



Ganyangnok as a Diary and Policy Report on Japan during the Jeongyu War

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Abstract

The primary purpose of this article is to examine and analyze Kang Hang's Ganyangnok, one of the few existing eye-witness accounts of Japan during the Imjin War. Kang, a nobleman who was abducted to Japan during the second and final phase of Japan's invasion of Korea from 1596–1598, wrote Ganyangnok to not only record what he heard and saw in Japan during the late 16th century, but to remind the Korean government of the importance of ensuring adequate preparations before the advent of a war and maintaining a wary eye on the possibility of Japan launching a similar invasion in the future. Ganyangnok is nevertheless important for understanding the origins of Korea's distrust and alarm towards Japan's attempt at territorial expansion and is a unique document that took the form of a travelogue and yet functioned as a policy report, informing Koreans about the nature of Japanese feudalism before the Imjin War. Rather than divorcing the form of the text from its function, as much of the existing scholarship has done by either focusing on Ganyangnok as a travelogue or a war captive's diary, the work ought to be understood holistically since the observations Kang recorded became the basis of his policy reports, which comprise the second part of Ganyangnok.

Keywords: *Ganyangnok*, Imjin War, Jeongyu War, travelogue, policy report, Korea, Japan

Introduction

Kang Hang (1567–1618), a scholar and a nobleman from Jeollanam-do province with a modest social background who was a former government-official in Korea, stared at his finished work—a recollection of the Jeongyu War and a record of his thoughts and ideas for reform—for a moment and titled it *Ganyangnok* 看羊錄, or *A Shepherd's Diary*.¹ He had been in Japan for nearly four years, and while he was not a shepherd and only knew how to write scholarly tracts and teach students, and had never raised a sheep, he was certain that the attitude of a shepherd toward his flock was the same attitude a government official should have about the security of his country while being held captive in enemy territory. Although the war that had begun with a sudden Japanese invasion of Korea had ended in a victory for Korea, the conflict had devastated the Korean economy, and had initially seemed to Kang to shatter any prospect of ever returning home. However, once the Japanese understood that Kang was well-versed in the Confucian classics, they allowed him to reside in Kyoto and teach Japanese students, one of whom owed an intellectual debt to Kang in establishing his own school of Confucian philosophy, which would dominate Japanese intellectual life for much of the 17th century (M. S. Kim 2010).

Although he had accomplished much teaching students, adjusting to a new life in a foreign country by no means prompted Kang to wish that he could change his national allegiance or patriotic feelings. Before he was a war captive, he had been a loyal servant of King Seonjo (r. 1567–1608) and the Korean government, and by extension, the Korean people. Not once during his stay in Japan did he ever think of betraying his motherland for the comforts of a foreign land, and after 20 years of living as an alien, he was ready to return home as a patriot who would not only tell Korean government officials about his personal life in Japan, but also what he saw in the eyes of various daimyo and how Japanese politics after the Imjin debacle

1. The Jeongyu War (Jeongyu jaeran) occurred in 1597 out of Toyotomi Hideyoshi's desire to avenge the failure of the first Japanese invasion, or Imjin War (Imjin waeran), which lasted from 1592 to 1596 and was Hideyoshi's attempt to subjugate Korea and China.

did not promise a sure return to a stable peace between Korea and Japan, but were an omen that perhaps, Korea ought to prepare for war once again. For if Tokugawa Ieyasu failed to tame the belligerence in the hearts of many Japanese generals, he might decide to rekindle the megalomania of Toyotomi Hideyoshi and the idea that only by conquering China and Korea could Japan aspire to be the center of a new universe. Kang also did not forget to remind his readers that Tsushima, despite maintaining centuries of good relations with Korea, had betrayed Korea out of a fear of angering Toyotomi after he had finished unifying the Japanese mainland. Considering the fact that Tsushima islanders knew how to read and even speak Korean, and even how to formulate diplomatic documents in accordance with Korean custom, Kang concluded that trade with Tsushima had to be restricted to Busan and it would be necessary to pressure Tsushima for information in order to maintain a constant alert regarding Japan's intentions.

Kang held the firm conviction that the words he composed in his work *Ganyangnok*, or *A Shepherd's Diary*, would surely serve as a reminder that although the war may have ended, Koreans must not abandon their suspicion and alarm about the true motives behind Japan's pursuit of stable relations. Stability might quickly turn out to provide Japan the justification for invading Korea again in the near future if Korea did not accommodate Japan's diplomatic requests, just as Toyotomi Hideyoshi had done out of his megalomaniacal belief that Japan could subjugate Korea and China.²

Research on *Ganyangnok* can broadly be categorized into Korean-language and English-language scholarship. Regarding the former, the main focus has been on understanding the emotions that Kang must have felt during his years as a war captive in Japan, on understanding the literary techniques used in the diary, and the work's significance as one of the very few examples of its genre: a post-war diary. Byun Dongmyong (1996)

2. An English-language translation of *Ganyangnok* by Jahyun Kim Haboush and Kenneth Robinson is simply titled *A War Captive's Diary*, but this translation does not reflect the actual contents of the book and neglects the implied meaning in the work's title, for it does not account for Kang's suggestions for reform and additional policies and the measures he felt the Korean government must take towards Japan. My slight alteration is closer to the text's political intentions. See Kim Haboush and Robinson (2013).

examined the authenticity of the diary by comparatively analyzing the original version with various second-hand copies. Cho Hyunwoo (2014) analyzed the diary as a record of a war captive's reminiscences, while Kim Mi Sun (2011, 2015, 2020) analyzed the itinerary that Kang described in *Ganyangnok* to determine the veracity of the work. She also highlighted the lasting historical influence of the *Ganyangnok* as a simultaneous account of the post-war situation in Japan during the 16th century and as a diary, noting that a single work possessing two genres as its literary identity was rare for its time. Finally, Lim Chi-kyun (2001) analyzed *Ganyangnok* as a work dedicated to delivering observable facts and credited it with analyzing the impact of the Imjin War objectively and phenomenologically, without generating too much emotional baggage that could have rendered the document unreliable as a primary source. On Kang Hang, recent research has focused on Kang's life, the precise process behind writing *Ganyangnok*, Kang's attempt to overcome the psychological wounds that the Imjin War inflicted, studied Kang's classical Chinese poems in *Ganyangnok*, or Kang's influence on the development of Confucian studies in Japan (U. Ha 2008; M. S. Kim 2010; S. Ha 2018; Shin 2019; Ahn 2021).

Regarding English-language scholarship, *Ganyangnok* remains largely untreated, and has not been explored independent from the political circumstances that created it. Original scholarship exploring the *Ganyangnok* as a unique text is relatively scarce compared with its Korean-language counterpart. Most of the scholarship written in English focuses on the war that produced *Ganyangnok*—the Imjin War. Such studies highlight the war's participants, analyze the political and social ambience in Korea before, during, and after the war, examine the international relations in East Asia and the balance of power in East Asia before and after the war, and also treat the war as a source of historical memory and the foundations of modern Korean nationalism.

John Lee (2018) examined how forestry in Korea was perceived as an important industrial sector following the Imjin War; James Lewis (2014) compiled essays from Korean, Japanese, American, and Chinese scholars to assess the war's immediate impact on Korean demographics, Korea's military and naval strategies during the war, the enduring legacy of the war as a

historical memory, and how the war's influence is represented in Korean literature. Jahyun Kim Haboush (2016) assumed a similar approach as Lewis, but her edited volume highlighted the important connection between the war and the rise of modern Korean nationalism, thereby challenging the notion that modernity strictly began in the 19th century for Korea, and the idea that nationalism only arose with the formation of the nation-state in the 19th century, by presenting the war as the deeper roots of modern Korean nationhood and national consciousness.

There have also been notable efforts to provide a holistic assessment of the war's procession. Samuel Hawley (2005) provides a comprehensive overview of the war, concentrating on the initial confrontations between Korea and Japan, the truce negotiations between Japan and China, and the final phase of the war accumulating with Korea's victory over Japan. While his coverage of Korean socio-economic conditions during the war is wanting, he provides a generally successful introduction to the war's geopolitics. Kenneth Swope (2016) examines the Wanli Emperor's motivations behind aiding Korea and points to Hideyoshi's search for vainglory and control of foreign trade through the creation of a new international order around Japan as primary motivations for Japan to initiate the war. Nevertheless, Hawley and Swope neglect to do justice to the fact that much of the war took place on Korean soil, which necessitates any scholar of the war to consult the *Seonjo sillok* (Veritable Records of King Seonjo), which contains detailed descriptions of events during the war, thereby reducing the reliability of their works on a war which fundamentally transformed Korean society and its faith in monarchical authority.

While all of the scholarly studies on *Ganyangnok* and the Imjin War are valuable in their own right and have done much to advance our knowledge of these topics, their respective focus on their specific areas has left much to be desired on two accounts. The Korean-language scholarship does a good job of combining historical analysis with literary criticism and analysis, but by focusing too much on the text itself, *Ganyangnok*'s political function as a policy report is almost left unexamined, giving the impression that *Ganyangnok* only has merit as a war captive's diary and nothing further. The English-language scholarship, by contrast, exhibits exactly the antithetical

kind of problem found in the Korean-language scholarship. By focusing rather too closely on the nature of the Imjin War and its political and socio-economic importance, the uniqueness of the *Ganyangnok* is not accounted for as adequately as the war itself.

While *Ganyangnok* alone does not represent the entirety of the war or summarize the entirety of the war's aftermath, its importance lies not only in the genre it represents (a war diary) but also in its political function as a guide for future policies toward Japan and what Korea must do to, on the one hand, restore amicable relations with Japan, and on the other, maintain a cautionary distance from Japan, for Kang warned that as long as some belligerent factions existed in Japan under the Tokugawa regime, the possibility of another war similar in magnitude and purpose with the Imjin War must not be dismissed or brushed off lightly.

This article aims to serve as a bridge connecting the existing scholarship on *Ganyangnok* by highlighting two important aspects of the text which need not be presented as exclusive but are conjoined by the common denominator of Kang Hang's experience as a scholar residing abroad, observer, and political commentator on Japanese politics following the Jeongyu War. By highlighting both *Ganyangnok*'s literary identity and its political function, this article will argue that Kang Hang wrote *Ganyangnok* to not only record what he heard and saw in Japan during the late 16th century, but to remind the Korean government of the importance of ensuring adequate preparations for war and maintaining a wary eye on the possibility of Japan re-launching a similar invasion in the future. *Ganyangnok* is important for understanding the origins of Korea's distrust and alarm towards Japan's attempt at territorial expansion and as a unique document that takes the form of a travelogue and yet functions as a policy report informing Koreans about the nature of Japanese politics before and after the Jeongyu War. Rather than divorcing the form of the text from its function, as much of the existing scholarship has done by either focusing on *Ganyangnok*'s nature as a travelogue or a war captive's diary, these two aspects ought to be understood holistically, since the observations Kang recorded in the first part of the *Ganyangnok* form the basis of his policy reports, which comprise the work's second part.

***Ganyangnok* as a War Captive's Diary**

Ganyangnok begins with a description of Kang Hang's experiences as a war captive in Japan. Before his capture by the Japanese, Kang had concentrated on defeating the invading Japanese invaders by collecting grain for the public granaries and mobilizing Righteous Soldiers or private militias to aid the war effort. Eventually, however, he was captured in 1598, and was first sent to Osaka and then to Fushimi Castle, where he exchanged views on Confucian classics with Japanese scholars. However, Kang never forgot his identity as a Korean captive in enemy territory, and decided to record not only his personal experiences as a captive, but also his observations on Japanese politicians and Japanese politics after the death of Toyotomi Hideyoshi. Kang painstakingly recorded his lonesome and desolate life as a foreigner, noting that although he was welcomed in Japan for his expertise on Confucianism and the Confucian classics, he was aware of the need to return to Korea, the country where he had lived a righteous life as a servant of King Seonjo. Kang had not forgotten what it meant to be a Korean patriot, and he felt it his duty to report on his daily life as a prisoner of Japan, and to understand the "enemy and to portray their politics and lifestyle" as he himself observed them (Kang 2006, 27, 41).

Kang begins his account with a summary of Japan's customs and culture in the late 16th century, noting the country's unique political structure. Kang observes that although the Japanese have not "changed their surnames ever since the founding of their country," for the majority of the "four hundred years preceding the war," the Japanese had "lived under a singular surname" and the emperor "ruled supreme without losing his authority to anyone else" until Japan decided to "appoint a Kampaku to oversee national affairs on the emperor's behalf" (Kang 2006, 47). In other words, prior to the supremacy of the Kampaku, the Japanese had lived with a shared ancestor, and the authority of the emperor remained unchallenged. Put differently, this simple observation suggests that Kang believed that the imposition of the Kampaku as an office above the emperor was a direct affront to the emperor's authority, and more importantly, a major disruption for the Japanese polity, rather than the completion of a delayed quest for a genuine national reunification

as Hideyoshi himself believed.

Nevertheless, it was after Hideyoshi assumed the role of Kampaku that the position attained meaningful influence, for prior to Hideyoshi's ascendancy, it was only after Minamoto Yoritomo's seizure of power that "the emperor was reduced to performing ceremonial rites" (Kang 2006, 48). Once Hideyoshi became the effective head of the Japanese government, he "seized even the lands near the capital which formerly belonged to the emperor and redistributed them to his generals" (Kang 2006, 48). In short, Hideyoshi elevated the stature of the Kampaku by forcedly sacrificing the last vestiges of authority and power that the emperor had by physically robbing the emperor of the last physical evidence that would prove him to be the ruler of all Japan, which suggests that Kang viewed the centralization of the Japanese government as nothing more than a euphemism for the usurpation of imperial authority.

Due to such a voracious appetite for land, the peasantry "suffered immensely, and was barely able to keep a single husk of hay," falling into "extreme destitution" and "barely able to eke out a living" (Kang 2006, 48). The immediate consequence of such socio-economic inequality was the existence of "many individuals who were in temporary employment or scoundrels who roamed the streets," a phenomenon, which as Kang had "heard from some erudite minds in Japan," was "unprecedented and unheard of before Hideyoshi's seizure of power" (Kang 2006, 49). In other words, Kang believed that the centralization of the Japanese government under the Kampaku did not represent a political renovation but a clear depreciation and relegation of imperial authority. What was outwardly a political success for the Kampaku actually carried with it the immense socio-economic cost of exacerbating economic inequalities, for it came at cost of the common peasant's misery and poverty that samurai and former vagabonds could designate themselves members of a *nouveau riche*.

Moreover, although Japan became more powerful to invade Korea under Hideyoshi's leadership, Kang held a strongly negative view of Japan's status as a newly rising power, for he believed that Hideyoshi's ascendancy must not be understood literally as a product of a meritocracy or individual talent, but a usurpation and negation of what ought to have been a strong

sense of political unity and stability under the Japanese emperor. In a similarly negative vein, Kang believed that the strengthening of Japan's political and military prowess incurred the grave price of exacerbated social stratification and the generation of greater economic disparities, and therefore, political centralization in Japan was not an unqualified success, since it only served to worsen social stratification between samurai and commoner by enriching the former at the utter expense of the latter such that the latter could never dream of realizing the opulent life of the former.

Kang then provides a geographical description of Japan and notes that Japan seems to "be a larger country than Korean, contrary to what has been known or imagined previously" (Kang 2006, 51). He notes that Japan is comprised of "eight provinces and 66 states, excluding Tsushima," and consists of "two islands, 92,000 moats, 100,000 villages, 2,958 monasteries, and around 20,000 shrines." The distance from the "farthest point in the East" to the "farthest point in the West" is about 415 *li*, while the distance between the farthest point in the south and that in the north was 88 *li* (Kang 2006, 51). Since a *li* in Japanese usage was ten times the denomination used in Korea, Kang was implying that contrary to the traditional Korean tendency to belittle Japan to be a *dwarf nation*, or a nation inferior in stature to Korea, the actual geographical size of the country was greater than Korea. However, Kang made sure to clarify that his attempt to correct Korea's misconceptions of Japan's geography did not necessarily mean that Koreans had to reappraise every negative conception they had about Japan, for Kang belittled Japan's "addiction to superstitions," an addiction which seemed "egalitarian" in that even the Christian-inspired general Kato Kiyomasa "honored ghosts" (Kang 2006, 52). While Japanese customs were "full of tact and guile," once a certain trend earns respect among commoners, and honor "becomes concentrated," there is no "deliberation about causes behind such a phenomenon," and once a Japanese "is cast with superstitions," they "make sure to never forget until they die" (Kang 2006, 52).

In short, Kang unabashedly displays his mixed feelings and reservations about the Japanese. Although Koreans needed to revise their view of Japan as a small country by reassessing its geographical dimensions, geographical size did not equate to the maturity of the average Japanese mind. The ironic

feature of Japanese society in Kang's eyes was that while social stratification was a serious problem, it was strangely nullified by the sense of "spirituality" that every Japanese shared, for whether it was a general or a peasant, no one seemed to understand the need to maintain a rational distance between reality and the supernatural. Geographical size, in Kang's eyes, was not consummate with the Japanese ego, insofar as the former did not guarantee the latter's maturity.

Kang also left a detailed record of Japanese generals who were directly involved in or responsible for initiating Japan's invasion of Korea. On Tokugawa Ieyasu, Kang noted that he was "trustworthy yet taciturn," and his "castle stands firm and well-prepared" (Kang 2006, 125). However, Tokugawa Ieyasu had yet to earn the trust of the Japanese, for unlike Toyotomi Hideyoshi who "forgot about grudges and did not steal other generals' lands once they surrendered," Tokugawa Ieyasu, "kept debts and grudges within his heart," and whoever "crossed him had to accept death as his only fate," forcing even Ieyasu's subordinates to "only follow him in external appearance, but never out of genuine sincerity" (Kang 2006, 125). Maeda Toshinaga was a representative of a typical follower of Tokugawa, according to Kang, for Maeda constantly conspired with other generals such as Ukita Hideie and Kato Kiyomasa to overthrow Ieyasu and redistribute his holdings amongst themselves. Since Ieyasu and Maeda were all aiming at each other's throats, Kang clearly expressed his wish for a "severe turmoil to rock Japan," for at the expense of Japan turning into a warzone, Korea could enjoy a "fortuitous peace" (Kang 2006, 128). However, unlike most first-generation Korean captives of the Japanese, who either became servants or even converted to Christianity and partially assimilated into Japanese society, Kang did not relinquish his loyalty to the Korean government and did not forget to warn the Korean government of the possibility of a future war with Japan (Min 2008). Kang realistically assessed that even if a war were to arise between Ieyasu and his enemies, it would not amount to much, for although generals such as Uesugi Kagekasu could theoretically ally with Ukita or Kato to "drive Tokugawa [Ieyasu] into a corner by striking simultaneously from East and West," men such as Uesugi had a "weak and foolish temperament," which prohibited them from taking decisive action to

take care of matters with their own hands (Kang 2006, 129).

In short, while Japan's domestic political conditions were ripe for civil war and there was deep distrust among Hideyoshi's generals, Kang was warning that a civil war would be temporary due to the clear weakness of Tokugawa Ieyasu's opponents, who generally lacked the will and resolve to carry wage war in a robust fashion. Kang's decision to warn the Korean government about the possibility of future hostilities with the Japanese also demonstrates his resolve to strictly observe his duty as a Korean government official and a Korean nobleman, refusing to be servile to Japan or assimilate into Japanese culture.

Neither did Kang forget to leave a detailed record of Hideyoshi's personality to help Koreans better understand the principal architect behind Japan's invasion of their country. Kang portrays Hideyoshi as an individual full of tact and guile, and *proves* his case by noting that Hideyoshi made his adopted son serve as Kampaku. But when rumors spread that Hideyoshi's adopted son had a child with Hideyoshi's own concubine, Hideyoshi forced the adopted son's abdication, whereupon the son became a monk for the remainder of his life. Kang also portrays Hideyoshi as ruthless and utterly evil for ordering his generals to cut off the noses of Koreans to better assess how viciously his generals had performed on the battlefield, and describes Hideyoshi as "sly and deceptive...fooling his subordinates with mockery and caricatures" (Kang 2006, 141–142). As examples of Hideyoshi's cunning, Kang makes use of simple anecdotes, such as Hideyoshi declaring that he would sleep in the easternmost room, but actually sleeping in the westernmost room when it became pitch dark, or Hideyoshi "feigning death while on a hunting trip but waking up a long time later" (Kang 2006, 143–144). Kang also notes that Hideyoshi liked to fool "even his own in-laws, raising girls who were not originally his daughters as his own and then marrying them off to richer notables," and "rewarding the notables with gold and land" to make them "abandon all thoughts about betrayal and treachery" (Kang 2006, 144–145). Kang makes a significant leap of logic to conclude that the "Japanese in general like to noisily conspire" and should "even a month or two pass without any significance," one could be sure that "war was on the horizon" (Kang 2006, 144–145). In Kang's view, since even

Japan's most powerful individual was so habitually prone to lying and was a libertine in deceiving not only his generals but also his potential family members, conspiracy and conflict seemed to be a perennial and natural element of Japanese political life.

Finally, Kang concludes his observation of Hideyoshi by suggesting that the Japanese "like to assign difficult tasks or arduous construction work to subordinates to condition them into forgetting about betrayal and treason" (Kang 2006, 145). In other words, Kang perceived Hideyoshi to be an extremely cunning and tactful man who did not hesitate to deceive even his most loyal generals or even impose arduous tasks to wear down his political rivals if such strategies succeeded in checking their will to challenge his authority.

What is notable about Kang's record is that although such descriptions of Japanese generals and their conflicted relationships were recorded privately as part of his own observations, it is also clear, albeit implicitly, that he wished his information to be put to public use by inciting the Korean government to take advantage of the political conflict brewing between rival Japanese factions. Further, in conjunction with Kang's extremely negative portrayal of Hideyoshi and his generalization about the Japanese character, Kang displayed a clear sense of alarm about what he deemed a constant penchant for belligerence, supported by bouts of intrigue, guile, and deception, within figures such as Hideyoshi.

Therefore, *Ganyangnok* as a private diary of a war captive is an important window through to observe the high level of alertness and distrust towards Japan, marked with a great disdain for Hideyoshi due to his penchant for belligerence. Yet, in the work it is also possible to see hints of a policy blueprint from Kang's caricatures of the Japanese nobility, since the most important implicit message stemming from the negative portrayals and description of intrigues and distrust within Japanese politics is that Korea must prepare itself militarily to guarantee a stable peace, even if it meant realizing such a peace at the cost of seeing a civil war in Japan. The second part of *Ganyangnok* offers a series of policy proposals to reform Korea's military in preparation for future turmoil. Therefore, the following section will discuss *Ganyangnok* as a policy report by concentrating on its

specific suggestions aimed at strengthening Korea's military and its warnings about Japan's military-oriented culture, which in turn necessitated, in Kang's view, the implementation of military reforms in Korea to prepare for the worst case scenario of Japan plotting another invasion of the peninsula.

***Ganyangnok* as a Policy Report**

In addition to its meticulous record of Japanese geography and politics after the Jeongyu War, *Ganyangnok* is also notable for its rare stature as a policy report disguised as a private diary. To adequately prepare for massive wars on the magnitude of the Imjin and Jeongyu War, Kang believed that Korea ought to strengthen its military by selecting soldiers based on merit and reforming the administrative system to ensure that there would be no overlapping duties and miscommunication that might severely compromise administrative efficiency. Kang advises the Korean court to regularly train soldiers and reorganize units, since the tradition of "not regularly training soldiers during times of peace and then suddenly rushing farmers up to battlefield" left them ill-prepared to deal with a formidable enemy. Kang also advises that military units be better organized, as it was common for soldiers to "be members of patrolling units in the afternoon and members of the Provincial Guards in the evening," causing much confusion and a "severe lack of discipline" (Kang 2006, 59).

Kang criticizes the haphazard practice of forcing generals to shift posts in response to crises, arguing that "hiring individuals who are unprepared to undertake totally different tasks" to be a risky endeavor. He also advises that when the government selects a general, it must not "distinguish between military officials and government officials...not be invested in ostentatious ceremonies," and "not exclusively favor talents from respected families." Instead the government ought to "recruit talent men with both courage and a strategic mind," and "those who fought valiantly against the enemy and had established credentials" had to be selected to defend southern Korea (Kang 2006, 62). In short, Kang urges the government to exercise greater caution in organizing the military bureaucracy to ensure there were no dual

assignments that could cause confusion and disorder; the government had to concentrate on selecting individuals for military posts chiefly based on their talents and credentials and not engage in any form of nepotism to ensure that only the most able generals would be sent to face the Japanese.

However, to ensure maximum efficiency in preparing defenses against the enemy, Kang argued for the simplification of fortifications, rewards, and the tax system, the training of soldiers to exercise constant concentration on the battlefield, and the elimination of the cronyism that threatened military discipline. Kang urges the government to “station generals for an extended period of time” to ensure consistency in their respective duties, to award only by a wage increase when a general makes a noted accomplishment, and to “charge only land taxes to the peasants” and only have the peasants “deliver military provisions” if the occasion so demanded (Kang 2006, 62). Along the coast, where raids from Japanese pirates were frequent, Kang urges the “installation of forts every 100 *li*” and that castles be located in “hilly or mountainous areas,” making it difficult for enemy arrows and cannon to fire uphill, while enabling the castle defenders to easily fire at the enemy from a superior position (Kang 2006, 66–67). Kang also advises that peasants live with soldiers so that the transition from farming to fighting the enemy would be easy to achieve, and that small forts along the coast either be demolished or incorporated into larger forts to ensure that soldiers did not “become idle during peacetime but instead be assigned various tasks aside from military duties,” thereby enabling forts to be constantly on alert regardless of whether war was imminent (Kang 2006, 69). Soldiers could also be mobilized easily to practice “naval warfare tactics” by organizing them into groups, and on such occasions, aside from “orders to collect horses,” no other miscellaneous tasks should be assigned. In short, the Korean government had to encourage soldiers and peasants to live together to motivate soldiers to be on constant alert and motivate peasants to easily transition from their daily labors to fighting the enemy.

To that end, the government had to also minimize the amount of unnecessary labor that might distract soldiers from concentrating on perfecting military strategies. For agriculturally rich lands located by the sea, Kang advises the government to designate such lands as “communal lands

that could be under the management of generals” to guarantee that “even vagabonds could live in peace by settling in them” (Kang 2006, 63–64). To Kang, such measures would satisfy both generals and peasants, since the former would be content at earning a prize for his service, while the latter could be guaranteed a permanent space in which to make a living and start a family. In other words, Kang believed that the meritocracy in the military had to be simplified to imbue a strong sense of discipline, the burden of taxes had to be lightened to help peasants concentrate on farming, and lands which yielded a great variety of produce had to be converted into prizes for generals, which would simultaneously guarantee permanent living spaces for peasants, satisfying both parties without going through the trouble of worrying about nepotism or high crime rates among peasants who turned into vagabonds or robbers seeking to enrich themselves by stealing from others.

Yet, no matter how prepared a nation might be against potential invasion, without a proper understanding of the enemy and their proclivity for war, there would be a mismatch between the preparations and the appropriateness of those preparations to face the enemy in question. For as political scientist A. Loudon observed, by either underestimating or overestimating the influence of an enemy, one will still not know what that enemy will actually end up doing (Loudon 1942). Therefore, Kang did not forget to convert his private reminiscences about Japan into a policy report with detailed information about Japan’s political culture and Kang’s predictions about the aftermath of the Imjin War. While Kang was certainly impressed with the bustling and lively market economy of Japan and its rapid commercialization, he was wary and even contemptuous about what he perceived as the country’s militant and belligerent political culture, which seemed to be filled with endless intrigue and plotting. He reflects that although Hideyoshi had made it appear as though every Japanese general was in agreement about invading Korea, in reality, Kato Kiyomasa and Konishi Yukinaga had “irreconcilable differences,” and had a Korean general taken advantage of this fact, victory would have come more rapidly and with greater certainty (Kang 2006, 71). Kang also notes the profound distrust among Japanese generals toward the peasantry, such that they displayed

contradictory attitudes. On one hand, generals demanded random payments of grain, and when a farmer failed to meet a designated quota, “he would simply be put in jail.” However, on the other hand, when the generals were ordered to invade Korea, they made sure to “leave half of their troops in their castles, lest a commotion arise among the peasantry” (Kang 2006, 72).

Considering the underlying disunity behind a facade of unity, Kang recommends that instead of executing every captured Japanese soldier, it would be more prudent and wiser to grant ample clothing and food to surrendering Japanese soldiers to encourage their submission out of an “eagerness to repay such kindness and to reciprocate the faith that Korea has shown them.” Adhering to such a policy, Kang argues, is killing two birds with one stone, for it would not only “pluck the feathers of the enemy’s wings,” but allow the Korean military to “strike the enemy with the enemy’s forte, and Korean soldiers would strike at the enemy’s weaknesses” (Kang 2006, 75). In short, Hideyoshi’s attempt to invade Korea with a unified national army was a facade, for the attempt could not hide conflicts among his generals and those generals’ distrust of their own people, demonstrating that force was the real cornerstone of such unity; psychologically, the Japanese people were far from having a unified national character. Therefore, if surrendering Japanese soldiers were shown proper care and respect, the Korean military would experience a considerable increase in manpower and simultaneously experience qualitative growth since the surrendered Japanese soldiers would know their former comrades better than anyone else.

As the previous section of *Ganyangnok* had demonstrated, Kang had a deep distrust towards the Japanese, but he displays the greatest alarm about the status of Tsushima. While the decision to deploy troops was chiefly that of Hideyoshi, Kang was deeply concerned about Tsushima’s role as a logistics center throughout the war and warned the Korean government to keep a close watch on the island’s activities after the war. Kang reminded the Korean government that although Tsushima was “culturally close” to Korea because Korea offered it “numerous benefits,” and Tsushima residents understood the Korean language very well, Tsushima was not to be trusted because upon hearing that Hideyoshi had unified Japan, So Yoshitoshi, the lord of Tsushima, “served up Korea to Japan,” and Tsushima residents were

so well-versed in Korean that they are “taught not only to speak in Korean but to design official documents similarly to those of Korea” such that “even the most discerning eye cannot tell a Korean document and a forgery coming from Tsushima” (Kang 2006, 121).

Considering such “deceitful and cunning behavior” of the Tsushima islanders, Kang suggests that Tsushima envoys not be invited to the capital lest “they steal top-secret information.” Instead, appointing several generals to meet them at Busan or adjacent areas to conduct business was more appropriate, as it would prevent them from “knowing in detail Korea’s roads and the merits and shortcomings of the Korean government. Furthermore, much like the simplified administrative system he yearned for, Kang thought that simplifying the gifts to Tsushima envoys by just presenting them with small quantities of local produce, rather than “lavish amounts of precious grain from Yeongnam,” would suffice. Tributes from Tsushima were best received at a certain date so that “Tsushima islanders would not enter and exit the peninsula as they pleased” and “Tsushima boats would not enter in large numbers to give the wrong impression that they could arouse suspicion from the Korean government whenever they wanted.” Finally, Kang advises that the Korean government demand that Tsushima file “periodic reports about potential Japanese invasions” to let Korea prepare in advance and to prevent Tsushima from selling Korea to Japan without Korea’s notice, for Kang believed that it was due to Tsushima’s betrayal of good faith that Korea had suffered the storm of war with Japan (Kang 2006, 122).

In short, Kang perceived Tsushima to be the most dangerous and suspicious enemy, for it not only abused its good relations with Korea by selling off Korea to Japan, but the cultural proximity between Korea and Tsushima incurred the danger of exposing too much information about Korea to Tsushima and by extension, Japan, considering that Tsushima residents spoke and wrote Korean well enough to create forgeries of diplomatic documents. Given such dangers associated with being too close with Tsushima, Kang is wary that the cultural affinity between Tsushima and Korea not be abused by Tsushima as to become a dagger aimed at Korea. Therefore, Kang recommends that Korea distance itself from Tsushima by restricting trading to Busan and adjacent areas and maintaining regular

tribute relations with Tsushima to allow Korea to constantly monitor activities there.

Conclusion

Contrary to the traditional emphasis on *Ganyangnok* as merely a war captive's diary or travelogue, this article demonstrates how *Ganyangnok*'s true significance lies in its crucial function as a post-Imjin War policy report, which is not detached or isolated from Kang Hang's personal observations about Japanese culture and politics after Toyotomi Hideyoshi's death. A supposedly neat divide between a war captive's diary and a travelogue does not exist, for the final section of *Ganyangnok*, written after Kang's return to Korea in 1600, clearly reveals Kang's eagerness to display his patriotism by urging the Korean government to prepare for future Japanese invasions, a recommendation directly borne of Kang's negative views about Hideyoshi's self-proclamation as Kampaku and the relegation of imperial authority, about the dominance of the samurai in Japanese society, and what Kang perceived as a general lack of Confucian morals compounded by the Japanese government's proclivity to invade other countries and wage wars of territorial expansion.

Considering that the negative portrayal of Japan is consistent throughout Kang's narrative, both in terms of tone and content, the nature of *Ganyangnok*, with respect to its dual purpose as a war captive's diary and a policy report, must accurately be reconciled as a policy report on post-Imjin War Japan written in the deliberate form of a war captive's diary. In addition to recording Japan's political transformation before and after the Imjin War, Kang proffers substantive advice on how to reorganize Korea's military bureaucracy, how to reorganize Korea's coastal defense system, and encouraging a cooperative working relationship between peasants and soldiers so none would be left idle during peace and war. Kang was also mindful of the importance of understanding and knowing the enemy. He details the tension and discord underlying relations between generals in Japan and meticulously describes Hideyoshi's personality to inform Koreans about

what kind of leader the Japanese had lived under and what kind of man had the ambition to invade and subjugate their country.

Finally, Kang was careful to distinguish between the political roles of Japan and Tsushima, stating that while Japan was primarily responsible for organizing and planning the invasion of Korea, Tsushima's culpability could not be described as any less important, for not only did Tsushima breach the faith and trust Korea had established with it through centuries of trade, but Tsushima residents proved their value to Japan by their comprehension and fluency in the Korean language, and even aided the Japanese war effort by forging Korean diplomatic documents.

Due to the mixture of personal observances and policy recommendations, a neat division between these seemingly distinct genres is not possible with *Ganyangnok*, as some existing scholarly literature assumes. The first part of *Ganyangnok*, which originally reflected Kang's negative impressions of Japanese politics and society as private reflections in the form of a diary, became the ultimate basis for writing the work's second part, which is essentially a series of policy recommendations aimed at curbing and preventing future occurrences of Japanese belligerence towards Korea. The textual form of *Ganyangnok* ultimately informed its political purpose such that it was only possible for Kang to publicize his private thoughts about Japan into a policy report because he had ample time and space to experiment with his personal impressions about Japan. Therefore, the traditional attempt to divorce form from function in understanding *Ganyangnok*'s political purpose needs revision. It was only because Kang Hang originally intended to unite form and function in his narrative that the evolution of personal reflections and recollections about post-Imjin War and post-Jeongyu War Japan into an official policy report across *Ganyangnok* as a singular text was possible.

The duality of *Ganyangnok* as a travelogue and a policy report was not meant for its own sake, but to better facilitate the reader's understanding of Kang's purposeful evolution of the former into the latter within a single text. Such duality was precisely what enabled a natural evolution of Kang's travelogue from the first section of *Ganyangnok* into Kang's recommendations for military and administrative and policy reforms in the second

section of *Ganyangnok*, for without the first-hand observations, Kang's recommendations could not have had the specificity and scope and the ultimate aim of qualitatively improving Korea's national defenses and cautioning the Korean government to learn in detail about Japan's internal politics following the Imjin and Jeongyu Wars, and to take a more stern stance against Tsushima to prevent another tragedy of that war's magnitude from ever again ravaging Korea's mountains and valleys.

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