attributed author, Luo Guanzhong.

499 For example, Hwang, who repeatedly emphasizes the significance of a translation faithful to the original, also says in his preface that his translation inherits the tradition of *Three Kingdoms* editing and compiling in that many people have participated in his translation project, making his rewriting a group creation just as other *Three Kingdoms* have been. Likewise, Yi asserts in his preface, “As time goes by, although the contents remain the same, the way to express them and the method of understanding them change.” For a more detailed discussion of the changes made to *Three Kingdoms* in terms of thematic alteration over the centuries, see the afterword in Moss Roberts’ English translation of *Three Kingdoms*.  

500 Li Zhi, *Fenshu, Xu fenshu*, 134; translation cited in Huang, 48.  

501 This is in part because of the doubts about the novel’s authorship caused by little information available regarding Luo Guanzhong. Refer to the following footnote.
In the case of *Three Kingdoms*, the vague presence of the author also made room for the translators to play a more active role in interpreting the meaning of a text. Because Luo Guanzhong was such a vague figure (little information about him being available), each translator can claim that his interpretation best reconstructs “authorial intention.” In addition, Martin Huang also points out that the relatively low status of the *xiaoshuo* 小説 narrative genre in traditional China facilitated the “disrespectful” meddling of commentators and editors. Considering that the status of *Three Kingdoms* has been elevated to that of one of the cherished national classics in modern China, Chang’s explanation about the Koreans’ advantage over the Chinese in terms of unrestricted rendition and re-rendering of the work sounds quite convincing. Chang says, “I can assert that in the case of [the deconstruction] of *Three Kingdoms*, we are in a better position to handle it than the Chinese, who would feel a certain burden in deconstructing their treasured cultural heritage.” Indeed, although copious academic publications on *Three Kingdoms* are available in China, radical revisions of the plot by modern writers are rarely found. On the other hand, modern Korean writers were able to take up this “disrespectful” challenge, which might have proven unsuccessful in this work’s native land, by labeling a "translation"

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502 See, for example, 448-454 in Roberts’ afterword for Luo’s background (abridged edition). According to him, even a fundamental fact like whether Luo was in fact sympathetic to the rebel movements against the Yuan is not clear. And although some scholars argue that Luo was deeply involved with Zhang Shicheng, one of the anti-Mongol leaders, there is no substantial evidence that he felt antagonism toward Zhu Yuanzhang, the first Ming emperor, or any firm evidence that he wrote a long prose version of these stories, as Hwang Sŏg’yŏng asserts in his preface.

503 Huang, 52. We can also note that after 1522 when the Jiajing Renwu edition came out, relatively few changes were made to *Sanguo yanyi*, compared to the appearance of many different versions of *Shuihu zhuan*. See Plaks, *The Four Masterworks*, chapters 3 and 5 for further discussion.
what in fact is a total rewriting based on the translator’s ideology. This strategy is made possible, in part, by the remoteness and obscurity of the author.

To claim full credit for this classic, writers tend to emphasize how they have totally re-created *Three Kingdoms* into a new narrative full of originality. For example, Yi repeatedly emphasizes that he took the liberty to “transform or reconstruct” the plot whenever he felt it necessary, thereby enhancing the work with the more lively “feel” of modern fiction. He further argues that these “transformations and reconstructions” are the crucial aspect of his *Three Kingdoms* rewriting. Chang even refrains from calling his rendition of the classic a translation. Through massive revision of the plot, these writers seek to elevate their status from translators to authors of the *New Three Kingdoms*.

Korean readers tend to go along with this line of argumentation insofar as they call these “rewritten” works by the writer’s name (*Yi Mun’yŏl* (version) *Three Kingdoms* and *Hwang Sŏg’yŏng* (version) *Three Kingdoms*); that Luo Guanzhong and Mao Zonggang are the original author and commentator has long been forgotten.504

The last common aspect between Pound and his Korean counterparts relevant here is their spectacular contribution to the spread of the subjects they dealt with. It can be argued that Pound’s Confucian translations, no matter how imperfect and problematic they may have been, succeeded in reviving readers’ interest in the teachings of Confucius that had been in hopeless

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504 Although Korean rewriters of *Three Kingdoms* often mention Mao Zonggang as the sole commentator who completed the Mao edition of *Three Kingdoms*, it has been widely confirmed that Mao Lun and his son Mao Zonggang both worked on the commentary of the Mao edition. See Alison Bailey, “The Mediating Eye: Mao Lun, Mao Zonggang and the Reading of *Sanguo zhi yanyi*” for further discussion.
decline. Likewise, Korean novelists who have “rewritten” *Three Kingdoms* have made it more “approachable” to readers in general in terms of the depth and quantity of readership. Although *Three Kingdoms* was already enjoying solid popularity before they got their hands on it, their unrelenting involvement with newer and fresher translations of the work, as well as their fierce criticisms of each other’s translations, have drawn more readers into the realm of *Three Kingdoms*, with the result that its reception is developing into an increasingly sophisticated and lively cultural phenomenon.

6.13 *Three Kingdoms* as Bestseller

Ever since the huge commercial success of Yi Mun’yŏl’s translation of *Three Kingdoms*, it has become a highly marketable cultural product, repeatedly reproduced by major publishers, and achieved canonical status in its adoptive home. In this section, I examine strategies for the translation, editing, and publishing of *Three Kingdoms* and discuss how it established its current status as bestseller. I also elucidate *Three Kingdoms*’ influence on the literary culture of modern Korea.

6.14 Why Do Prestigious Writers Rewrite *Three Kingdoms*?

*Three Kingdoms* has been favoured by Korean publishers as a perennial cash cow for many years, in part because of its long-established reputation as a low-risk financial item. As discussed in Chapter 5, already in the early twentieth-century, adaptations and translations of *Three Kingdoms* had been repeatedly published by major publishers in the format of the so-
called ttakchibon. When it came to choosing a work that could guarantee a certain level of sales, publishers preferred *Three Kingdoms* since it had so many loyal readers by the late Chosŏn period. Moreover, there was no copyright issue to consider for *Three Kingdoms*.

As for the modern translations of the novel, even though Yi Mun’yŏl, Hwang Sŏg’yŏng, and Chang Chŏng’il all mention their dissatisfaction with available *Three Kingdoms* translations or revisions as their common motivation for making their own version of *Three Kingdoms*, we cannot disregard a profit motive that goes unmentioned.

This marketability of *Three Kingdoms*, proven over many years, motivated Yi Mun’yŏl to produce his own translation of the work. As noted earlier, his undertaking was motivated by the commercial success of translations by Yoshikawa Eiji and Chen Shunchen in the Japanese book market. In a recent internet television interview, Yi mentions that he decided to produce his translation when he learned that Yoshikawa Eiji’s *Three Kingdoms* translation had sold far better than all of his other historical novels combined.\(^{505}\) Likewise, his *Three Kingdoms* has sold far better than all other novels and essays by him combined (some 17 million copies thus far). In turn, the huge commercial success of Yi’s translation motivated Hwang Sŏg’yŏng to publish his translation of the novel. In several interviews on his *Three Kingdoms* translation, Hwang openly mentioned that publication of his *Three Kingdoms* translation was no more than a “plan for old age” (*nohu taechaek* 老後對策) for himself.\(^{506}\)

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\(^{505}\) Refer to Yi’s interview with *Chung’ang ilbo* at

\(^{506}\) For instance, see Hwang’s interviews at
http://www.kukinews.com/news2/article/view.asp?page=1&gCode=all&arcid=0920494471&cp=nv and
As noted above, Yi’s translation of *Three Kingdoms* has achieved the most authoritative standing among the modern Korean translations of *Three Kingdoms*. His rewriting of the classic still remains the most influential and popular among readers, establishing itself as the most “canonical” among the Korean translations of *Three Kingdoms*. Nonetheless, for the past two decades, Yi’s *Three Kingdoms* has faced several challenges, the most notable one being the criticism by Yi Tonghyŏk in 2003. Yi Tonghyŏk pointed out numerous translation errors in Yi Mun’yŏl’s rewriting, which resulted mostly from his inaccurate and insufficient knowledge of Chinese.507 Chŏng Wŏn’gi, another notable authority on *Three Kingdoms* in Korea, also joined Yi Tonghyŏk by pointing out inaccuracies in the existing *Three Kingdoms* translations as represented by Yi Mun’yŏl’s rewriting.508 However, this fierce criticism by *Three Kingdoms* specialists of the authoritative translation by the Ezra Pound of Korea, has had little effect on the ongoing commercial success of Yi’s translation. This attests to the fact that, even though translation errors should be corrected, they nevertheless do not diminish a “translation’s readability, its power to communicate and to give pleasure.”509

6.15 Marketing Strategies for *Three Kingdoms*

The turning point in the fortunes of Yi Mun’yŏl’s translation came when it became closely affiliated with the college entrance examination. Ch’oe Chihwan, a student who achieved

507 Refer to sections 6.10 and 6.11 in this chapter for Yi Tonghyŏk’s criticism of Yi Mun’yŏl’s translation.

508 Refer to Chŏng Wŏn’gi’s website on *Three Kingdoms* at http://www.samgookji.com.

509 Venuti (1998), 32.
the top seat in the nationwide college entrance examination remarked in an interview that reading *Three Kingdoms* helped him develop logical reasoning and facilitated his preparation of essays.\(^{510}\) Thereafter, Yi’s translation achieved the status of a must-read for preparation for the

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\(^{510}\) In his interview, Ch’oe Chihwan, who achieved the top seat in 1993, mentioned that he had read Yi’s version of *Three Kingdoms* fifteen times while preparing for essay writing. (See *Tong’a ilbo* (Tong’a Daily), page 28, July 17, 1999 and *Kungmin ilbo* (Kungmin Daily), page 30, Feb. 23, 1999.) According to the *Kungmin ilbo* article, ever since this was broadcast, sales of Yi’s *Three Kingdoms* translation rapidly climbed, reaching about 1.5 million copies per year. Other top seat winners of the college entrance examinations, Yi Hakho in 1991 and Ch’oe Chisŏk in 1994, respectively, also mentioned that repeat reading of *Three Kingdoms* facilitated their logical reasoning. (See *Tong’a ilbo*, page 20, Dec. 30, 1991 and *Kungmin ilbo*, page 18, Jan. 22, 1994; news articles available at http://www.kinds.or.kr/.)

Kin Bunkyō (or Kim Mungyŏng), when discussing two versions of the Tang Binyin edition of *Three Kingdoms* in his recent conference paper, mentions that in the early seventeenth-century China, there was a trend that publishers of the novel used the names of the top graduates of the civil service examinations as the alleged compilers, following the long-established tradition for the publishers to attribute their books to famous figures. (Refer to Kin Bunkyō (or Kim Mungyŏng), “Guanyu liang zhong Tang Binyin jiaozheng ben Sanguo zhi zhuan” (Regarding Two Versions of the Tang Binyin Edition *Three Kingdoms*), paper presented at the Seventy-sixth International Conference of The Korean Scholars’ Association for Traditional Chinese Fiction, Seoul, September 19, 2009 (Pages 60-71 of the conference proceedings)). More specifically, two (or three) editions in the names of the top graduates of the civil service examinations as the alleged compilers came out in 1603, 1620, and around 1610-20. He asserts that this is because *Three Kingdoms* was recognized and used as a kind of reference book for civil service examination, whose market was bigger than that of popular novels then. Kin further argues that there is no evidence showing that other famous Ming novels were used as
college entrance examination, which led millions of secondary school students to purchase Yi’s translation each year.

In this context, the wide appeal of Yi’s version of *Three Kingdoms* was more or less engineered by his publisher, Min’ŭmsa, who used Choe in its advertising. To boost sales of Yi’s version of *Three Kingdoms*, Min’ŭmsa followed the basic formula for bestseller marketing, publishing excerpts and buying advertising in a variety of periodicals, newspapers, and magazines.\(^{511}\) Moreover, Yi Mun’yŏl was not shy about being pushed onto television shows as a celebrity guest\(^{512}\), and gave numerous interviews on his rewriting of *Three Kingdoms* with various mass media.\(^{513}\) As a matter of fact, he was already one of the most popular novelists in

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reference books for state examinations, and accordingly no top graduate was claimed as the alleged compilers for them. In short, Kin believes that some early editions of *Three Kingdoms* were recognized as study aid, and then came to be recognized as pure entertainment later, especially since the appearance of the “Li Zhuowu” commentary edition.

In Chapter 3, through Song Myŏng-hŭm (1705-1768)’s anecdote, we have noticed that *Three Kingdoms* was used as a sugar-coated textbook for classical Chinese at some yangban households in Chosŏn by early eighteenth century, and that among all six masterpieces of Ming and Qing novels, *Three Kingdoms* is the only work that incorporates numerous classical Chinese passages from the historical sources of the Han period (therefore being the least vernacular work among these masterpieces). In this context, the fact that *Three Kingdoms* has been recognized as study aid for college entrance examination in modern Korea since the early 1990s can be interpreted as a continuation of its tradition.

\(^{511}\) Venuti (1998), 136.

\(^{512}\) Whiteside, 66.

\(^{513}\) See Kang Chunman, 1: 199 and passim for Yi’s close connection with major newspaper companies when it comes to promoting his new novels. The strategy of using positive reviews and
Korea when he started serializing his version of *Three Kingdoms* in a major newspaper, following in the footsteps of predecessors such as Yang Paehwa and Han Yong’un. Given these marketing strategies, when his translation was published as a multi-volume work, it enjoyed positive reviews by the mass media, which also functioned as an advertisement for his translation.

To date, Yi’s *Three Kingdoms* has repeatedly made the list of “recommended books” issued by cultural authorities such as the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Samsung Institute for Economics, CEOs of major corporations, and YMCA Seoul branch, establishing its status as a canonical foreign text. It is also worth noting that universities and the educational establishment play an important role in admitting a new work of translation and elevating its status, mainly by recommending it for courses. In this wise, Yi’s *Three Kingdoms* was selected as one of "One Hundred World Masterpieces" for first-year students by Seoul National University.

This aggressive marketing of *Three Kingdoms* translations is also observed in the cases of Hwang Sŏg’yŏng’s version of the work and Chang Chŏng’il’s rewriting of the novel. In the case of Hwang Sŏg’yŏng’s translation, his ten-volume *Three Kingdoms* translation set comes previews by the critics has been repeatedly used by the writers who published their translations of *Three Kingdoms*, Hwang Sŏg’yŏng being a case in point (see below).

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514 Yi’s *Three Kingdoms* translation was serialized in *Kyŏnghyang sinmun* (Kyŏnghyang Daily) from 1983-1988.


517 Lefevere (1982), 20.
with a free supplement, *Chūlgŏun “Samguk chi” t’amhŏm* (Wonderful Exploration of *Three Kingdoms*), which contains advance reviews by six celebrities, such as renowned professors of literature and history and the president of a newspaper company. Surprisingly, these literary magnates lavish all kinds of praise on Hwang’s translation even though none of them had actually read it when they wrote these “reviews.” Only one of them (a professor of Chinese) had read some part of the original work in Chinese.518 Such marketing using reviews and advance reviews is one of the typical and effective strategies of publishers, as seen in the example of English translations of the Italian novelist Guareschi by his publishers in 1950s America.519

In the case of Chang Chŏng’’il’s translation, the publisher sells his *Three Kingdoms* translation set along with two free supplementary books on so-called “self-help” techniques, which include *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen Covey, another bestseller that has sold over fifteen million copies in thirty-eight languages. Advertising strategies like these assure readers that *Three Kingdoms* is not only essential reading as a literary masterpiece, but also a must-read for business strategies that enable one to survive in today’s competitive society.

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518 For the details of these advance reviews, see, *Chūlgŏun “Samguk chi” t’amhŏm*, 44-63.

519 Venuti (1998), 136-7, and passim. Giovanni Guareschi is an Italian writer whose works were bestsellers in the United States for more than two decades after the Second World War. Venuti (127) notes that in order to achieve bestseller status in translation, “Guareschi’s books had to meet cultural expectations that were necessarily diverse, appealing to different constituencies, and these expectations necessarily deviated from the ones he met in Italy.”
6.16 *Three Kingdoms*: A Goose that Lays Golden Eggs for Major Publishers

Competition between the publishers of these modern rewritings of *Three Kingdoms* is fierce. Ch’angjak kwa pip’yŏng (Creation and Criticism; hereafter Ch’angbi), the publisher of Hwang Sŏg’yŏng’s version of *Three Kingdoms*, has come to be viewed as a highly independent literary house, which has maintained an oppositional stance against not only the military regimes in the 1970’s and 1980’s but also all kinds of censorship, oppression of liberalism, and authoritarianism. Originally established in 1966 by Paik Nak-chung (Paek Nakchŏng), a
renowned scholar in humanities at Seoul National University, as a publishing house for a literary journal, Ch’angbi has maintained its reputation for highly selective publications of “pure literature.”\footnote{Ch’angbi has been under constant surveillance by the Korean Central Intelligence Agency, and has also been shut down once, its authors, editors, and publishers prosecuted and imprisoned by the military regime in Korea for advocating liberalism. Refer to their history at www.changbi.com.} More importantly, it is Ch’angbi that initiated a debate on how to define the “national literature of Korea” that has gone on for years, involving and influencing most prominent contemporary intellectuals. In its mission statement, Ch’angbi says that the company endeavors to provide alternative ideas to the world capitalist system, an attitude distinct from most commercial publishers, for whom the profit motive is key.

In this context, the publication of Hwang Sŏg’yŏng’s version of *Three Kingdoms* by Ch’angbi in 2004 can be viewed as a commercial deviation from their long-term commitment to the high aesthetic, as was the editing and translating of Guareschi by Farrar, Straus, and Giroux.\footnote{According to Venuti (1998, 151). Farrar, Straus and Giroux was viewed as “an independent literary house, one of the last, who resists the profit orientation driving the lists of publishers now owned by transnational corporations.”}

These are but two examples of publishers originally known for their support of literary value, ending up pursuing commercial interest, choosing the functional rather than the aesthetic.\footnote{Venuti (1998), 150.} It is also notable that Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux “have also acquired considerable cultural authority as the publishers of major contemporary writers,”\footnote{Venuti (1998), 150.} including many Nobel...
Laureates such as T.S. Eliot, just as Ch’angbi has been the cultural authority for several decades in Korea.

These examples nevertheless show that even independent literary houses renowned for their allegiance to the high aesthetic cannot be entirely free from consideration of commercial interests. In the Korean book market, in particular, the exceptional marketability of *Three Kingdoms* has appealed to the major publishing houses. According to the surveys published in 2005, the top three major publishing houses in Korea were Min’ŭmsa, which published Yi Mun’yŏl’s rewriting of *Three Kingdoms*; Ch’angbi, which published Hwang Sŏg’yŏng’s version of the novel; and Kimyŏngsa, which published Chang Chŏng’il’s translation, respectively.\(^{524}\) This survey reveals that the major publishing corporations in Korea have paid close attention to the commercial value of *Three Kingdoms* and pursued a publishing strategy that brought together translation of a famous classic and a literary magnate.\(^{525}\) This fierce competition for the *Three

\(^{524}\) Refer to the *Tong’a ilbo* article at http://www.donga.com/fbin/moeum?n=dstory$j_755&a=v&l=2&id=200512270056.

\(^{525}\) One such example would be the case of Pak Maengho, the former representative of Min’ŭmsa. He persuaded Yi Mun’yŏl to write the *Three Kingdoms* on the side as a part-time project (*puŏp* 副業), assuring him that once Yi’s translation of the novel became successful he would not have to worry about financial support for his creative writing. Pak also allocated exceptionally high promotional budgets for Yi’s translation, including a budget for the illustrations he purchased in Hong Kong. See *Kungmin ilbo*, page 30, Feb., 23, 1999. Due largely to the huge commercial success of the *Three Kingdoms* translation published by his company, Pak was named as the most influential publisher in Korea in 2003 by a survey that involved sixty-three editors-in-chief of major publishing houses. See *Tong’a ilbo*, page 19, Jan. 13, 2003.
Kingdoms market between literary magnates teamed with major publishers has drawn more readers into the realm of this “rewritten” classic.

6.17 Domesticating the Translation of Three Kingdoms and the Formation of a Canonical Work

Another key to the success of Yi Mun’yŏl’s translation is his “domestication” of the original text. Venuti discusses the translation process for The Little World of Don Camillo as a case in point, showing how the domesticating deletion and abridgement of the original text culminated in success in the market. In 1949, Guareschi’s editor for the United States market cut the complete English-language translation of the Italian text down, omitting some 180 pages of the Italian edition.526 This move turned out to be a wise one, because the cut “made the book easier to digest for most American readers since the omitted material contained topical satires filled with references to contemporary Italian political figures,” with whom most American readers were unfamiliar.527 Such domesticating editing contributed to the commercial success of the Don Camillo series in the United States book market for more than a decade. Likewise, in the case of Yi’s translation, none other than Yi himself decided to omit the less stimulating chapters of the original work.

Many readers of the novel, including Moss Roberts, assert that the most crucial main character of the novel is Zhuge Liang, rather than Liu Bei or Cao Cao.528 It is apparent that after

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526 Venuti (1998), 140-1.
527 Venuti (1998), 141.
528 Moss Roberts, 422.
Zhuge Liang dies (in chapter 104), readers’ interest diminishes drastically. Yi took the liberty of cutting and abbreviating the chapters following Kongming’s death into one third of the original in length; chapters 105-120 in the original work were either removed or abbreviated in Yi’s rewriting.

This decisive removal and abbreviation of the insignificant chapters in Yi’s translation is a typical strategy of domestication by the translator to enhance readability. These revisions focus on fluency and the illusory effect of transparency by removing linguistic and cultural differences that readers of the translated work might find unfamiliar.

Through this domesticating move, Yi's translation has established itself as the canonical version among Korean translations of *Three Kingdoms* over the past two decades. Since its first publication in 1988, his *Three Kingdoms* also remains the all-time bestseller, so much so that major bookstores often choose not to include it on the bestseller list since its presence is taken for granted. All *Three Kingdoms* translators who published their rewritings in the post-Yi Mun’yŏl period cannot help being mindful of its authority.

Nevertheless, such canonical works of foreign literature, established through the selection of foreign texts and development of translation strategies, reveal exclusions and admissions that conform to domestic aesthetic values. In the case of Yi’s rewriting of *Three Kingdoms*, he

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529 Among all the main characters of the novel, Kongming is the one whose entry into the novel is delayed the most, until chapter 38, making a long-anticipated appearance when the narrative is more than one third completed. He also outlives the other protagonists. In chapter 78, Guan Yu dies. Cao Cao dies in chapter 78, Zhang Fei dies in chapter 81, and Liu Bei dies in chapter 85.

530 Venuti (1998), 154, 126.


tends to exclude the transgressive and approve the conservative. For example, Yi regards as outlaws the poor peasants who formed the Yellow Scarves and brought turmoil to the Han empire and treats them as a mere instrument for the successful military career of Liu Bei and his sworn brothers; Chang, on the other hand praises them as the grassroots, who sacrifice themselves for the progress of history. Li Tonghyŏk also points out that in Yi’s translation, he deliberately disparages the Zhang brothers, the leaders of the Yellow Scarves. Li asserts that Zhang Jiao 張角 and his subordinates in Yi’s translation are depicted as more ignorant, malevolent, and cunning than in the Luo Guanzhong or Mao Zonggang versions. (See 199-205.)

6.18 Cultural Stereotyping

As noted above, Yi’s *Three Kingdoms* privileges certain values to the exclusion of others, and readers of it have come to develop certain images of traditional Chinese culture and history, as attested by Yi’s assertion in his preface that “With these critical notes provided [for the novel], there is nothing that one cannot discuss; not only revolution, the legitimacy of political power, and war, but even history, philosophy, and science can all be incorporated.”

A similar case in point concerns the translation of modern Japanese fiction into English. As Edward Fowler notes, the American publishers of Japanese novels established a canon of Japanese fiction in English based on a specific stereotype that determined reader expectations for the past four decades up until the early 1990s. They selectively translated only those Japanese works that reflect images that the American publishers preferred that readers receive. Japan was represented as an “exoticized, aestheticized, and quintessentially foreign land quite antithetical to

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533 Fowler (1992), 15-16.
its prewar image of a bellicose and imminently threatening power.”  

By the same token, the dominant translations of *Three Kingdoms* represented by Yi Mun’yŏl’s rewriting, exhibit a tendency to deliver stereotypical and more or less distorted images about China and Chinese culture to Korean readers. As noted above, advertisements for *Three Kingdoms* translations emphasize the significance of the novel as an ultimate guide that teaches how to survive in a competitive modern society (*ch’ŏsesul* 處世術), focusing on such subjects as betraying of or loyalty to one’s lord, how to deceive not only enemies but allies (who are potential enemies), and entrapment using beauties (*meiren ji* 美人計). These subjects are, in fact, in accordance with ideologies prevalent in Japan in the Warring States period (Sengoku period 戦國時代, mid-fifteenth century to early seventeenth century) and are featured in Yoshikawa Eiji’s translation, especially, as noted in Chapter 5. Machiavellian renderings of the novel like this by the Korean translators of *Three Kingdoms* have also focused attention on machinations considered a “retrogression of literature” by some intellectuals.

The establishment of *Three Kingdoms* as a canonical work brings about another problem. In the case of Chinese novels and stories both premodern and modern, *Three Kingdoms* alone has

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534 Fowler (1992), 3; his emphasis.

535 Yoshikawa was renowned for his samurai novels such as *Taiko: An Epic Novel of War and Glory in Feudal Japan*.

536 See, for instance, *Tong’a ilbo*, page 7, Dec., 1, 2004. Ko Sŏnghŏl, the associate editor-in-chief of *Tong’a ilbo*, points out that resorting to machination and trickery is the common subject of *Three Kingdoms* translations by all three literary magnates, and the case of *Three Kingdoms* exposes how pathetic and anti-intellectual the Korean book market has become.
been repeatedly translated by many famous writers over many decades\textsuperscript{537}, limiting readers’ accessibility to other masterpieces of Chinese literature as a result. For instance, among the so-called Six Masterpieces of the Traditional Chinese Novel (\textit{Three Kingdoms}, \textit{Water Margin}, \textit{Journey to the West}, \textit{Plum in the Golden Vase}, \textit{The Scholars}, and \textit{A Dream of Red Mansions}), more than 180 different editions of \textit{Three Kingdoms} have appeared between 1920 and 2004, while the first complete modern Korean translation of \textit{A Dream of Red Mansions}, arguably the most popular classical Chinese novel in its motherland, appeared only in 2007. The novels of Yu Hua, one of the most prominent contemporary Chinese novelists whose major works have been translated into many languages, including English, are another case in point. Even though several of his novels were translated into Korean, they were published by relatively small and specialized publishers (P’urũnsup and Humanist), which is in striking contrast to the practice of the top three publishers outlined above. Not surprisingly, none of Yu Hua’s novels made the bestseller list in Korea; the only modern Chinese writer who ever has (in the 1980s) is Jin Yong 金庸 (also known as Louis Cha), a famous writer of Chinese martial arts fiction 武俠小說. This highly biased practice of translation creates a cultural stereotype of China, given that a relatively narrow range of Chinese texts is made available to Korean readers\textsuperscript{538}.

Even though the Korean book market can boast the most diverse and voluminous array of \textit{Three Kingdoms}-related products of any society (including China), the publishers’ bestseller-oriented translation strategies have excluded Chinese novels outside this narrowly established

\textsuperscript{537} According to Yi Yŏngt’ae (139-40), the number of translations (both complete and abridged versions), adaptations, mangas, animations, and reference works published in Korea from 1920 to 2004 reached 342 in number.

\textsuperscript{538} Venuti (1998), 75.
canon. As a result, in the modern Korean book market, a diverse reception of Chinese literary works has been hindered; the historical period of China that Korean readers feel most familiar with is the Three Kingdoms period, and the historical figures of the same era are favoured the most by Korean readers in general. However, it should be noted that such interpretations of history and historical figures tend to be a mere reflection of the domesticating procedures adopted by the rewriters of *Three Kingdoms*, thus conforming to their domestic aesthetic and moral values. The intense emphasis on a single canonical text has caused readers to focus on a particular period and locus of Chinese culture, and remain indifferent to anything but the cultural stereotype.

6.19 Translation Practices of *Three Kingdoms* by Modern Korean Writers: The Treatment of Diaochan in their Revisions

6.19.1 Introduction

In *Three Kingdoms*, Lady Sun (孫夫人) and Diaochan (貂蟬) are the two female characters who perform critical roles in the narrative. Through her “beautiful woman snare" or *meiren jì* (美人計), Diaochan breaks the alliance between the usurper of the throne, Dong Zhuo (董卓), and his sworn son Lü Bu (呂布), which eventually culminates in Lü Bu's killing of his father, thereby stigmatizing himself as an unfilial son who murdered two adopted fathers in a row. However, Diaochan disappears almost entirely from view after she successfully performs her role of eliminating Dong Zhuo. After Dong is killed and thus removed from the narrative in Chapter 9,
the author does not seem to be concerned about Diaochan’s whereabouts anymore. This is mainly because Diaochan is used as bait in the narrative; after Dong Zhuo’s death, she is no longer necessary. In this context, it is not surprising that some modern rewriters of Three Kingdoms feel that Diaochan’s sudden disappearance is left unexplained, and often insert their own interpretations of her character. Some of their revisions are based in part on a Neo-Confucian ideology of chastity; others respond negatively to such ideologically driven revisions.

6.19.2 Yoshikawa Eiji’s Revision

Of particular interest among the revisions of Diaochan’s character are those made by Yoshikawa Eiji. His is the first example of significant alteration of Diaochan’s image. Being the first such rewriter, Yoshikawa’s treatment of Diaochan is far more radical than that of those who followed him. He deliberately emphasizes that although Diaochan performs her duty to accomplish the cardinal principle of public righteousness (dayi mingfen 大義名分), her chastity is compromised in doing so. Accordingly, Yoshikawa makes Diaochan commit suicide the moment she is certain of Dong Zhuo’s death. Yoshikawa overlooks Diaochan’s death in Chapter 9 in his revision. In Yoshikawa’s work, she reappears in the part equivalent to chapter 19 of the Mao edition, as in the Sanguo zhi yanyi.

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539 Diaochan reappears briefly in Chapter 19 after a gap of ten chapters, shortly before Lü Bu’s final battle against Cao Cao. After Lü’s death in Chapter 19, she vanishes from the story entirely.


541 Yoshikawa overlooks Diaochan’s death in Chapter 9 in his revision. In Yoshikawa’s work, she reappears in the part equivalent to chapter 19 of the Mao edition, as in the Sanguo zhi yanyi.
shortly after Dong Zhuo’s death, leaving a poem lamenting her tragic fate and expressing her
loyalty to the Han court. Her downfall reminds readers of the suicide of Tripitaka’s (三藏)
mother Yin Wenjiao (殷溫嬌) at the end of Chapter 9 of *Xiyou ji* (西遊記).\(^{542}\)

Yoshikawa, after eliminating Diaochan from the narrative, depicts Lü Bu as an even more
tlowlly figure than in the original. Upon learning of Diaochan’s suicide, Lü Bu grows angry and
throws her corpse into a pit. Here Lü is described as a typical person devoid of *qing* (wuqingren,
無情人), in contrast to a woman who dies to express loyalty and maintain her chastity:

> Then, Lü Bu was flabbergasted; Diaochan’s body was already cold...On closer
> inspection, there was blood around her lips. She must have drunk poison...He [Lü Bu]
> sighed in disappointment, —Then...she finally...oh! Lü Bu gnashed his teeth. Only then
> he finally realized what Diaochan’s real intent was. He grabbed her body and left the
> room, and threw it into a pit in the backyard.\(^{543}\)

### 6.19.3 Yi Munyŏl’s Revision

On the other hand, Yi Munyŏl, the first (in chronological order) among the three modern
Korean rewriters of *Three Kingdoms* examined above, generally followed the narrative

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\(^{542}\) Tripitaka’s mother commits suicide after she is finally rescued from Liu Hong (劉洪), who had
killed her husband and impersonated him. When her family is finally reunited, she encounters her son
Tripitaka for the first time in eighteen years and her husband resurrected from the underwater palace, but
at the point when a seemingly happy ending is imminent, she commits suicide to protect her own integrity
and that of her family.

\(^{543}\) Yi In’gwang, trans., *Samgukchi*, 1: 305–306 (Korean translation of Yoshikawa Eiji’s
Sangokushi).
presentation of the Mao edition with respect to descriptions of Diaochan. In his work, Diaochan agrees to act as bait for the beautiful woman snare in order to destroy the sworn father-son relationship between Dong Zhuo and Lü Bu, as she does in the Mao edition. It is after Dong Zhuo’s death that Yi alters Diaochan’s image. Yi describes her as an earthy and licentious woman rather than a martyr who sacrifices her chastity for the greater good:

On entering the palace complex at Mei in which no one stood against him, the first thing that Lü Bu did was go looking for Diaochan. Diaochan, for her part, had no reason to turn him down. Now that she could not restore her purity one way or another, she would rather favor Lü Bu, handsome and young. In addition to that, even though Dong Zhuo was already dead, it was not yet advisable to disappoint Lü Bu. Naturally, the two of them were busy caressing each other, relieving their accumulated lust.\(^{544}\)

In addition, Yi Munyŏl, as a self-claimed critical reviewer and translator, informs the readers of the fact that Diaochan is a fictional creation who did not exist in history:

One thing we should remember is the record in official history regarding this part. According to the extant histories, there is no reference to Wang Yun’s double snare (lianhuan ji, 連環計) or the name of Diaochan.\(^{545}\)

6.19.4 Hwang Sŏgyŏng’s Revision

After weeping for a while in his bosom, she finally began to talk:

"Although I am not his real daughter, Minister Wang Yun cherished and treated me as if I were his own daughter. I thought my prayers were answered the moment he

\(^{544}\) Yi Munyŏl, trans., Samgukchi, 2: 171.

\(^{545}\) Ibid., 173.
presented me to you and decided that I would serve you all my life. I could never imagine that the preceptor, with evil thought in his mind, would stain my purity, so that I now despair the very fact that I am still alive. The only reason that I dared not to end my life was for the chance to say good-bye to you. Now that I met with you even for a moment, I have no further regret. My body has already been disgraced, how could I serve you? I shall die before your eyes for sure rather than live like this. Please understand my sincerity.546

Hwang Sŏgyŏng’s translations of the scenes involving Diaochan, as he repeatedly emphasizes, are "faithful to the original." As shown with the paragraph of the example above,547 no description regarding Diaochan is markedly different from the Mao edition, although Hwang modifies the style and expressions to enhance readability for modern Korean readers. However, he does not provide additional information that Diaochan is a fictional addition, as Yi Munyŏl and Chang Chŏng’i’il do. The question arises, as noted in the discussion of Hwang’s translation above, whether such a translation delivers a weak argument as to why readers should read his kind of translation. If a translation faithful to the original is the most ideal one, there is no need for readers to choose Hwang’s translation over already available literal translations of the Mao edition. Nevertheless, Hwang’s translation, while "faithful to the original," more or less lacks the "aesthetic flexibility" that he aims for. Although it is clear that Hwang was greatly offended by the excessive interventions of Yi Munyŏl, a translation such as his, with no distinct characteristics, only confirms the assertion that Hwang’s primary purpose in translating the work


547 For the equivalent passage in the Mao edition, see Moss Roberts, Three Kingdoms, 1: 136, 139. For the original text, see Sanguo yanyi, 1:69.
was to secure a share of the ever-increasing market as a "plan for old age."

6.19.5 Chang Chông’il’s Revision

As noted above, Chang Chông’il criticizes both Yi Munyŏl’s and Hwang’s translations of Three Kingdoms. He particularly disapproves of conservative and reactionary elements in Yi Munyŏl’s work. Chang takes offense at the male-centered viewpoint in the established Three Kingdoms translations, as disclosed in his interview on his Three Kingdoms renditions,548 But whether these views have influenced his rewriting of Three Kingdoms deserves further investigation. His revision of the Diaochan segment is a case in point.

Chang’s representation of Diaochan is distinct from that of his predecessors from the outset. In his revision, Diaochan is not Wang Yun’s household entertainer (jiaji 家妓), but a singing entertainer (kagi 歌妓) who belongs to the imperial court. Here, Diaochan is not involved with any political scheme such as the beautiful woman snare, nor is she used as bait. She and Wang Yun are complete strangers. Her ambivalent feelings about Dong Zhuo and Lü Bu can be interpreted as a down-to-earth, practical and plausible hesitation between Dong’s wealth and high status and Lü’s masculine attractiveness:

When Diaochan received Dong Zhuo’s order [for her to dance alone for him], she was extremely thrilled. Since she entered the palace at the age of thirteen, six years had already passed. However, she was never lucky enough to be in favor with the emperor. Instead, dancing was the only thing that relieved her loneliness. Now that the most powerful person wanted to watch her dance exclusively for him, her heart was

548 See the appendix I for a translation of Chang’s interview.
Dong Zhuo being such a powerful figure, Diaochan ingratiated herself with him with full devotion and care. Each time he fell ill even slightly, Diaochan stayed up all night even without taking her belt off and took good care of him, also making love to him whenever he wanted. Although Diaochan had experienced the pleasure of cloud and rain (雲雨之慾) with Dong for the past month, being of her father's generation, Dong was nevertheless more than 30 years Diaochan's senior. Accordingly, it was natural for Diaochan to feel passion for Lü Bu, a real hero of the age.  

In the narrative revised by Chang, Diaochan, while dancing at court, wins Dong Zhuo's favor for her exceptional beauty. She expects that Dong's political power and high rank will help her climb the social ladder. On the other hand, Diaochan seeks physical attraction, what she could not pursue from an old and obese Dong Zhuo, she could get from Lü Bu:  

Diaochan, as well, when embraced by Lü Bu, felt her body grow hot with passion. The two of them hurried to her room. Since then, whenever Dong Zhuo took a nap, they went to Diaochan's room to have a tryst.  

Chang refuses to depict Diaochan as a means for the greater good and tries to show that she makes her own decisions; she unambiguously acknowledges her desire for better social status (with Dong Zhuo) and for carnal pleasure (with Lü Bu), rather than following the Confucian moral values predominant in the original by remaining chaste and loyal.

550 Chang, 1: 231.
551 Ibid., 232.
However, Chang's approach clearly has its limitations; he makes revisions only so far as they do not seriously interfere with the narrative structure of the original *Sanguozhi yanyi*. Accordingly, although Diaochan does not deliberately use the beautiful woman snare, she nevertheless ends up destroying the alliance between Dong Zhuo and Lü Bu. What seems absurd in Chang's revision is that Diaochan's female nature brings disaster to the men close to her:

"General Lü, what are we supposed to do now? Being a beloved concubine of Imperial Preceptor Dong, my heart is yet with you. What shall I do? Ever since I fell in love with you, I cannot think of anything, nor do anything. Now I feel guilty whenever I go to bed with Preceptor Dong, as if my body is defiled. If I cannot be with you in the future, I would rather end my life." \(^{552}\)

"Why did you have an affair with Lü Bu?" [Dong Zhuo asked.]

Diaochan, extremely frightened and embarrassed, made an excuse. "When I was appreciating flowers in the back yard, General Lü suddenly approached me. I was trying to hide, since I knew that he had an evil intent in the first place. Then, he got angry, brandishing his spear, and said, "I am the son of Preceptor Dong. How could you, a mere mistress, look down on me?" Then he started to chase after me. I was so afraid that I tried to save my chastity by drowning myself in a pond. But he took me in a strong embrace and..." \(^{553}\)

In Chang's revision, Diaochan, eager for better social status and carnal pleasure, cannot make up her mind between Dong Zhuo and Lü Bu. As a result, whenever she is caught with one

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\(^{552}\) Ibid., 236.

\(^{553}\) Ibid., 239.
by the other, she lies to cover up her affair. This culminates in the "double intrigue" (lianhuanji) as in the original. In fact, Diaochan is portrayed as a serial liar who deceives her lovers repeatedly. Moreover, Chang gives no clue in the narrative as to the one for whom Diaochan has a deeper passion, or whether she has sincere feelings for anyone with whom she has an affair.\footnote{We cannot blame Chang alone for these apparent discrepancies. Hu Ying repeatedly points out that Mao’s version of *Three Kingdoms* does not explain the motivation for Diaochan’s eager participation. With regard to Diaochan’s feelings for the men she is involved with, Hu Ying (p. 102) says, “What is consistently removed from the dramatic presentation is the personal touch, there is no mention of private feelings.” Readers nevertheless can expect Chang, as a modern writer who espouses a strong feminist approach, to modify Diaochan’s character into that of a more independent yet accountable person.}

She is depicted as an independent woman who acts on her own. However, in the revised narrative, it seems that she does not want to take a responsibility for her decisions. Therefore, readers are likely to acknowledge Diaochan as a negative figure, a typical characterization of beauty in traditional Chinese narratives. Diaochan likely is conceived of as "one who topples kingdoms" (*qingguo zhi se* 傾國之色) like the notorious Xi Shi (西施) or Yang Guifei (楊貴妃); she leads both Dong Zhuo and Lü Bu to ruin.\footnote{Chang compares Diaochan with Xi Shi and Yang Guifei in his explanation of an illustration regarding the "love triangle between Dong Zhuo, Lü Bu, and Diaochan," He says, “Although Diaochan is so famous in [Chinese] popular tradition that she is counted as one Four Chinese Beauties together with Xi Shi, Yang Guifei, and Wang Zhaojun (王昭君), her name is not found in official histories. The only record we have is that 'Lü Bu had a clandestine affair with a serving maid of Dong Zhuo, and felt anxious that his affair would be exposed' [Chen Shou, *Sanguo zhi*, 142.] Nevertheless, Diaochan’s mystique has stimulated the imagination of later generations.” (Chang, 1: 241)} Her depiction also confirms the popular concept in traditional Chinese literature that women have a "watery" nature (*shuixing* 水性), whose
connotations include fundamentally unstable, fickle, or dissolute features.\textsuperscript{556}

In the \textit{Sanguozhi yanyi}, the negative characteristics attributed to Diaochan are more or less excused for the greater good, namely fulfillment of the cardinal principle of public righteousness. She sacrifices her chastity (\textit{jie}) in order to accomplish public justice, the male idea of \textit{yi} (義).\textsuperscript{557} Also worth noting is that since Diaochan in the \textit{Sanguozhi yanyi} is "conveniently portrayed as 'almost' a daughter to Wang Yun, the code of filiality is employed to override that of chastity."\textsuperscript{558} We cannot overlook the fact that Chang describes Wang Yun and Diaochan as strangers to each other, and it is solely Diaochan's uninhibited decision that makes her an unfaithful lover in his revision. Chang's ambitious attempt to revise the narrative according to his own ideology (noted above) is apparently restricted by his self-regulated decision not to insert excessive interventions into the classic, as he claims Yi Munyŏl, his anti-role model in the rewriting of \textit{Three Kingdoms}, had done.

Min Kyŏng'uk, a critic of \textit{Three Kingdoms}, points out the limitations of Chang's revision examined above, treating Diaochan's character as a case in point. His review is lengthy yet raises important points, as follows:

Nevertheless, Chang Chŏng'il tries to analyze all happenings [in the story] equally. However, it is almost impossible to provide reasonable analyses for the accounts [in the narrative] that were designed to enhance dramatic effect. . . . As a matter of fact, we still do not have complete translations of official histories [of the Three Kingdoms

\textsuperscript{556} McMahon, \textit{Causality}, 65; Epstein, \textit{Competing Discourses}, 142, 222.

\textsuperscript{557} Hu Ying, 102.

\textsuperscript{558} Ibid., 103.
period], which could be the only valid yardstick by which to remove all fictional inventions and subjectivity hidden almost everywhere in *Three Kingdoms*.\(^{559}\) Therefore, the new rendition of the author [Chang Chŏng'ŭl] merely beats around the bush at best, and falls short of [our expectation] for digging up the substance of *Three Kingdoms*. . . .

In addition, the author tries to overcome the dichotomy of good and evil and endeavors to describe all characters as real people who encompass both good and evil. However, in return for his pursuit of reality, the overall presentation of characters and

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\(^{559}\) Yi Zhongtian’s (易中天) reference book to *Three Kingdoms* and the historical facts with regard to it, *Pin Sanguo* (品三國, Appreciation of *Three Kingdoms*), far exceeds *Samgukchi haeje* (co-authored by Chang) in its accuracy of historic details and in-depth discussions of critical issues in *Three Kingdoms*. Yi’s book recently became very popular in China, and is arguably the first bestseller in humanities in the modern Chinese book market (for further details, refer to the article at http://knows.jongo.com/res/article/17994). Yi’s *Pin Sanguo* was recently translated into Korean and published as *Samgukchi kangŭi* (Lectures on *Three Kingdoms*, 2 volumes, 2007) by Kimyŏngsa, the same publisher as for Chang Chŏng’ŭl’s translation of *Three Kingdoms* and *Samgukchi haeje*.

The intellectual gap between Yi’s reference book on *Three Kingdoms* and the translation of Chang seems to be due, in part, to the availability of *Three Kingdoms*-related histories by the respective authors. Yi adequately utilizes a variety of relevant historic sources, especially the commentaries by Pei Songzhi. However, none of the co-authors of *Samguchi haeje* has any expertise in classical Chinese or Chinese history. As Min Kyŏng’uk points out, complete Korean translations of official histories [of the Three Kingdoms period] are not available yet. Although Kim Wŏnjung published his translation of the *Sanguo zhi* in 1994, it only selectively included Pei Songzhi’s commentaries, dropping Pei’s remarks in many cases. Besides, Kim sometimes mixes his own commentaries with those of Pei. Other relevant official histories, such as *Hou Hanshu* and *Zizhi tongjian*, are only available in partial Korean translations.
construction of highly dramatic characters has become extremely difficult. A *Three Kingdoms* in which characters are evenly attractive and equally imperfect might be politically correct but does not read smoothly... The reason *Three Kingdoms* moves its readers is definitely not because it is ideologically fair. The real attraction of *Three Kingdoms* lies in its ideological bias for every historically important account. Luo Guanzhong manipulated and altered historic facts according to his subjective rendition, and that made *Three Kingdoms* a "straightforward and authoritative story" as Yi Inhwa described, making possible its survival to the modern day... The criticism of Yi Munyŏl’s version of *Three Kingdoms* in this volume [*Samgukchi haeje* co-authored by Chang Chŏng’il] and the obsession with political correctness revealed in Chang’s *Three Kingdoms* translation demonstrates that Yi’s rewriting of *Three Kingdoms* was an object to overcome for Chang. He obviously targets the conservative nature of Yi’s work.560

6.19.6 Conclusion

Thus far, I have examined selections from *Three Kingdoms* translations by three modern Korean writers in order to demonstrate their translation strategies. Each writer claims to have overcome discrepancies in their predecessors’ works. Of particular interest is Chang Chŏng’il’s translation: as a response to that of Yi Munyŏl, his work reflects contemporary sociopolitical conditions, as he argues in the preface to his translation. However, as Min Kyŏng’uk points out, Chang’s translation is marred by an obsession with political correctness and alternative

interpretations of dramatic scenes, which tends to reduce the entertainment value of his version. However, we cannot simply conclude that his translation is a failure. His work perhaps cannot be recommended to those who expect highly dramatic narrative presentations and authoritative viewpoints from *Three Kingdoms*; as a matter of fact, in many respects, Chang’s rewriting are not for first-time readers of *Three Kingdoms*. It is rather a welcome alternative for readers who are tired of conservative renditions and the clichés of predominant translations of *Three Kingdoms*.

It also shows that *Three Kingdoms* is evolving into a national novel of Korea that reflects "the spirit of the times." Chang's work also implies that the practice of *Three Kingdoms* rewriting is still in the process of development, and that more rewritings will appear in order to reflect the sentiments and wishes of readers at the time that revision is made. In this respect, no perfect translation of *Three Kingdoms* will ever be written. There seems to be no need for one; readers will select the rewriting that best suits their preferences. In the following chapter, the various stages and diverse preferences of the readers of *Three Kingdoms* will be discussed to conclude this dissertation.
7 Conclusion: Five-Stage Progress of *Three Kingdoms* Readership in Modern Korea

In the previous chapters, my dissertation has explored one facet of Chinese fiction in the late imperial period by focusing on the circulation, reception, and influence of the *Sanguozhi yanyi* (Three Kingdoms) in Korea. In the latter chapters, in particular, I have tried to elucidate the popularity of *Three Kingdoms* in modern Korea, which shows no signs of abating; *Three Kingdoms* remains the most widely read of all novels in modern Korea.

I started my thesis by elucidating how the classic Chinese novels (of which *Three Kingdoms* is one) were disseminated into Korea, and how they were translated, printed and circulated in Chosŏn Korea. The following chapter examined how *Three Kingdoms* could flow into Korea almost concurrently with its publication in China, and how its reprints published in Korea and then widespread circulation impacted literary trends.

I then clarified how the sociopolitical and ideological changes in Chosŏn Korea accelerated the reception and dissemination of *Three Kingdoms* by illuminating in particular how the Chosŏn rulers utilized the Neo-Confucian values in *Three Kingdoms* to maintain and strengthen Korea’s identity as the sole cultural and spiritual successor of the Great Han-Chinese empire after its collapse in 1644. In addition, I analyzed the emergence of Guan Yu as a national hero of Korea who guards national integrity against foreign invaders as an outstanding example of how localization of heroes in *Three Kingdoms* was accomplished in Korean folk narratives.

I then showed that *Three Kingdoms*’ popularity grew steadily even during the colonial period. With the development of modern printing technology, various adaptations of *Three Kingdoms* gained wider range of readers. It is also during this period that three pioneering modern complete translations of *Three Kingdoms* came out; they competed with Yoshikawa
Eiji’s adaptation of the novel, which has been influential to many Korean translators of the later period.

My thesis has also examined *Three Kingdoms*’ enduring popularity as reflected in contemporary Korean popular culture and literature. The ever-increasing popularity of *Three Kingdoms* today can be attributed, in part, to the relentless modification and re-creation of its contents by authors for whom the novel functions as a yardstick for measuring prestige with readers of all generations.

In the preceding chapters, I have asserted that it is virtually impossible for a modern Korean to lead a life divorced from *Three Kingdoms*, whether one desires to or not. Even given that male readers tend to show a more apparent mania for the work in general\(^561\), people of all backgrounds are nonetheless affected by *Three Kingdoms*, noticeably in terms of its cultural and sociopolitical authority in modern Korean society. Virtually all people come into contact with certain types of *Three Kingdoms* reproduction at some point in their life. Those who develop a predilection for the work are expected to continue consuming *Three Kingdoms*-related cultural products, and while doing so, they tend to go through several distinct stages in terms of their readership. *Three Kingdoms* is an exceptional work in that it has remained popular for some four hundred years (and counting) and is still welcomed by the general reader. Moreover, it has developed into a continuously evolving creation based on collaborative work reflecting feedback from numerous readers and appreciators of the work. In other words, to its many fans it has evolved into a cultural product of enduring fame. In this context, I conclude my thesis with an

\(^{561}\) Refer to the study by Yi Sŏngch’ae, “Taehaksaengdŭl ŭi panbok toksŏ kyŏnghŏm e kwanhan yŏn’gu” (A Study on Repeat Reading Practice of Korean College Students) discussed in Chapter 5.
examination of the progress of *Three Kingdoms* readership, a key to comprehending the secret of its ever-increasing popularity.

**Stage 1. Literal acceptance of the dichotomy of good and evil**

After reading a Mao-edition-based translation of *Three Kingdoms* that follows the tradition of Shu-Han legitimacy, the reader tends to accept literally what the novel conveys. When it comes to judging the characters in the novel, he or she develops a dichotomy of good and evil, whereby every character is placed into one of two groups; either positively described characters (*zhengmian renwu* 正面人物) such as Liu Bei, Guan Yu, and Zhuge Liang, or negative characters (*fanmian renwu* 反面人物) such as Cao Cao, Dong Zhuo, Lǔ Bu, and all other figures who oppose the orthodoxy of the House of Shu-Han.\(^{562}\) At this stage, the reader has not accumulated substantial historical knowledge of the Three Kingdoms period other than what he obtains from the novel. More often than not, the motivation for the reader to start reading the work turns out to be the pressure to catch up with the “intellectual pioneers” close to him or her who are already familiar with the work, or the pressure to be knowledgeable about a novel that has achieved the status of a “must-read” and world-classic.

**Stage 2**

The reader increasingly becomes exposed to translations of *Three Kingdoms* other than the traditional one read initially; they often unfold distinct interpretations contrary to Shu-Han legitimacy. Among the numerous Korean versions of *Three Kingdoms* available, many provide an alternative rendition to this viewpoint. Refer to *The Four Masterworks*, Chapter 5.

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\(^{562}\) Andrew Plaks provides an alternative rendition to this viewpoint. Refer to *The Four Masterworks*, Chapter 5.
readers with opportunities to compare the historical facts with their fictitious manipulations in
the novel. After learning of the gap between the realities of the historical figures and the
fictional characters in the novel, many readers become somewhat sympathetic to the figures
whose historical images are deliberately distorted and stigmatized in the original novel. The
increasing tendency of modern Korean *Three Kingdoms* revisions to set Cao Cao as the real hero
or the main protagonist instead of Liu Bei is a case in point.

Stage 3

The tendency noted in Stage 2 escalates to the point where the reader develops a
preference for revisions that are based strictly on historical fact rather than on the traditional
novel. Some readers deliberately favor such revisions as portray characters in the work in reverse.
That is, they enjoy observing the positively depicted characters and the negative figures in the
original work reversing their character roles in terms of the dichotomy of good and evil.

563 For example, each chapter of Yi Munyŏl’s version of *Three Kingdoms* ends with his appended
critical notes, which often provide comparisons of specific occasions in the novel with historical accounts.
In *Sōten Kōro* 蒼天航路, a Japanese Manga by King Gonta and Yi Hag’in based on *Three Kingdoms*, the
storyline primarily uses the original historical account of the era, *Chronicle of the Three Kingdoms* by
Chen Shou 陳壽 as a reference rather than the *Three Kingdoms* novel. Li Tonghyŏk’s recent translation of
the novel compares differences between each major edition of *Three Kingdoms* with each other and with
historical accounts, both in the form of brackets in the translated text and with critical notes appended to
the end of each chapter.

564 *Sōten Kōro* is a case in point for its highly positive portrayal of its main character, Cao Cao, who
is traditionally the antagonist in *Three Kingdoms* and in many of its revisions. By the same token, Liu Bei
and Zhuge Liang, the traditional heroes of *Three Kingdoms*, take on relatively less importance and are
Stage 4

The reader comes to accumulate near-expert or even expert knowledge of *Three Kingdoms*, which includes detailed knowledge of the discrepancies between historical facts about the Three Kingdoms period of China and the novel, the revisions made to major editions of the novel, and how historical figures and their deeds are reflected in the protagonists in the work. Such a high level of expertise is made possible by the emergence of numerous *Three Kingdoms* reference books, websites and digital databases. The reader often attempts to accommodate portrayed in a less positive light. As a matter of fact, in this Manga revision, contrary to the original novel, Kongming is often defeated by Cao Cao in terms of military strategy and leadership, and grows excessively jealous of him. Quite a few role-playing games based on *Three Kingdoms* also treat the heroes who received less attention in the original work—namely the heroes of the states of Wei and Wu—as equal to or sometimes even more important than the traditional heroes of the House of Shu-Han. By doing so they provide the game players with opportunities to play as many heroes in the role of protagonist as possible, thereby enhancing the so-called multi-play function. This approach also appeals to devoted gamers, who tend to have a more detailed and objective knowledge of historical accounts of the Three Kingdoms period. As the example of *The Romance of Three Kingdoms*, Koei’s famous *Three Kingdoms*-based game series shows, these *Three Kingdoms*-related games often provide dictionaries (embedded in the game) for all characters in the game plot as well as illustrated history of *Three Kingdoms* period. These are provided to help game players become acquainted with the game more easily, also culminating in enhancing game players’ *Three Kingdoms*-relevant knowledge.

565 Such reference books include “*Samguk chi*” haeje, the thickest Korean reference book on how to read *Three Kingdoms* at 621 pages (date of publication: 2003). It was co-authored by Kim Unhoe, Chang Chǒng’il and Sǒ Tonghun and appeared shortly before Chang published his translation of *Three Kingdoms* based in part on the research he and his co-authors had done. In 2004, one of these co-authors,
new *Three Kingdoms* revisions enhanced with more liberated and imaginative interpretations and re-creations in terms of translations or adaptations of the novel, console games, Internet role-playing games, cartoons, and animations. At this stage, the reader’s primary concern, in most cases, is not how characters are portrayed in the revised work, whether positively or negatively, but whether the revised work demonstrates a high level of achievement as an independent complete work. In fact, they are willing to accept uninhibited interpretations of the characters, such as altering the gender of the characters in the original work. This tendency is more apparent in *Three Kingdoms*-based comics, animations, and computer games than in translations or other written adaptations of the novel. For example, Guan Yu, Zhang Fei, and Zhuge Liang have been portrayed as women in several revised works.566

Kim Unhoe, published another reference book on how to read *Three Kingdoms*, titled *Samgukchi paro ilkki* (How to Read *Three Kingdoms* Properly), in which he strongly asserts that *Three Kingdoms* stimulates the aggressive nationalism of the Chinese (as indicated with the Northeastern Project) and asserts that Koreans should not take the novel at face value.

Yi Tonghyŏk, in his “*Samguk chi*’ ka ulgo inne (Cry the *Three Kingdoms*), points out numerous embarrassing errors in Yi Mun’yŏl’s and Hwang Sŏg’yŏng’s translations of *Three Kingdoms* and also provides historical references for the work. Later on (in 2006), Yi published his 10-volume translation of the novel. Thus, the tradition of books on how to read *Three Kingdoms*, initiated by critics such as Jin Shengtan, Li Zhi, and Mao Lun and Mao Zonggang, is being continued in modern Korea by prominent writers and scholars, who both publish reference books to the novel and provide commentaries and critical notes in their translations.

566 Zhang Fei, one of the most masculine characters in *Three Kingdoms*, is portrayed as a young female general in a *Three Kingdoms*-based Korean comic, *The Story of Three Kingdoms Generals* (*Samguk changgun chŏn* 三國將軍傳) written by Pak Suyŏng (Seoul: Champ Comics, 1997-present).
Figure 11 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was portrait of Zhang Fei in the traditional way in the Playstation 2 version of Romance of the Three Kingdoms. This romance of the Three Kingdoms (Sangokushi 三国志) is the eleventh installment of Koei’s famous Three Kingdoms-based game series released in 2006. Original source: Romance of the Three Kingdoms at http://www.koei.com/rtkxipc/.

Figure 12 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It is about Zhang Fei as a young female general in futuristic attire in *Samguk changgun chŏn*. Original source: Pak Suyŏng, *Samguk changgun chŏn* (Seoul: Champ Comics, 1997-present), 5: 60.
Figure 13 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was about Xiahou Dun 夏侯惇, a famous one-eyed general on Cao Cao’s side portrayed in a traditional way in Dynasty Warriors XI (真三國無雙 6), released by Koei. Original source: Dynasty Warriors XI at http://koei.com/dw6e/.
Stage 5: Final stage

With their accumulated knowledge and broad understanding of the work, readers come to acknowledge that creations and revisions of *Three Kingdoms*, a historical novel, are reflections of contemporary people’s sentiments and wishes as affected by the sociopolitical conditions of the time when the work was created, and that such modifications to the work have occurred gradually for hundreds of years through the collaborations of numerous people. Readers reach a certain type of transcendence whereby they can countenance any kind of revision or re-creation of the work without becoming overly agitated or offended.

These five phases of *Three Kingdoms* reception are best observed in reader responses, often in the form of online reviews of distinct translations of *Three Kingdoms*, *Three Kingdoms*-based games, comics, and animations. It should be noted that each reader/player/viewer divulges
distinct circumstances in terms of his or her experiences of repeated reading, or playing, or viewing of the work. One might start his acquaintance of *Three Kingdoms* by watching animations and move on to reading a certain translation of the novel, which then leads to another. Alternatively, one might become acquainted with the work by reading a certain critical interpretation of the novel and grow curious about the original work.

As for the development of readership through each stage, not all readers start from Stage 1, nor do they all end up reaching Stage 5. Depending on each reader’s specific background and circumstances when he or she first encounters the work, each person starts from a distinct stage, and displays a distinct pace of progress. For example, a (Japanese) author of a *Three Kingdoms* reference book started his acquaintance with the work by playing a console game, and ended up writing books on the historical background of the novel. Some readers (male readers in many cases), even after going through numerous revisions and reference materials about the work, tend to stay at the basic level in which their favorite topic about the work turns out to be the comparison of the level of the martial arts prowess and intelligence of the characters in terms of numerical points. As a matter of fact, ranking of the characters based on a point system has been a fundamental factor for *Three Kingdoms*-related computer games (both online and console).

For example, in terms of points for martial valor (*wuli* 武力), Lú Bu often acquires the full score

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567 Refer to p. 476, Kim, Chun’yŏng, trans. *Samgukchi inmul sajŏn* 三國志人物辭典 (Dictionary of *Three Kingdoms* Characters), Seoul: Dulnyouk, 2000 (Korean translation of *Sangokusi jimbutsu jisho* by Fumihiko Koide). Koide Fumihiko (born in 1967) says he started his acquaintance with the work by playing a console game as a teenager, then moved on to reading *Three Kingdoms* mangas, then to reading histories about the Three Kingdoms period and *Three Kingdoms* the novel, and finally ended up writing books on the historical background of the novel.
(100), followed by 99 points for Guan Yu. Accordingly, for intelligence, Zhuge Liang perennially scores the highest points (100), followed closely by Pang Tong’s 99 points.568

568 Among the copious number of Three Kingdoms-based computer games, The Romance of Three Kingdoms series by the Japanese video game publisher, Koei, is the most well-known; all such games tend to apply numerical point systems to measure the abilities of characters in the game.
Figure 15 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was from Playstation 2 version of *The Romance of Three Kingdoms*, the eleventh installment of Koei's famous *Three Kingdoms*-based game series released in 2006. Original source: *The Romance of Three Kingdoms XI* at http://www.koei.com/rtkxipc/.
Figure 16 has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was about Lū Bu in the character dictionary in the computer game *The Romance of Three Kingdoms XI*. Original source: *The Romance of Three Kingdoms XI* at http://www.koei.com/rtkxipc/. 
This rather unsophisticated ranking of *Three Kingdoms* characters can be observed not only among adolescent users of *Three Kingdoms* computer games, but also in serious academic research conducted by scholars. A team of six scholars in Korean literature at The Centre for Korean Studies of Inha University, upon performing a two-year research project on Korean translations of *Three Kingdoms*, announced their nominations for the Top Ten Warriors in terms of martial valor (*muryŏk sipkŏl* 武力十傑) and Top Six Strategists (*mosa yukkŏl* 謀士六傑) in 2005.\(^{569}\)

\(^{569}\) This ranking was published in a news article by Seoul Sinmun in 2005. (Article available at http://news.naver.com/main/read.nhn?mode=LSD&mid=sec&sid1=103&oid=081&aid=0000037460).
This example demonstrates that even the researchers of the novel are highly likely to be devoted fans as well. Ardent fans of *Three Kingdoms* have a mania for the work that rivals that of fans of the Star Wars series. Numerous Star Wars fans seek out sequels after watching the initial installment and mostly end up watching all sequels, prequels, and ‘director’s cut’ special editions; they also end up purchasing Star Wars-related toys, souvenirs, animations, and games. Likewise, ardent devotees of *Three Kingdoms* continue to consume *Three Kingdoms*-related products, which include various versions of *Three Kingdoms* revisions/re-creations, movies, drama series, comic books, animations, and computer games. *Three Kingdoms* is a textbook example of a “one-source multi-use” product with unlimited marketability. Also noteworthy are the dedicated fan sites for the work, which are mostly run by supporters of the work with near-Chao 馬超, Huang Zhong 黃忠, Wei Yan 魏延, Xiahou Dun 夏侯惇, Xu Zhu 許褚, and Dian Wei 典韋, respectively. The top Six strategists include Zhuge Liang 諸葛亮, Pang Tong 龐統, Sima Yi 司馬懿, Lu Xun 陸遜, Xun Yu 筈彧, and Jia Xu 賈诩, respectively.

It is notable that all Five Tiger Generals (五虎大將) of the state of Shu dominate the highest ranks, with the exception of Lű Bu, a legendary general who fought the three sworn brothers concurrently in the novel. Also noteworthy is that not a single general of the state of Wu is included, and only one strategist from Wu made the list, demonstrating that readers interpret the work mostly as a conflict between two archenemies, Shu-Han and Wei. In this context, the title of the work is rather misleading to modern readers in that the third kingdom in the novel, the state of Wu, fails to make any substantial impression on readers, whether in terms of legitimacy or the prospect of reuniting China. The past three decades in Korea saw quite a few revisions of *Three Kingdoms* accompanied by positive renditions of Cao Cao and his state, yet not a single re-interpretation of the work has made the Sun family or the state of Wu the focus and it is unlikely that such a revision will emerge in the near future.
professional expertise. Webmasters of *Three Kingdoms*-related websites also tend to demonstrate vast and specific knowledge concerning particular aspects of the work, such as knowledge on its historical background or details of *Three Kingdoms* computer games. Currently, there are hundreds of such websites available in Korean alone, some of which gain financial benefits by selling or trading so-called cultural contents (*munhwa k'on†'enchû*) concerning *Three Kingdoms*.570

It should also be noted that numerous distinct kinds of re-creations of the work are being produced to satisfy consumers of the *Three Kingdoms* cultural entertainment industry so that each reader, player, or viewer can select the revision that suits his or her stage of preference best. Sometimes the emergence of distinct re-creations of the work leads the fans of *Three Kingdoms* into specific trends. By the same token, the erudition of the consumer urges the producers to

570 An example of these websites is Chŏng Wŏn’gi Samguk chi Yŏn’guso (Centre for *Three Kingdoms* Research by Chŏng Wŏn’gi; http://www.samgookji.com). According to the announcement on the website, the centre is run by Chŏng, a Ph.D. candidate in Chinese literature who studies exclusively *Three Kingdoms*, and charges fees to subscribers for “expenses for maintenance and research of *Three Kingdoms*.” (Refer to http://www.samgookji.com/institute/introlab.php) As of February 2010, there are 18,349 subscribers and counting. This website is quite influential in that it has numerous ardent fans of *Three Kingdoms* who have agreed to pay fees to stay abreast of *Three Kingdoms*-related news and recent information, and that it introduces new *Three Kingdoms*-related cultural products to both ardent and potential fans of the work. It is worth noting that, according to the announcement, quite a few subscribers are novice readers who seek to acquaint themselves with *Three Kingdoms* for the first time. (Refer to http://www.samgookji.com/institute/introlab.php.)
create new versions of the work. In this context, “The reader is both the producer and the consumer of a text.”

Such interactions, along with so-called “Three Kingdoms stress” (the frustration one feels at the prospect of being isolated and marginalized from mainstream society if one lacks an adequate level of knowledge of the classic) have broadened the readership of the work for the past several decades in Korea, making it a “national novel of Korea”--according to Chang Chŏng’i1, at least.

However, we should bear in mind that this flood of revisions and re-creations often prevents readers from becoming acquainted with the original work. Although more than four hundred translations, revisions, and adaptations have emerged in Korea, an “untainted” and complete modern translation of the Mao-edition did not appear until the 1970s. It remains the

571 Jinhee Kim, “The Reception and the Place of Three Kingdoms” in Three Kingdoms and Chinese Culture, 149.

572 Refer to Chang’s preface to his translation of Three Kingdoms in the previous chapter.

573 Kim Kuyong’s translation (1974) is the first and the only complete modern translation of the Mao-edition Three Kingdoms. However, as Kim mentions in the preface, it is based on the Hyŏnt’o two Samgukchi 懸吐三國志 published by Pangmun sŏgwŏn 博文書館 in 1935, which is a modified reprint of the Mao-edition that adds Korean particles to the sentences in classical Chinese to enhance readability for Koreans. Hyŏnt’o Samgukchi, the only Three Kingdoms edition that Kim used for his translation, also includes numerous typographical and editorial errors. Even now, Koreans do not have a complete translation of the novel “faithful to the original work” in terms of textual accuracy which is comparable to the English translation by Moss Roberts that came out in 1994. This “untainted” complete modern translation is called chŏngyŏk 正譯 or chŏngbon 正本, which literally means “orthodox” or “authentic” translation, implying that all other translations more or less lack legitimacy.
only complete translation of the original work mostly because this “obsolete” and rather boring masterpiece has never been popular among modern readers.\textsuperscript{574} It is quite ironic that while Yi Mun’yŏl’s version of \textit{Three Kingdoms} has sold seventeen million copies over the past two decades, in striking contrast, the number of Korean readers who are familiar with the original work is exceptionally small, even though it paved the way for the success of the modern recreations. After all, it can be argued that, as a renowned Korean historical fiction writer recently asserted: “[When it comes to historical fiction,] innocent knowledge [on the part of the readers] trumps no knowledge or indifference.”\textsuperscript{575} Modern translators and producers of \textit{Three Kingdoms}-related cultural works have revived one of the richest legacies in human history and have brought about the heyday of a work that first appeared some four hundred years ago. There is no doubt that \textit{Three Kingdoms} will continue to thrive in the years to come; how it will evolve depends solely on those who continue to cherish this masterpiece, be they those re-creating it or those appreciating it.

Thus far, I have clarified that the secret of \textit{Three Kingdoms’} popularity in modern Korea lies, in part, in its newly acquired reputation as a self-help reference book for \textit{sararīman} and as a study aid for college entrance examination. The “\textit{Three Kingdoms} stress” discussed in Chapter 6

\textsuperscript{574} Cho Sŏnggi, “Samgukchi ŭi han’gye: Chaemiŏmnŭn wŏnbon kwa chaemi’innŭn pŏnyŏkpon (The limitations of \textit{Three Kingdoms}: Boring original and interesting translations),” 22.

\textsuperscript{575} Cited from the interview with Yi Chŏngmyŏng in \textit{The Hankyoreh Newspaper} on October 30\textsuperscript{th}, 2008. (News article available at http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/specialsection/newspickup_section/319016.html) Yi is currently the most famous Korean “faction” writer who in his recent work depicts a famous Chosŏn painter Sin Yunbok as a transvestite woman. In the interview, he acknowledges that he does not believe in actuality that Sin Yunbok was a woman, but that it was worth trying to draw attention from his readers.
and appearance of various *Three Kingdoms*-related cultural products have also contributed to the ever-increasing popularity of the work. However, we should never ignore *Three Kingdoms*’ intrinsic greatness as a narrative and its entertainment value as the key to its enduring popularity in Korea for over four centuries. As Mao Zonggang points out in his preface to the novel, of all historical novels, people are especially fond of *Three Kingdoms*, because in no other work can people find so many talented heroes at the same time. As he further points out, “There is nothing remarkable to be seen in the contest between a talented man and an untalented one. It is remarkable, however, to see one man of talent contend against another. . . . But it is truly remarkable when a combination of talented men are forced to yield before the superiority of a single man of talent.”

As a scholar of Chinese traditional fiction, I am not fascinated by the superheroic abilities of Zhuege Liang any more, knowing that such a depiction of him is a fiction. However, Kongming’s image as an unparalleled hero, who outsmarts his enemies on the battlefield while wearing a robe and holding a fan made of crane feathers, was my first impression of him when I read *Three Kingdoms* as an elementary student, and it still lingers in my head. I was certainly not aware of the theory of Shu-Han legitimacy then, but was happy enough to see Kongming’s superheroic talent and the peerless martial prowess of Guan Yu and Zhang Fei. Such vivid depictions of historic figures make a profound impression, and helps to explain why there were many women readers of the novel in mid- to late-Chosôn. A work of such entertainment value is

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576 Rolston, *How to Read*, 156.

577 Translaton cited from Rolston, *How to Read*, 156.
rare, and has been embraced by readers irrespective of the genre into which it has been translated.⁵⁷⁸

The appearance of modern rewritings of *Three Kingdoms* notwithstanding, earlier translations of the novel are still being reprinted. Pak T’aewôn’s work, first serialized almost seventy years ago, was reprinted in 2008. Kim Kuyong’s work, the first complete modern translation of the Mao edition that came out in 1974, has been reprinted five times since 2000. Yokoyama Mitsuteru’s manga version of *Three Kingdoms*, first published in Japan in the 1970s and then introduced to Korean readers in 1993, was recently reprinted in December 2009 in Korea. All these works are “faithful to the original” when compared to modern rewritings, and attest to the intrinsic entertainment value on the original work for modern readers. As Robert Hegel points out, *Three Kingdoms*’ achievement lies largely in “humanizing historical types, in drawing poignant parallels between winners and losers, and in lamenting human inability to establish any moral order.”⁵⁷⁹ The legacy of *Three Kingdoms* will continue, because its greatness draws readers to virtually every collaborative modification that appears in response to a desire that the novel continue to evolve.

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⁵⁷⁸ In this sense, Yi Munyŏl’s decision to cut and abbreviate the chapters following Kongming’s death (in chapter 104) seems wise. It is apparent that after Zhuge Liang dies, readers’ interest fades precipitously, despite the novel's reputation as a self-help tool and study aid. Although people purchase *Three Kingdoms* for all kinds of reasons, entertainment value remains paramount when it comes to explaining its status as a perennial bestseller.

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Appendix I: Chang Chŏng’i’il’s Interview on his *Three Kingdoms* Rendition

“It is Time to Deconstruct the Masculine *Three Kingdoms* based on the “Chinese-barbarian distinction” (*huayi guan* 华夷观)”

Interview with Chang Chŏng’i’il, who has published a new [translation] of *Three Kingdoms*

Reporter: Cho Sŏng’il

Regarding writer Chang Chŏng’i’il who just published the Chang Chŏng’i’il version of *Three Kingdoms*--- not just another translation of the *Three Kingdoms*  

After a lapse of five years, Chang Chŏng’i’il, a novelist, presents [his translation of] the *Three Kingdoms* to readers. Upon being asked if it is just another [translation of] *Three Kingdoms*, Chang emphatically disagrees, saying it is an entirely new *Three Kingdoms*. Is it so? Why don’t we ask Chang himself?

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580 Some topics in this interview overlap with the preface to his *Three Kingdoms* translation. However, I am introducing his interview here because, unlike in his preface, Chang directly names names when criticizing the previous translations by his rivals Yi Mun’yŏl and Hwang Sŏg’yŏng. The level of criticism is also much higher with more details. Considering that direct criticism of senior writers has been strictly avoided in Korean literary circles, Chang’s bold remarks on his “predecessors” are more than just meaningful. In addition, Chang reveals his feminist inclinations in his rendition of the work in the interview, a point not observed elsewhere. Upon publishing his new translation, Chang had a number of interviews with the media. Among them, I have selected and translated the most straightforward one, which also happens to be longest. The interview is a news article from www.ohmynews.com (November 24, 2004).
“If my purpose were merely to add another [Three Kingdoms] translation, I would not have started my project. Instead, I tried to incorporate a totally new perspective.”

Chang, when he met with the reporter on the 23rd of November, 2004, started the interview with an appeal to readers not to view his Three Kingdoms from the same perspective applied to established Three Kingdoms translations.

“If we are to keep reading Three Kingdoms, it is time we opted out of the translation-centered [Three Kingdoms ideology] and achieved some upgrade. In other words, I felt that we needed to take one step further by rewriting the Three Kingdoms in our own hand.

There is No Orthodox Edition (正本) of the Three Kingdoms!

“The Three Kingdoms [translations] that we have been reading to date are without exception stories about heroes based on the Han-Chinese centered ideology (or Han ethnocentrism 中華中心主義). However, considering that Three Kingdoms has been translated many times by famous contemporary writers, and has been read, is being read, and will be read by numerous readers, it would not be wrong to say that it has become the national novel of Korea by now. Given that, it is not desirable to regard only the [translations] mindlessly following the original text as the best ones.”

Why don’t we let Chang articulate more on his perspective on the original text-obsessed trend (原典中心主義)?

[Chang says that] there is no extant orthodox edition of the Three Kingdoms, although every time a new translation of the Three Kingdoms is published, each translator insists that his work is the orthodox edition (正本) because it is based on the “most authoritative editions in China,” which are the Luo Guanzhong edition or the Mao Zonggang edition created in the late
Ming and early Qing period. However, the truth is that the Mao edition—the favorite of Korean translators—is just one of many *Three Kingdoms* editions read in China. Furthermore, Luo and Mao were mere editors, not the authors. Therefore, theirs cannot be an orthodox edition of the *Three Kingdoms*.

“I think, for example, it is like the [translations] of *Greek Mythology*. Wasn’t there a period when the translation of Thomas Bullfinch was accepted as the orthodox edition among Korean readers? Although I also read Bullfinch’s translation, now Korean readers’ favorite translation has become that of Yi Yun’gi. Likewise, [I believe that] the *Three Kingdoms* text gets rewritten with changes according to the times rather than remaining as an integral text.

**[Translations of] the *Three Kingdoms* by Hwang Sŏg’yŏng and Yi Munyŏl**

That said, Chang’s criticism spontaneously moves to the works of Hwang Sŏg’yŏng and Yi Munyŏl, which are the most widely read *Three Kingdoms* translations in Korea. First, let us hear his viewpoint concerning Hwang’s *Three Kingdoms* [translation]. Chang said that he has not read Hwang’s translation. However, he wanted to make a comment because there are too many things [in Hwang’s translation] that he feels are inappropriate.

“When Mr. Hwang Sŏg’yŏng announced the publication of his *Three Kingdoms* [translation], I had high expectations [for it] as many other readers must have, too. I thought that Mr. Hwang, as the leader of *minjung*- and nationalistic literature (民衆/民族文學의 座長), would create an authentic and localized *Three Kingdoms* instead of a mere translation. I mean, a new work reflecting the spirit of the times with the emphasis on decolonization and cultural identity. What came out, however, is merely a [plain] translation. What is worse is that he emphasizes that it is an orthodox edition.”
Hwang’s *Three Kingdoms* [translation] is also no different from the established translations in that he also accepts at face value the Han-Chinese centered ideology and its viewpoint that progress in history is made by individual heroes (英雄史觀), ideas prevalent in the [old-fashioned] *Three Kingdoms*. Chang also claimed that, although Hwang’s assertion that his translation is the orthodox edition might have made sense six hundred years ago in Luo Guanzhong’s time, at present it can simply be interpreted as a failure to incorporate the rapidly changing spirit of the times.

As for Yi Munyŏl’s *Three Kingdoms* [translation], Chang, while evaluating highly the critical notes Yi added to his translation, criticized some matters of interpretation in Yi’s translation.

“Considering the social circumstances in 1988 when Mr. Yi’s *Three Kingdoms* [translation] came out, [we can assert that] his work was deliberately created to counterattack the civil consciousness based on the democratic movement at that time. Nevertheless, critics were not willing to analyze or criticize his *Three Kingdoms* thus far, arguing that it is not his pure creation. However, my observation is that Yi’s *Three Kingdoms* is like a repository or a grave where his every single conservative viewpoint is kept.

Create a New Interpretation for *Three Kingdoms*!

Chang emphasizes that what really matters in reinterpreting and reconstructing *Three Kingdoms* is the object of reinterpretation. For example, if [the translator takes] an elitist view of history (選民史觀), by, say, defining the Yellow Scarf Army (黃巾軍) as the Yellow Scarf Outlaws (黃巾賊), he cannot comprehend the aspirations of the people who lived during the
Three Kingdoms period, let alone the truth about the foundation of the Republic of China (中華民國).

Because peasant rebellions made all subsequent dynasties of China collapse, nowadays Chinese history records the Disorder of the Yellow Scarfs as a “righteous uprising (起義).” If [the translator] nevertheless keeps calling it the Yellow Scarf Outlaws in his translation of the Three Kingdoms, it would be no different than calling the Tonghak Revolution (東學革命) the Tonghak Revolt and describing the Kwangju Democratic Movement (光州民主化運動) as the Kwangju Riot.

That is why Chang asserts there is no reason for us to spare the term “the Yellow Scarf Righteous Uprising (黃巾起義)” even if, having happened a long time ago in a distant country, namely China, it might seem quite remote and irrelevant to us.

Chang also points out that the moral we are supposed to draw from the story of Meng Huo’s Seven Captures and Seven Releases (七縱七擒) is not the talent and integrity of Zhuge Liang, who succeeded in obtaining sincere submission from Meng Huo by releasing him seven times, but the seemingly stubborn and bold Meng Huo and his advanced awareness that only persistent resistance [against the Shu-Han army] based on a subjective spirit can secure the integrity and independence of his people.

Based on these observations, Chang “deliberately” made reinterpretations in his Three Kingdoms. “The dichotomy adapted from Chunqiu bifa simply divides all characters into good people and bad people. It categorizes the literati with Confucian education into ‘qingliu 淸流 (limpid stream; good characters)’ and eunuchs and maternal relatives of the emperor into ‘zhuoliu 濁流 (turbid stream; evil characters). This classification prevents a precise reading of
the lively movement of human desire. However, the real problem is that the dichotomy of *Chunqiu bifa* whereby the Han Chinese are the limpid stream while other ethnic minorities on the frontier are the turbid stream, operates as an instrument to strengthen the Han-Chinese centered ideology.

Chang specifically pointed out the objects to be reconstructed, which are the 210 Chinese poems embedded in the Mao and Luo editions of the *Three Kingdoms*; they bolster the view of history based on *Chunqiu bifa*. According to Chang, the editors of the *Three Kingdoms* embedded poems by men of letters or of their own at the end of a story or a chapter, and these poems contain the essence of *Chunqiu bifa*. To deal with these, Chang included twenty [new] poems instead; two of them were taken from old Chinese poetry collections and the remainders are his own creation.

*Three Kingdoms* Can be said to be the History of Women’s Suffering

Another setback to overcome in the established *Three Kingdoms* translations, according to Chang, is their male-centered viewpoint. While men take the *Three Kingdoms* as an indispensable textbook for cultivating personal selves (*xiushen* 修身), like a rite of passage one has to go through, women never read it. Why is this? Because the female characters in the *Three Kingdoms* merely function as accessories stuck between male characters.

“It can be argued that *Three Kingdoms* is a history of women’s suffering. I become utterly speechless when encountering the scenes where Liu Bei deserts his wives four times, each time escaping, saying ‘brothers are like hands and feet; a wife is like a piece of clothing,’ as well as at the scene where a hunter roasts his wife’s flesh with a brazier to feed hungry Liu Bei, who
was astray in the mountains being pursued by Lü Bu. In *Three Kingdoms*, male readers deliberately block out female readers.”

Chang, therefore, boldly removes this trap [set by the males]. For example, when Guan Yu escorts Lady Gan, Liu Bei’s wife, to her place, Guan refuses to accept the surrender of the remnants of the Yellow Scarves because he does not want to be associated with outlaws. However, moved by their ardent supplication, Guan informs Lady Gan, the first wife of Liu Bei, of this situation. At this point, most translations [of the *Three Kingdoms*] describe Lady Gan’s negative reaction, since she says she dares not defile the reputation of her husband and the imperial army [Liu Bei’s army] by accepting them. Chang, however, describes Lady Gan as a positive and subjective character by letting her saying “General Guan, since the old saying says ‘soldiers and bandits are of one family (兵匪一家),’ why don’t we accept them?” rather than making her perform as a parrot of male rhetoric.
Appendix II. List of Three Kingdoms Editions in Korea

Thus far, no scholarly article or book on Three Kingdoms (either in Korean or in other languages) includes a list of all editions and printings of versions of Three Kingdoms novels in Korea.\(^{581}\) As far as I am aware, this is the first attempt to make such a list. For convenience of reference, I am arranging the list into three separate entries.

Titles in Entry 1 are extant copies of Sanguo zhi yanyi in Korea. Min Kwangdong’s 1995 article is the only study for titles in this category. Titles in Entry 2 are premodern vernacular Korean translations of Sanguo zhi yanyi from the Chosŏn and colonial periods. Cho Hŭiŭng’s books are the most critical source for titles in this entry. I have also included the list of ttakchibon adaptations of Three Kingdoms published in the early twentieth-century, which are also mentioned in Chapter 5 of this dissertation with further discussion. Titles in Entry 3 are modern translations of Three Kingdoms that were published in the post-colonial period and to the present. For Entry 3, I have cross-checked the titles in the lists in Cho Hŭiŭng, Min Kwandong, and Chŏng Won’gi, and corrected errors and added my own findings.

To complete these lists, I drew mostly on works of other scholars. The articles and books that I referred to include the following:


\(^{581}\) Min Kwangdong’s article discusses Entries 1 and 3 in my list, yet has very few titles for Entry 2. Cho Hŭiŭng’s books cover Entries 2 and 3 in my list, yet hardly cover titles in Entry 1.


Pak Chaeyŏn. “Chosŏn kakpon Sin’gan kobon taetcha ŭmsŏk Samgukchi chŏn t’ongsok yŏnŭi e taehayŏ” (Regarding the Chosŏn Print of Xinkan guben dazi yinshi Sanguo zhi zhuan t’ongsu yanyi).

Chungguk omun hakji 27 (2009): 171-211.


Many titles in the above-mentioned sources often provide inconsistent, contradictory, or overlapping bibliographical information with other works, which made the task of updating the following list very difficult. I believe that this is due mainly to the difficulty of locating each edition or version of Three Kingdoms in the possession of various private collectors.582 Almost

582 For the list of major libraries or private collectors of Traditional Korean novels, see Skillend, 30-33. His list is rather old and needs to be updated, but remains useful to this day.

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all premodern editions of *Three Kingdoms* are either held in Rare Book sections of research libraries in Korea or foreign countries, or kept by private collectors. As Cho Hŭiung himself admits, “some institutions and individuals refused to reveal the works in their possession, or even if they did, photocopying was not allowed in many cases. Even if these were all allowed, I had my hands tied for lack of time and financial sources.” (Cited from Cho, 1: 4.) Min Kwangdong also says, regarding the list of *Sanguo zhi yanyi* editions available in Korean libraries and private collectors, “the following list is based on catalogues of rare books published by some thirty major libraries in Korea, and as for individual collections, I referred to those introduced in scholarly papers. I was not able to cross-check many of the titles in my list. Rather, the sole method that I depended on was the catalogues of rare books. Therefore, I cannot say that there will be no mistakes.” (Cited from Min (1995, 400)).

To compare and cross-check each item, I tried to visit as many libraries as possible. However, as both Cho and Min have revealed in their articles, there are many difficulties when it comes to individual scholars actually gaining access to libraries, let alone private collections. A nationwide inter-library loan system is still nonexistent in Korea. Moreover, many universities do not allow individuals without an official affiliation even to look at their collection, let alone photocopy or scan items.

Given the situation above, Cho Hŭiung’s reference books constitute a major breakthrough in this field. Prior to his books, there were no such comprehensive and detailed bibliographical lists. He made lists for thousands of titles in many different places, and has created a body of work that is both pioneering and hugely useful. Without his lists, it would have been much more difficult to make this list.
However, Cho’s reference books also have some shortcomings. There are numerous contradictions, confusions, and overlaps in the entries and titles covered in his books. For example, among the many titles of modern translations of *Three Kingdoms* in his book, several titles are actually the same ones with slightly different details. His list of modern translations of the novel also includes quite a few reference books for *Three Kingdoms*, although they are not translations of the novel, simply because they have the term *Three Kingdoms* in their titles.

In addition, not all books including *Three Kingdoms* as a part of their titles are relevant to the novel. We cannot forget that the term “Samgukchi” has become a very popular word with different connotations in modern Korean society. It often means “competitions between three parties involved” rather than “Three Kingdoms: a historical novel.” A more meticulous selection of titles would have been required. For the titles in Entry 3, I have excluded all irrelevant titles in Cho’s list. Cho’s books also lack detailed accounts of titles in general; sometimes it is not even possible to differentiate whether names given are for collectors or collections.

As for premodern Korean translations of *Sanguo zhi yanyi* in the Chosŏn and colonial periods, many titles in this category in Cho’s books seem to be identical items collected by different individuals, or even by one and the same collector who did not allow titles in his possession to be cross-examined by scholars. Cho cannot be held responsible for these confusions and repetitions. However, given the above-mentioned situation, estimating the actual number of distinct titles, their dating, and their categorization all seem to be a difficult job. For this reason, I have not listed some apparently overlapping titles from Cho’s books in Entries 2.2 and 2.3. Some remnants of the novel of which the lengths are less than 1 kwŏn (K.) or juan (C.) held by individuals, are not included, especially when they are repeated or overlapped.
As for the titles in Entry 1, extant copies of *Sanguo zhi yanyi* in Korea, Cho Hŭiung provides only very limited and outdated information, and this is why I believe that, thus far, there has not been a listing of all editions and printings of versions of *Three Kingdoms* novels in Korea. For the titles in this category, I have relied mostly on Min Kwandong’s 1995 article. I recently learned that some professors of Chinese literature in Korea have unofficial memos containing detailed bibliographical information on the collections of Chinese traditional novels in their respective universities. I will try to acquire some of these memos to update the following list in the future. Accessing the rare book collections of each different library will be another challenge, though.

To complete the following three lists, I have compared available sources, and cross-checked the inconsistencies, repetitions, and omissions as best I can and corrected them. However, due to the difficulties of examining all available premodern editions closely, there is still room for improvement. For recent translations of *Three Kingdoms* that came out in early twentieth century, I have updated these based on my own examinations.

List of *Sanguo zhi yanyi* editions in Korea

1.1 Zhou Yuejiao edition

*Sin’gan kyojŏng kobon taetcha ūmsŏk Samgukchi chŏn t’ongsok yŏnŭi*

新刊校正古本大字音釋三國志傳通俗演義, printed in the year Ched in 丁卯 (1567 or 1627), 12 juan. Collections possessing chapters of the Zhou Yuejiao Choshave updated these based on:

*Juan 1*: Chung-Han pŏnyŏk munhŏn yŏn’guso 中韓翻譯文獻研究所, Sŏnmun University

*Juan 2*: Chung-Han pŏnyŏk munhŏn yŏn’guso, Sŏnmun University; Sangbaek Collection of the Kyujanggak Institute, Seoul National University
Juan 3: Chung-Han pŏnyŏk munhŏn yŏn’guso, Sŏnmun University; Sangbaek Collection of the Kyujanggak Institute, Seoul National University; Kyemŏng University Library
Juan 4: Chung-Han pŏnyŏk munhŏn yŏn’guso, Sŏnmun University; Kyujanggak Institute, Seoul National University; Professor Im Hyŏngt’ae of Sŏnggyun’gwan University
Juan 5: Kyujanggak Institute, Seoul National University, Tongguk University Library
Juan 6: Kyujanggak Institute, Seoul National University, Namje Collection of Yŏngnam University Library
Juan 7: Kyujanggak Institute, Seoul National University
Juan 8: Chung-Han pŏnyŏk munhŏn yŏn’guso, Sŏnmun University; Kyujanggak Institute, Seoul National University
Juan 9: Chung-Han pŏnyŏk munhŏn yŏn’guso, Sŏnmun University; Kyujanggak Institute, Seoul National University
Juan 10: Kyujanggak Institute, Seoul National University
Juan 11: Namje Collection of Yŏngnam University Library
Juan 12: Chung-Han pŏnyŏk munhŏn yŏn’guso, Sŏnmun University; National Museum of Korea; Professor Kim Yŏngjin of Kyemyŏng University; San’gi Collection (Yi Kyŏmno’s private collection)
1.2 Versions of Mao Zonggang commentary edition

1.2.1 Si da qishu di yi zhong 四大奇書第一種


1) Copy held at Koryó University Library

Date of publication unknown 刊年未詳; Qing period, 60 vols. Illustrations provided.

_Biaoiti_ 表題 583: _Sanguo zhi yanyi 三國志演義, Banxin ti 版心題 584: _Di yi caizi shu 第一才子書._

2) Copies at Koryó University Library (held in the Kansong Collection, Hwasan Collection, and Mansong Collection) and at the National Library of Korea.

Woodblock prints published in China in the fourteenth year of the Guangxu Emperor’s reign 淸光緒 14 年 (1888) by Saoye shanfang 掃葉山房. 20 vols. _Biaoiti_: _Sanguo zhi, Banxin ti: Di yi caizi shu._ Two incomplete editions also available (17 vols and 11 vols; held in the Yuktang Collection, Koryó University).

3) Copy at Tongguk University

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583 _Biaoiti_ refers to the title listed on the book's cover (not necessarily identical to the title listed on the title page or in the _banxin_).

584 _Bannxin ti_ refers to the title appearing in the central line of the block (which is not always the same as the title on the cover on the title page).

4) Copy at the National Library of Korea

Incomplete edition (*juan* 14); reprint of a Qing edition.

5) Incomplete or undated editions at various places

- 20 vols. (4, 9, 10, 12, 13, and 17 missing), held at Kansong Collection
- 20 vols. (4, 16, and 18 missing), held at Kansong Collection
- 20 vols., held at Kansong Collection
- 20 vols. (3-11, 13, 14, 16, and 19 available), held at Yŏnse University
- 20 vols., held at Yŏnse University
- Volume 13, held at Yuktang Collection
- 20 vols., held at National Library of Korea
- Volume 16, National Library of Korea
- 11 vols. (1-4, 8, 15-19 available), held at Chŏnbuk University
- Volume 10, held at the local Confucian school 鄉校 in Hongch’ŏn District 洪川郡

6) Copy collated by Zou Wugang 鄒梧岡參定本

Dated late Qing period. 51 vols. *Banxin ti: Di yi caizi shu, Biaoti: Xiuxiang di yi caizi shu*. Held at Hwasan Collection, Koryŏ University.

7) Copy collated by Hang Yongnian 杭永年

Dated late Qing. 20 vols. Illustrations included. Held at Chŏnbuk University. An incomplete edition of 16 volumes held by Pak Chae-yŏn.

8) Copy with commentary by “Shi Nai’an” 施耐庵評 (incomplete).
Published in the nineteenth year of Guangxu Emperor’s reign (1893); incomplete edition (volumes 9-19 available). Held at Koryŏ University

9) Copy with commentary by “Shi Nai’an.”


1.2.2 Guanhuatang di yi caizi shu 貫華堂第一才子書 (Kwanhwadang cheil chejaŏ in Korean)

Authored by Luo Guanzhong, edited by Jin Shengtan, with commentary by Mao Zonggang

1) 20 vols. Illustrations included. Held by Kyujangggak Institute, Mansong Collection, Pak Chaeyŏn, and Sŏn’gyojang 船橋莊 in the city of Kangnŭng.

2) 20 vols. Illustrations included. Held by Kyemyŏng University.

3) 4 copies available at Koryŏ University; details not available.

4) Reprint of 20 volumes held by Pak Chaeyŏn

5) Incomplete editions

2 volumes (juan 9 and 18) at Sŏn’gyojang in the city of Kangnŭng

2 volumes (juan 15 and 16) at Sŏn’gyojang in the city of Kangnŭng

20 volumes held at Yŏnse University

1 volume (juan 1) at Sŏnggyun’gwan University

1 volume at Kŏn’guk University

1 volume at Kyujangggak Institute.
1.2.3 *Di yi caizi shu* 第一才子書


3) Lithograph edition. Dated 1853. Published by Jinzhang shuju in Shanghai 上海錦章書局. 60 vols. Held by Ch’oe Chongho.


5) Lithograph edition. Published by Jinzhang shuju in Shanghai. 20 vols. Held at Koryô University; 4 vols. Held by Hong Chaeso.


8) Woodblock edition. Published by Saoye shanfang 掃葉山房. 20 vols. Held at

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585 *Neiti* refers to the title found at the beginning of the text on the title page.

586 *Waiti* refers to the title on the outside cover.
Yǒngnam University.

9) Woodblock edition. Published by Cheng Wenxin 成文信. 9 vols. Held at Sǒnggyun’gwan University; incomplete edition (volumes 8-15) held by Pak Chaeyŏn.


1.2.4 Sanguo zhi yanyi 三國志演義 (prints published in China)

1) Reprint of woodblock edition. 20 vols. Neiti: Mao Shengshan xiansheng pidian 毛聲山先生批點貫華堂第一才子書. Held at the National Library of Korea; 20 volumes held at Ihwa Women’s University; 40 volumes held at Kŏn’guk University; Incomplete edition (10 volumes) held at Kŏn’guk University.

2) Woodblock edition. 20 vols. Held at Kŏn’guk University; Incomplete edition (12 volumes) held at Chŏnbuk University.

3) Woodblock edition. Incomplete edition (18 volumes) held at Kŏn’guk University; Incomplete edition (volumes 2-11) held at Kyujanggak.


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5) Woodblock edition. Published by Saoye shanfang. 20 vols. Held at Sŏnggyun’gwan University.


1.2.5 Sanguo zhi tongsu yanyi 三國志通俗演義

1) Woodblock edition. Incomplete edition (1 volume) held at Yŏn'nam University


1.2.6 Xiuxiang quantu Sanguo yanyi 繡像全圖三國演義 (prints published in China)

1) Lithograph edition. Published by Shanghai Jinzhang shuju. 8 vols. Held at Hyŏn’gok Sŏwon, and Sŏnggyun’gwan University (dated 1903).


1.2.7 Jingjiao quantu xiuxiang Sanguo zhi yanyi 精校繡像全圖三國志演義


3) Movable type edition. 7 vols. Illustrations included. Published by Zhongxin
1.2.8 *Zengxiang quantu Sanguo yanyi* 增像全圖三國演義 (prints published in China)


2) Lithograph edition. Published by Jinzhang shuju. 7 vols. Held at Kŏn’guk University.


2. Korean translations of *Sanguo zhi yanyi* until the colonial period\(^{587}\)

2.1 Complete editions

2.1.1 *Samgukchi T’ongsyok Yŏnŭi* 三國志通俗演義.

Manuscript. 27 vols. Attributed as a translation of the Jiajing Renwu (1522) edition. Held at Naksŏnjae Royal Library Collection and Seoul National University. The copy at Naksŏnjae Royal Library Collection is dated early- to mid-eighteenth century, and the copy at Seoul National University late-eighteenth to early-nineteenth century. Also held at the Academy of Korean Studies.

\(^{587}\) Many titles in the Entries in 2.2 and 2.3 (especially those in private collections) have not been cross-checked, and therefore could overlap with each other.
2.1.2 *Samgukchi T’ongsyok Yŏnŭi*.

Manuscript. 39 vols. Held at Naksŏnjae Royal Library Collection and the Academy of Korean Studies. Attributed as a translation of the “Li Zhuowu commentary edition”; dated early- to mid-eighteenth century; a 29-volume version is held at Kyujanggak. Hong T’aekchu (personal collector) also has a 39-volume *Samgukchi* (Cho Hŭiung, 230); whether Hong’s copy is related to the other two is not confirmed.

2.1.3 *Samgukchi* 三國志.

Manuscript. 17 vols. Translation of the Mao edition. The copyist identifies herself as "Madam Li from Kwangju" (光州李氏), who hand-copied the manuscript between 1868 and 1871. Each page is about 11 columns, and each column about 24 syllables. Held at the National Library of Korea and the Academy of Korean Studies.

2.1.4 *Samgukchi*.

Manuscript. 19 vols. Translation of the Mao edition. Publication notes dated from 1891 to 1911. Held at Chung-Han pŏnyŏk munhŏn yŏngusŏ of Sŏnmun University. Also held by Pak Sunho.

2.1.5 *Samgukchi*.

*Sech’aekpon* (rental bookstore) manuscript. 69 vols. Each volume is about 30 pages (each page is about 11 columns, 14 syllables). Dated Imin 壬寅 (1902) in vols. 54 and 69, Sinhae 辛亥 (1911) in vol. 1, and Imja 壬子 (1912) in vol. 29. Several volumes are undated, including vol. 50, which looks rather older than the rest. (Cited from Skillend, 156.) Held at Tōyō Bunko.
2.1.6 *Samgukchi*.

Manuscript. 18 vols (1-7 and 9-19), 791 pages in total. Dated 大韓光武七年甲辰 (1903-1904) in vols. 6, 7, 9, and 10; 大韓光武十年丙午 (1906) in all other volumes. Held at Harvard University.

2.1.7 *Samgukchi*.

*Sechaekpon* (rental bookstore) manuscript. 19 vols (1652 pages). Publisher’s notes indicate that this volume was published by Ch’yŏngp’ung [rental bookstore] in Paegundong in Taehan Kwangmu 10 (1906). Held at Harvard-Yenching Library.588

2.1.8 *Samgukchi*.


2.1.9 *Samgukchi ch’oyo* (also titled *Chŏngbon Samgukchi* 正本三國志).

Manuscript. 18 vols. Held at Kyujanggak and Academy of Korean Studies. I confirmed that Chinese characters were added later by a reader for names of people, places, and titles in vols.1, 2, and the early part of vol. 3.

2.1.10 *Samgukchi*.

38 vols. Held at Koryŏ University.

588 Entries 2.1.6 and 2.1.7 may be identical copies. The description of entry 2.1.6 is based on Skillend (1968), 156, and I examined entry 2.1.7. I presume that Skillend might not have had the opportunity to examine the full text, which is now available online. For further discussion of entry 2.1.7, see Chapter 5.2.2.1.
2.1.11 *Samgukchi*.

12 vols. Held at Tan’guk University.

2.1.12 *Samgukchi*.

20 vols. Held at Ihwa Women’s University

2.2 Manuscript translations either incomplete or with no details about their entirety

2.2.1 *Samgukchi*.


2.2.2 *Samgukchi*.

Vols. 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 available. Held at Tan’guk University.

2.2.3 *Samgukchi*.

Manuscript. 2 vols. Seoul National University.

2.2.4 *Samgukchi*.

“Petrova gives two volume 3s: one of 20 leaves, 己未孟夏紅樹洞新刊 ‘newly engraved at Hongsudong, fourth month, 1859’; one of 22 leaves, 己未石橋新刊 ‘newly engraved at Sŏkkyo in 1859’. (Cited from Skillend, 156; these incomplete chapters seem to part be sech’aek rental books in the form of manuscripts, rather than prints.)

2.2.5 Incomplete editions held by Kim Tonguk (private collector)
15 vols.; 13 vols.; 6 vols.; 5 vols.; 1 vol. (volume 12); 3 vols.; 2 vols.; 1 vol. (volume 4); 1 vol. (volume 5), 1 vol. (volume 3); 1 vol. (volume 1).

2.2.6 *Samgukchi Yǒnǔi*.

1 vol. Held by Pak Chaeyŏn.

2.3 *Panggankbon* (woodblock) prints

2.3.1 *Kyŏng’anbon* prints

2.3.1.1 *Samgukchi*.

Published by Hongshudong rental bookstore in 1859. 3 vols. Skillend and Cho Hŭiung mention that it is held by Kang Hanyŏng, and Min Kwandong says that Kim Tonguk has this title. The catalogue notes, “The quarto volume, which is not uniform, has 美洞新版 ‘newly engraved at Midong [rental bookstore]’ and one other volume has 紅樹洞己未版 ‘engraved at Hongsyudong [rental bookstore] in 1859’”. Courant gives the same information for an apparently identical text in Paris. (Cited from Skillend, 156.)

2.3.1.2 *Samgukchi*.

Volume 3, with the publisher’s note: 己未孟夏紅樹洞新刊 “newly copied at Hongsyudong, fourth month, 1859,” held at Kyushu University. Incomplete edition.

2.3.1.3 *Samgukchi*.

2.3.1.4 *Samgukchi.*

5 vols. Held at the British Museum.

2.3.1.5 *Samgukchi.*


2.3.1.6 *Samgukchi.*

Volumes 1-3, held by Kim Tonguk. Published by Hongsyudong in 1859. Incomplete edition.

2.3.1.7 *Samgukchi.*

Volumes 1-5, held at the British Museum.

2.3.1.8 *Samgukchi.*


2.3.1.9 *Samgukchi.*

Volume 3, held at Sajaedong (private collection).

2.3.1.10 *Samgukchi.*

Volume 3, held in the Aston collection, Leningrad. Published by Hongsyudong in 1859.
2.3.1. 11 *Samgukchi*.

3 vols. Held by Yi Nŭngu. Published by Sŏkkyo in 1859.

2.3.1.12 *Samgukchi*.


2.3.1.13 *Samgukchi*.

3 vols. dated 1923, held at the Academy of Korean Studies.

2.3.2 *Ansŏngp’an* prints

2.3.2.1 *Samgukchi*.


2.3.2.2 *Samgukchi*.

Volume 3, held at Tōyō Bunko.

2.3.3 *Wanp’an* prints

2.3.3.1 *Samgukchi*.

1 vol. Held by Kim Tonguk.

2.3.3.2 *Samgukchi*.

Held by Pak Sunho (private collection). Pak has fourteen *wanp’an* prints of *Samgukchi* (incomplete editions). Five copies are dated 1911 and one copy is dated 1916.
2.3.3.3 *Samgukchi.*

Volume 1, held at Sajaedong (private collection).

2.3.3.4 *Samgukchi.*


2.3.3.5 *Samgukchi.*

Volumes 3 and 4, held at Yŏngnam University. Incomplete edition.

2.3.3.6 Øn *Samgukchi* 諺三國志.

1 vol. dated 1916, held at Yŏngnam University.

2.3.3.7 *Samgukchi.*

Volumes 3 and 4, held by Im Hyŏngt’ae (private collection).

2.3.3.8 *Samgukchi.*


2.4 List of *ttakchibon* editions of *Three Kingdoms* translations or adaptations (in order of title, publisher, and date of publication).

2.4.1 *Sansu Samgukchi* 三國志 (Essence of Three Kingdoms). Choŏn Sŏgwan 1913 (1 volume; incomplete edition), 1914 (5 volumes) / name of publisher unknown 1914 (9 volumes).
2.4.2 *Samgukchi* (Three Kingdoms). Taech’ang Sŏwŏn, 1918.

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2.4.20  *Kyemyŏng san* (Cock’s Crow Mountain). Sech’ang _SWŏn_ 1919 (36 pages)/

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3. List of modern translations of *Three Kingdoms* published in the post-colonial period to the present.

To avoid repetition, the place of publication for entries is always Seoul unless otherwise noted. The personal names in the list are translators’ names unless otherwise noted. All of the following titles cite Luo Guanzhong (in some rare cases, Shi Nai'an) as the author.


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